

19- The Provision of the Master *Mark 6:30-44; 8:1-9*

Mark 6:30-44 And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught. 31 And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat. 32 And they departed into a desert place by ship privately. 33 And the people saw them departing, and many knew him, and ran afoot thither out of all cities, and outwent them, and came together unto him. 34 And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things. 35 And when the day was now far spent, his disciples came unto him, and said, This is a desert place, and now the time is far passed: 36 Send them away, that they may go into the country round about, and into the villages, and buy themselves bread: for they have nothing to eat. 37 He answered and said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they say unto him, Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread, and give them to eat? 38 He saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? go and see. And when they knew, they say, Five, and two fishes. 39 And he commanded them to make all sit down by companies upon the green grass. 40 And they sat down in ranks, by hundreds, and by fifties. 41 And when he had taken the five loaves and the two fishes, he looked up to heaven, and blessed, and brake the loaves, and gave them to his disciples to set before them; and the two fishes divided he among them all. 42 And they did all eat, and were filled. 43 And they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments, and of the fishes. 44 And they that did eat of the loaves were about five thousand men.

Mark 8:1-13 In those days the multitude being very great, and having nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples unto him, and saith unto them, 2 I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat: 3 And if I send them away fasting to their own houses, they will faint by the way: for divers of them came from far. 4 And his disciples answered him, From whence can a man satisfy these men with bread here in the wilderness? 5 And he asked them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven. 6 And he commanded the people to sit down on the ground: and he took the seven loaves, and gave thanks, and brake, and gave to his disciples to set before them; and they did set them before the people. 7 And they had a few small fishes: and he blessed, and commanded to set them also before them. 8 So they did eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken meat that was left seven baskets. 9 And they that had eaten were about four thousand: and he sent them away.

Mark 10:45 For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

Every year we see the celebrations of New Years and resolutions to do different things in our life. Most are broken within a few days for different reasons, many times for things beyond our control. So we must ask who controls tomorrows, or better yet who controls today.

In the gospel of Mark we have two different occasions when Jesus miraculously fed the multitude. One time there were five thousand men present and the next with four thousand. This shouts to me that God is concerned with our day to day worries and cares. We are told that He even knows the number of hairs on our head.

I- The Situation:

In the first part of our text (*verses 30-34*) Jesus takes His disciples to a deserted place to rest but is followed by a crowd of what will ultimately be upward of 10,000. (5,000 men were fed not counting women and children) While there in Galilee He teaches them because He sees their spiritual need and lostness. It gets late in the day and the disciples recognize that the people need food. *Mark 6:35 And when the day was now far spent, his disciples came unto him, and said, This is a desert place, and now the time is far passed: 36 Send them away, that they may go into the country round about, and into the villages, and buy themselves bread: for they have nothing to eat.*

II- The Inadequate of Men:

We must remember that the setting of this is shortly after the disciples had returned from a very successful trip out two by two in which they preached, cast out demons and healed the sick. Jesus told them to feed the people.

Mark 6:37 He answered and said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they say unto him, Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread, and give them to eat?

In the gospel of John that Philip was the one who said this about the amount of money they had to buy bread. *John 6:7 Philip answered him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little.*

As the disciples had a common purse in which they carried their little property, consisting of the donations of their friends and money to be given to the poor (compare Joh_12:6; Mat_26:8-9; Luk_8:3), it is not improbable that they had at this time about this sum in their possession. Philip - for it was he who asked the question Joh_6:7 - asked, with a mixture of wonder and agitation, whether they should take all their little property and spend it on a single meal? And even if we should, said he, it would not be sufficient to satisfy such a multitude. It was implied in this that, in his view, they could not provide for them if they wished to, and that it would be better to send them away than to attempt it.

Barnes Notes

One thing that we need to become aware of out of this situation is that when men's means end God begins. When we exhaust all our resources than God is only beginning to

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dip into His. These men did not have any way that they could have fed the thousands, they had limited resources but God had all of creation.

In the second account in Mark 8 when Jesus fed the 4000 men plus we see that Jesus is very much aware of our human weaknesses. *Mark 8:1-3 In those days the multitude being very great, and having nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples unto him, and saith unto them, 2 I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat: 3 And if I send them away fasting to their own houses, they will faint by the way: for divers of them came from far.*

He dared not send them away because of the weakness of the human flesh. Does this weakness trouble us? I say it should not. Remember what the apostle Paul said in *2 Corinthians 12:9-10 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.*

Perhaps you are in the midst of something that makes the coming of another day seem daunting. Perhaps you need to know that Jesus is the one who can when we can't. The disciples were overwhelmed with the crowd. Peter is recorded in *John 6:9 There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?*

III- The Endless Supply:

Hear well beloved what *Psalms 50:10* says, *For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills.*

May I suggest that God has an endless storehouse from which to supply our needs? Jesus had them enquire and take an inventory of the available food in both of these situations. On one occasion they had five loaves of bread and two fishes, the other time seven loaves of bread. You may recall the story of Elijah that went to the house of the widow who only had enough flour and oil to make one more meal and then her and her son was going to die. God supplied an endless supply of oil and flour out of that barrel.

Jesus tells them to take an inventory of what they had. They found the five loaves of bread and two fish on one occasion and seven loaves on the other. *Mark 6:38 He saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? go and see. And when they knew, they say, Five, and two fishes.*

Mark 8:5 And he asked them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven.

What would a small lunch from this small boy do to feed the multitude? May I suggest is not how much we have but how much of what we have that we allow God to use. Notice what happened when God breathed His breath of provision on the small amount.

Jesus gave instructions to them. *Mark 6:39 And he commanded them to make all sit down by companies upon the green grass. 40 And they sat down in ranks, by hundreds,*

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and by fifties. 41 And when he had taken the five loaves and the two fishes, he looked up to heaven, and blessed, and brake the loaves, and gave them to his disciples to set before them; and the two fishes divided he among them all. 42 And they did all eat, and were filled. He does the same both times. He arranged the crowds but we must be sure we notice that Jesus used the hands of others to bless the crowd. He gave to His followers and they in turn gave it to the crowd. They all ate that were filled. No one remained hungry.

I have heard a lot of sermons in my life but one that stuck with me was on a preacher preached in the mountains. It was about the little boy who shared his lunch which Jesus took and blessed other. There were three simple points. I met a man, I shared what I had and He used it to bless others. Simply but profound.

IV- The Overflow:

I have often thought about why there were leftovers? *Mark 6:43 And they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments, and of the fishes.*

Mark 8:8 So they did eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken meat that was left seven baskets.

There were 12 baskets one time and 7 the other. Certainly God blesses us and we know that His potential is beyond our need. We know that there was a basket for each of the 12 disciples who help distribute the food that day. Perhaps it was to teach us if we allow God to bless others by allowing Him to use us that He will provide a blessing for us beyond expectations.