

Life and Ministry of Jesus Christ

The Feeding of the 5000

Last time...the seriousness of the mission, as characterized in those binary terms, is “played out” by John the Baptist and Herod Antipas

- confess or deny
- peace or sword
- Jesus or family
- find or lose

John the Baptist giving us an inspiring model of

- faithfully and boldly speaking the truth in a hostile environment,
 - regardless of the potential worldly consequence
 - even if our next words will be our last
- being ready to meet the Lord at any moment
- enduring to the end

This time...

- having heard the news of John’s death, Jesus seeks to commune with His Father
- the 6 mission teams return and give Jesus a mission trip report
- feeding of 5000 with 5 loaves and 2 fishes
 - the only miracle of Jesus’ ministry previous to His last visit to Jerusalem that is recorded in all 4 Gospels

We will look at all 4 independent accounts to get the sum of the picture, starting in Mark 6

Mark 6

v30 the apostles...told Him all...they had done...taught:

The 12 apostles/disciples were

- called to
 - preach, saying, The Kingdom of God is at hand (Matt 10:7)
 - heal all manner of sickness and disease (physical and spiritual)
- given the power of God to cast out demons and to heal (Matt 10:1)
- sent by the Lord of the harvest into His harvest (Matt 9:38)

And they did as instructed and empowered

Now they have returned, all excited, and give Jesus a Mission Trip Report about

- what THEY had done...remembering Whose power?
- what THEY had taught...remembering Whose words?

These 12 are

- ministers/servants
- shepherds-in-training

I'm sure they are very excited, but a "natural" temptation in the ministry is to think we bring something to the table, to think too highly of ourselves

They (and we) remain shepherds-in-training, as we shall see

v31-32 Come...apart into a desert place and rest:

Serving God..."the ministry"...is very demanding and endless work,
physically, emotionally, and spiritually

Jesus sees and hears both their excitement and their weariness

He knows they have need of rest from their labors

They had been so non-stop busy with the ministry that they ate their meals on the run, hurriedly

Jesus says "Come" (i.e. Follow Me) to a remote, uninhabited, quiet place to be refreshed before continuing.

After getting the de-briefing of the 12, Jesus shows them His heart:

- the Good Shepherd tending His flock;
shepherds-in-training are sheep too
- the Lord cares more about His ministers than He does the ministry;
He could use angels or donkeys or even stones

Brothers, Sister: Jesus knows the value of Retreat to come away with Him to be refreshed from your service/ministries
Do you know the value?

So, Jesus and the 12 get into a boat and sail across the north shore of the Sea of Galilee...a slow voyage

v33-34 ran afoot...outwent...moved with compassion:

At this point in His ministry, Jesus is very popular with the people...and large numbers of people were ever-present

When they see Jesus get into the boat and head east, on a slow voyage, they run to follow him, to be where He is

In fact, they pass the boat and are waiting for Jesus

When Jesus steps out of the boat He sees them...as God sees them:

Sheep without a shepherd...just as He did the multitude in Matt 9:36 at the outset of the 1st Mission Trip without Him

He “sees” Ezk 34 again

The people are flocking to Him, like sheep to their shepherd

His heart toward them was God’s heart:

Moved with compassion, just as He was in Matt 9:36 at the outset of the recently concluded 1st Mission Trip and why He sent the 12 into the cities and towns of Galilee to preach the Kingdom of God and to heal all manner of sickness and disease

Facing a multitude of needy people, will there be much rest on this “retreat”?

What does Jesus do?

Send them away?

Say: “Come on!

Give Me a break!

This is not a convenient time, come back later.”

No, He set aside His will for their benefit and began to teach them many things...the Word of God

How did the 12 disciples see the people?

What was their heart toward them?

Were they as cheerful about this interruption as was Jesus?

That will be revealed soon enough

v35-36 Send them away:

Do the 12 have the eyes and heart of their Master, the Lord our Good Shepherd?
No

“We are running out of daylight and this is a remote place.
Send them away so they can forage for themselves in the surrounding villages.”

Do sheep forage for themselves...or are they dependent upon their
Shepherd to lead them to green pastures and beside still waters?

Jesus was moved with compassions, His disciples had no compassion

There is a disconnect between the heart of Jesus and the heart of the 12
Yet, they need His heart and mind to continue His work after He finishes the work
His Father sent Him to do and He returns to the right hand of the Father
The shepherds-in-training need more...training

Jesus pours His heart into them while simultaneously pouring His heart out
to the people

v37 Give ye them to eat:

The 12 have proposed the wrong solution to the problem at hand

A shepherd feeds his flock...as Jesus was in v34 (spiritually) and as He will now
(physically)

They are shepherds-in-training, therefore Jesus' solution is obvious:
You give them something to eat.

The 12 pushback from the perspective of man vs of God
“We need money to do that, lots of money.”
(penny = denari = days' wage)

For man, it's always about the money, isn't it?
Matt 6:24

What does Immanuel (God with us) ask them, teach them?

v38 How many loaves have ye? Go and See:
“How much money do you have?”?

No!

Does the Creator of the universe need money?

Instead, “How many loaves of bread do you have? Go find out.”

Instead of telling the multitude to “Go”, Jesus tells His ministers to “Go”

He did not send the people away to the surrounding villages to forage for themselves, He sent the 12 away to the people to find what they have on hand to feed them

The “mighty” disciples (v30) are sent to do the mundane task of shopping for food

And they come back later...after more sunlight has burned...with:
“We have lunch for 2.”

v39-40 sit down...green grass...ranks:

Jesus commanded His disciples...those of mighty works on their Mission Trip...

- to be the hosts (entry level job) in His open air restaurant
- to seat the people
 - by companies, in ranks/rows...God is the God of order
 - upon the green grass...Ps 23:2

v41 looked up...blessed...brake...gave:

Jesus, God with us, took the lunch for 2 and

- looked up to the Provider (Matt 6:11)
- blessed...gave thanks (always give thanks, always give thanks first)
- brake/divided...5 loaves of bread and 2 dried fishes

Now the 12 disciples, the might workers of God, are...waiters/servers
Serving others, not being served by others

v42-44 all eat and were filled...12 baskets full of fragments:

In Jesus Christ's hands, lunch for 2 became lunch for many thousands

The 5 loaves and 2 fishes were multiplied when Jesus divided them

Only God can multiply by dividing!

ALL 5000 ate until they were satisfied, even gluttons

Note: "men" = "males"

And, there was 12 baskets FULL of leftovers...

- evidence of "filled"
- one basket for each of the 12 disciples, the mighty workers of God who are now...bus boys

Jesus gives His 12 disciples a "hands-on lesson" in

- how far man's ways and perspective falls short of God's ways and perspective
- His identity
- the ministry – to serve rather than to be served

Matt 14

v13-14 When Jesus heard:

Heard what?

The news of the death of John the Baptist, His cousin and Forerunner (v12)

Who is the next Prophet to die?

He is

Note: There was no mention of the death of John in Mark's account

There was no mention of the Mission Report and the call to

"go to a retreat" in Matthew's account

We get the full picture from all 4 accounts

Jesus, 100% God and 100% Man,

- is troubled and wants/needs to commune with His Father
- knows His disciples to be refreshed

but it is not to be

It would have been easy for Jesus to brush off the people or to tell them to wait...

but that is not God's heart...ever

May we His disciples be like Him!

John 3:30

What did Jesus do?

He healed their sick

Note: In Mark's account, he began to teach them many things

v15 victuals:

proof positive that Granny Clampett read her KJV Bible, not an NIV

v16 They need not depart:

Jesus teaches His disciples to see with His eyes and to moved with His heart

See a need (other's, not ours) and meet it!

v17-21 He commanded the multitude...beside women and children:

Thru His disciples, the Good Shepherd commands His flock to sit in
green pastures (Ps 23:2)

New information: besides

It was customary to count only the males...5000

But there were women and children as well

So how many people did Jesus Christ feed with 5 loaves and 2 fishes?

5000 x 2?

5000 x 3?

More?

Luke 9

v10 belonging to the city called Bethsaida:

With Mark's and Matthew's account in mind, the location of the remote place
chosen by Jesus is meaningful

a. Bethsaida was just inside the jurisdiction of Philip the tetrarch...

just outside the jurisdiction of Herod Antipas, murderer of John the Baptist

Jesus certainly does not fear Herod Antipas, He simply is not going to
engage this rat who is curious to see Him (v9b)

b. Bethsaida is the hometown of...Peter and Andrew,
and that will come into play in John's account

v11 followed...received...spoke...healed:

Jesus and His 12 disciples are making the slow journey to Bethsaida

The “sheep” are following the Shepherd

The Shepherd receives His sheep...welcomes them with open arms, loves them

Isn't it awesome to be a sheep of Jesus Christ following Him?!

Notice what Jesus does for His sheep in Luke's account

1. spoke: taught them many things (Mark's account)
2. healed: all who needed His touch (Matt's account)

The Good Shepherd fed and tended His sheep

I repeat, isn't it awesome to be a sheep of Jesus Christ's?

Note: the objectives of the 1st Mission Trip: teach/preach and heal
Jesus keeps doing what He instructed His disciples to do

v12-14a lodge...except we should:

Additional information, from the hearts of the 12 disciples regarding these people
Jesus loves:

- lodge...they can find some place on their own to lay down tonight
- this is all the food we have, unless you expect us to go buy it ourselves
 - (and where are we going to find this much food on such short notice, way out here in a remote place?)
 - (who is going to pry the money out of Judas' miserly hands?)

A self-centered attitude, not an others-centered attitude

v14b-15 made them all sit down:

The people did not hesitate to obey Jesus

v16-17 as recorded in the other 2 Synoptic Gospels

John 6

v1 After these things:

Certainly after the events of John 5, perhaps a year or more earlier, but obviously after all the events of the past year which are not recorded by John

- SoM
- choosing the 12 disciples
- healing the servant of the centurion from Capernaum
- raising from the dead the son of the widow of Nain
- 2nd teaching tour of Galilee
- healing the man possessed by a dumb demon...and being accused of being the prince of the devils
- all the teachings in parables
- casting out Legion
- raising from the dead the daughter of Jairus in Capernaum
- healing the woman with the issue of blood
- the 1st Mission Trip
- the death of John the Baptist

v2 because they saw His miracles:

Now we get the motive of the people running afoot after Jesus

Seems like they are more interested in the benefits of being around Jesus than just being with Jesus

They are seeking the perks, not Him

And they are never satisfied

v3-4 into a mountain...the Passover...was nigh:

Where: the site of the proposed retreat with His Father and His 12 disciples

When (a timestamp): spring, with Passover approaching
Galilee in the Spring is breath-takingly beautiful!
Green grass, wildflowers

Then more details not found in the synoptic Gospels

v5-6 saith unto Philip...to prove him:

Jesus is the one who raised the issue of food to feed the people,
His disciples didn't

He did so by posing the situation to Philip...to test him and thru him, the others
This is how the feeding of the 5000 starts – from the heart of the Good Shepherd

Jesus is doing the work His Father sent Him to do...God's Divine Plan,
not winging it, not reacting to things He did not foreknow

Jesus is not seeking Philip's advice...He already knows what He is going to do
He is training His shepherds-in-training, He is pouring His heart into them
so they will see as He sees and be moved as He is moved

Note: According to the other accounts, this is where Jesus would tell His
disciples to give them something to eat, to go and see what food is
available

v7 pennyworth...take a little:

It is Philip's considered opinion that 200 days wages would only be enough for
everyone present to get just a little bit of food,
certainly much more than that is needed for all of them to get their full

v8-9 Andrew...a lad:

In Luke's account we learned the site of the Retreat –
a remote place outside of Bethsaida, Peter and Andrew's hometown
It was Andrew who brought forth this lad with a lunch sack...
he may well have known him

What do learn about this lad: He gladly gave Jesus his lunch

What do we learn about the 5 loaves of bread and the 2 fishes?

Loaves: barley vs wheat (feed the animals, grain of the poor
vs offer to the Lord in grain offering)

Fishes: small

This is the lunch of a poor, humble boy

v10 Make the men sit down:

"men" = "mankind", not "males"

so the men sat down:

"men" = "males"

v11 Jesus...distributed:

In the place chosen by Jesus (v3), all would be able to see and hear Him,
Jesus divided and delivered a poor boy's lunch to many thousands

What was the individual portion from the 5 loaves and 2 small fishes?
As much as they would...everyone got as much as they wanted to be filled

v12-13 nothing be lost:

More insights into the heart of God:

- nothing is wasted, everything is used
(Rom 8:28)
- Jesus will lose nothing, especially the sheep His Father has given Him
(John 17:8, 12)
- more than enough leftovers were picked up to restore the lunch unto
this cheerfully giving young boy
(Eph 3:20)

The feeding of the 5000 is the only miracle of Jesus prior to His final visit to Jerusalem that is
recorded in all 4 Gospels

- The magnitude of the miracle
 - 5000 * X with 5 loaves and 2 fishes
 - remote place vs in a city
- The importance to His ministry
 - 1st act after the alarming (to all) news of the death of John the Baptist
 - another denial of Self for the benefit of others
 - I AM the Messiah...the Lord Who alone can multiply by dividing

Application

What do we learn about the heart of our Good Shepherd?

1. He sees us with a heart filled with compassion
 - a. He never brushes us off or sends us away, He welcomes us with open arms
 - b. He feeds and tends His flock
2. He cares more about His ministers than He does the ministry
3. He pours His heart into His followers
4. He is not seeking our advise, He already knows what He is going to do
5. He wastes/loses nothing, uses everything

What do we learn about being a disciple of Jesus Christ?

1. Have the heart of our Shepherd:
 - see the need, meet the need (spiritual and physical)
 - compassionate
 - self-less
 - accessible and available
2. Do not hesitate to obey Jesus
3. Seek Him, not His benefits...He is sufficient
4. Humility
 - Rom 12:11
 - Rom 12:16

Leaders/disciples are

- followers
 - servants
 - grocery shoppers
 - hosts/ushers
 - waiters/servers
 - bus boys
5. Rest when you can, but expect every day to be busy