

Mountains and Lakes
Week 6: Jesus Feeds the 5,000
Mark 6:34-44

Our youngest daughter, Norah, loves Hilltop Christian Camp. It's her favorite place in the world and, for the last few years, the elementary camp that Maggie deans has been her favorite week of the year.

Unfortunately, she has "aged out" of that week, so she can't be a camper anymore, but she can be Jr. Faculty. The only thing is, Jr. Faculty are required to have a parent at camp with them. So, after church today, me and Norah are heading to Hilltop for the week. She'll get to do her Jr. Faculty thing and I'll get to be the dorm dad for 15 elementary-age boys...in one room...for an entire week.

Church, I have never coveted your prayers more than I do right now!

And, I don't know what to expect, but I have some ideas. I imagine I'm going to spend the week convincing these young men that swimming in the pool is NOT the same as taking a shower. That their parents packed all these clothes for a reason and so maybe they should change every now and then. That no amount of body spray can cover up certain odors.

And, I'm sure there will be plenty of surprises along the way. I have no doubt that it's going to be a really fun week, but I also know that it's going to be a lot...because elementary-age boys can be a lot. I know there will be moments when I feel like I'm too much for them...and moments when they're too much for me.

But I remember being an elementary-age boy and being told, directly or indirectly, that I was a lot. That I needed to settle down. Lower my voice. Stop goofing off. But, I can also think of times as an adult when I've been made to feel like I was a lot. That I needed to dial it back a little.

I imagine we've all felt that way before. A hurtful comment or judgmental glance made you feel like you were being just a little "too much" for the people around you. We've probably all had moments like that. You've had a friend pull away because you're in a hard season and they don't know what to say or how to act. You see family members roll their eyes at your struggles and say, "When are you going to get over this?"

I think what breaks my heart the most is when people experience this at Church. You might be sitting here right now thinking, *If people knew the real me, would they still welcome me?*

This should be the place where we can be most open and vulnerable about our struggles and sin and confess to one another our complete and utter reliance on the grace of Jesus that continues to make us new. But, unfortunately, churches often give the message to

hurting people...*You're too much for us.* Which then starts making us believe that we're too much for God, too.

But, what I want us to see in our text today is that, **when others turn you away, Jesus invites you in.** (Say that with me.)

If you don't remember anything else I say today, I hope you at least hang on to this. It might be the reason God stirred in your heart to be here this morning. When others turn you away, Jesus invites you in.

Contemplative reading: Psalm 23; Mark 6:30-44 – Just listen to the words and let the Lord speak through them.

What did you hear as I read those two passages? Did you notice anything?

I got to preach for a friend of mine up in Avon last weekend, and my text was Psalm 23:1. My sermon was still pretty fresh in my mind when I sat down and started studying our passage for this week, and I noticed a parallel between these passages that I'd never seen before. You may have picked up on it.

This passage in Mark 6 is one of Jesus' most famous miracles. He takes 5 loaves of bread and 2 fish and multiplies them to feed the 5,000. But, it got me thinking this week about **why** Jesus performed miracles. Why did he give sight back to the blind? Why did he heal the leper and drive out demons and raise the dead and feed the multitude?

Jesus performed miracles to give us a glimpse of the world as it was meant to be. The way God designed it. A world where the blind see, the broken are made whole, the hungry are fed, and death doesn't have the final word. Every miracle that Jesus performed was like a window into the Kingdom of God where all things are made new.

But miracles also reveal the heart of Jesus for people. They show us who Jesus is and what he came to do. Yes, they were a demonstrations of God's power through him, but miracles also revealed his mission and identity. And, I think in Mark 6, Jesus is showing himself to be our Good Shepherd. He says it in John 10, but he shows us in Mark 6.

Let's go through our text together.

- Recap scene – Jesus is taking his disciples to a “quiet place.” They got in a boat and started making their way over.
- But they were just clipping the northwest corner of the Sea of Galilee, so people could still see them from the shore.
- Some people ran over by foot and actually beat them to where they were going.

- Read Mark 6:34

Sometimes you have the best of intentions to get some rest, but it gets interrupted. That's what's happening here. Jesus and his disciples are tired. They need some time away. But the crowd they left on one side of the lake ran and met them on the other side! I'd be rowing up to that shore like, "You've got to be kidding me."

But Jesus responded with compassion and love. He cares for them the way a good shepherd cares for his lost and hurting sheep. So he continues ministering to them. Verse 35...(READ vs. 35-38)

I think this shows how quickly people left to chase down Jesus. They didn't want to lose sight of him, so they didn't go home and pack up provisions. They just took off after him. And so now you have thousands of people all realizing they don't have any food. The disciples notice it, too, so they form a little committee.

And their response reminds me of something comedian Fred Allen once said, "A committee is a group of people who can individually do nothing, and collectively decide that nothing can be done." They didn't know what to do other than just send people away. The need was too great. It all felt like "a lot" and it was all just too much for them.

Now, I don't want to be too hard on these disciples. It was a lot, and I think they were expressing genuine concern for all these people by saying, "Hey Jesus, let's wrap it up so they can go get some food!" But don't miss this...the disciples responded with concern, but Jesus responded with compassion. What's the difference? Concern notices a problem; compassion moves towards the people affected by it.

Deacon's Ministry Foster Care card writing event – 7/20 @ 7pm by the firepit. Come join us!

Jesus moves towards us with compassion, and we want to move towards others in that same way, even when the need feels like a lot. And like a Good Shepherd, Jesus moves towards the people in our text who felt like a lot to the disciples...(READ vs. 39-41)

I think this is where you really start to hear the words of Psalm 23 and see Jesus be their Good Shepherd.

He has them sit down in green grass – "He makes me lie down in green pastures..."

Jesus provides a meal for them – "You prepare a table before me..."

The hunger and desire of the people in front of him was not too much for Jesus, and like a Good Shepherd, he draws them near, he gives them rest, and he provides all they need. Verse 42 says...(READ vs. 42-44)

The number would have been easy to figure since they divided up the group. And it was 5,000 men. That doesn't count women and children, and yet the text says, "They all ate and were satisfied" and 12 baskets of leftovers were collected. **"My cup overflows."**

There's so much we can glean from this text. I could spend another _____ minutes just talking about the miracle, but as we wrap up, I want to focus on what this miracle reveals about Jesus...not just to those who were fed that day, but to all of us when we feel like we're "a lot." Like our needs are too much.

When others turn you away, Jesus invites you in. The crowd that day was in great need and they didn't have enough to meet that need. The disciples were concerned, but turned them away. Jesus had compassion and invited them in. Invited them to experience Him as their Good Shepherd.

There are times in life when we come face to face with the fact that we're "a lot" and that our resources are finite. We don't have enough time or energy or finances or will power to make it through. In those times we can feel lost. We can feel alone and like a sheep without a Shepherd.

But in those moments, when we put our faith and hope and trust in Him, Jesus shows up as our Good Shepherd. He has compassion on us. He leads us by still waters and gives rest to our restless soul. He makes us lie down in green pastures. And He abundantly provides all that our soul needs. When you feel like you are "too much" or that what you have in you is "not enough," take heart. Jesus sees you. He loves you. He will not turn you away. He will always invite you to experience more of Him.

And so, what does your soul desire today?

Peace – Do you feel anxious and restless? Craving stillness? Jesus whispers, "I am your peace. Come to me."

Belonging – Do you feel left on the outside, at work, in your family, even here at church? Jesus says, "You are mine. You belong to me and you belong here."

Purpose – Do you sometimes wonder who you are? Try to be the person you think everyone else expects you to be? Jesus says, "I know you and call you by name."

Freedom – Are you carrying the weight of regrets so heavy they're crushing you? Jesus says, "Come to me, all who are weary, and I will give you rest."

Peace, belonging, purpose, freedom. Something else? **What does your soul desire today?**

Setup Card

- Basket, take a card and pen, and pass it down.

- Spend a few moments, write down what your soul desires today. What feels like “a lot.”
- Hold onto it.

When others turn you away, Jesus invites you in. You are never “too much” and your need is never too great. Jesus alone can satisfy your soul in ways nothing and no one else can.

In John’s Gospel, Jesus uses this moment not just to show us that He is our Good Shepherd, but that he alone can satisfy and sustain us. In John 6:35, Jesus says, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry...”

Invitation

This morning, if you’ve been wandering alone and life feels like too much, if there is a hunger and desire in your soul that nothing has been able to fill, Jesus is inviting you to come to Him. He wants to welcome you with open arms and bear the weight of your sin and shame for you so you can experience new life and a fresh start.

Communion

As we come to the communion table, we remember that Jesus doesn’t just give bread, He is the bread of life who satisfies our deepest hunger.

This bread we take reminds us of His body that was given for and the juice reminds us of his blood that was shed...not for “perfect” people, but for people like us who come to him hungry, needy, and sometimes feeling like we’re “too much.”

As you come to receive communion today, bring that card with you and image yourself bringing it to Jesus, the Good Shepherd, who sees you, loves you, and continues to invite you to Himself. Drop it in the basket and then go thank Him for not turning you away, but inviting you in.

Or, you may want to take it to one of our prayer team members and just ask them to pray over it with you.

Whenever you’re ready, you come. The table is open and Jesus is inviting you in.