

**\*READ Mark 6:41,42\***

If you have ever viewed a sporting event where one of the teams has really dominated the game on their way to a victory, then you might expect for the coach to take the press conference chair and do nothing but speak really highly of his/her team's performance. However, most of us who have seen this play out week after week realize that while the coach might offer up a few words of praise for a good performance, it doesn't take long before the coach will start in on things that his/her team needs to continue to improve on for the next week. The best teams and best coaches in the world refuse to be satisfied with their current success, and they're constantly looking towards continued improvement and the next milestone to achieve.

I can certainly relate to that type of mindset when it comes to various things within my life. I'm constantly reading and trying to think about how I can improve my preaching and presentation. I don't want to be satisfied which can quickly turn into complacency. I find myself reading more than I ever have in my life because I'm not satisfied with my current level of knowledge on the Bible and what is found within it. And every time I learn something new, I am quickly turning around to find that next new thing to learn that can help in my teaching and preaching.

Even in things that are less important, I still find that I am rarely satisfied with where I currently am or what I have done. You all know that fishing has been something that I have come to enjoy this year, and it has been very satisfying searching around for new bodies of water and catching a new personal best. Though there was a great sense of accomplishment and satisfaction in catching my personal best of a 4lb largemouth bass...I know there are fish out there that are much bigger than that and that even some people here this morning have caught some of those big fish. I'm glad to have that 4lb bass as a notch on my belt, but I'm not satisfied! I want to find even more bodies of water and catch even larger fish in my life.

More that likely, I would venture a guess to say that many of you have experienced those same type of feelings in your life in various areas and endeavors. Each of us seem to be constantly looking for the next big thing that will bring a new level of satisfaction to our minds. Maybe we achieve to a high position in the work place, but after a while we're no longer satisfied and we look for the next promotional opportunity. It might be that we go from relationship to relationship looking for that one person who will bring true satisfaction to ourselves, but we just can't seem to find it. Or it could be that we continue to make purchase after purchase of the next greatest thing...and yet nothing we buy brings us the truest sense of satisfaction.

While satisfaction might be experienced for a time, the reality is that we are often left feeling dissatisfied with what we have in this life because there is almost always something bigger and greater out there that we simply haven't found yet. So often in this life, we are simply left dissatisfied with whatever is before us because there always seems to be something missing or lacking.

This is especially true whenever it come to finding satisfaction in our purpose or meaning in this life. So many people go through this life never feeling the wonderful sense of real satisfaction because they never feel as if they know why they are here or what they are supposed to be doing here. Even those who do the greatest deeds of philanthropy or kindness for others are still left knowing that there is nothing they can do to truly rid this world of pain, heartache, and even death. Therefore, dissatisfaction is left abounding in this world.

That is...unless we recognize that true satisfaction can be found in the One who came to bring satisfaction in the truest sense to the people of earth through Him and His incredible love, grace, and mercy. The Incredible Jesus, the great Servant of God came to bring people what this world can never give us, true satisfaction for these greatest needs and desires that we have. Mark's Gospel is continually giving us evidence for Jesus as the Messiah and leading us to know what He came to this earth to do, and this morning's study in **Mark 6:30-56** will continue to do just that. Let's read this text together, consider what takes place, draw some Old Testament connections, and leave recognizing that ***In Jesus, our greatest needs will always be fully satisfied.***

## Mark 6:30-56

### A. The Compassion Of Jesus (Mark 6:30-34)

1. The compassion of our Lord is truly on full display within these first few verses of this text. Remember that the first portion of this chapter details Jesus's disciples embarking on their own teaching journeys that would be full of their own difficulties. They would be going from city to city to teach the good news of the Kingdom, and remember that Jesus warned them that they would face a great deal of rejection. As a result, these men would not only be physically drained from their journeys, but they would more than likely be emotionally drained from them, as well. As they come back into the presence of Jesus, let's notice that Jesus doesn't immediately set out back to work with His inner circle.
2. Instead, we find Jesus, after allowing them to speak of what all they experienced, telling them that it was time to go back into the wilderness ("**remote place**" is the same Greek word translated as "**wilderness**" in **1:4**) for some rest. One writer said of this instruction of Jesus, "*If you don't come apart and rest, you will come apart.*" The Master knew the students were in need of some much needed R&R, and they were not going to get it in their current location because "*many people were coming na going, and they did not even have time to eat.*"
3. Therefore, Jesus leaves with the Apostles and begins a trip towards that remote place in the wilderness. Unfortunately for their plans, many of the people in the crowd saw them leaving and began to follow them on foot and headed towards the place where they would make land. Mark even tells us that the crowd arrived and were waiting on Jesus when He arrived back on shore. Instead of Jesus being frustrated that there would be no rest for the weary, we find Him having "**compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd.**"
4. That type of language ought to be very familiar to us because of our studies earlier in the year from the prophet Isaiah. Within his prophetic writings, Isaiah rebukes the leaders of Israel because they had failed in their leadership positions. They had failed to properly shepherd the sheep. "***These dogs have fierce appetites; they never have enough. And they are shepherds who have no discernment; all of them turn to their own way, every last one for his own profit.***" (**Isaiah 56:9-12**) Because of this persistent lack of leadership, the people were now in a very sorry state. They were lost and in need of true leadership that would point them back to God. Mark clearly shows us that Jesus understands that He would be their Good Shepherd who would lead them back to God. Again, this is something that Isaiah prophesied would take place. (**Isaiah 40:9-11**) Mark clearly wants the recipients of his Gospel account to recognize that Jesus is the fulfillment of Isaiah's writings, and that is seen in the fact that Jesus's compassion on the people leads Him to begin teaching instead of seeking rest in this moment. He knew He needed to teach to make up for the failures of the leaders of the people.

### B. The Provision Of Jesus (Mark 6:35-44)

1. The day begins to fade as Jesus has taken the time to teach the people, and the disciples realize that it is time to eat so the crowds need to be dismissed. However, Jesus very oddly responds with "***You give them something to eat.***" The Apostles obviously don't take Jesus seriously since they almost sarcastically ask Him if they should go and buy 200 denarii worth of bread for the large mass of people. This must have been a sarcastic response since that amount of money would equal an entire year's worth of wages for most people. They must have been thinking that Jesus was crazy, and again this isn't the first time a situation like this is seen within Scripture.
2. Way back in **Numbers 11**, the children of Israel find themselves in their own wilderness without desired food. God had provided manna to them, but they complained that they only wanted meat like they had back in Egypt. The Lord becomes angry with them and their complaining,

and he becomes angry as does Moses. Moses is so frustrated that he goes to the Lord and asked why He has made things so difficult on Moses. He complains that there is no way that he would be able to find enough meat for the people to be satisfied, and the people are going to end up killing him. The Lord responds that the people would be given meat that they would be able to eat for an entire month, but Moses still takes issues because he doesn't see anyway that there would be enough meat with the animals that they had to feed them for a month. The Lord answers Moses with His own frustrations, *"Is the Lord's arm weak? Now you will see whether or not what I have promised will happen to you."* (**Numbers 11:23**) The Lord's promise surely does come to pass as He provides quail as meat for the people.

3. Here in **Mark 6** we have an echo of that story as Jesus miraculously provides for the people with the seemingly insufficient five loaves of bread and two fish. He has the people sit down in groups and they are able to do so on the green grass. This might seem like an insignificant detail to us, but again I believe this is purposeful by Mark to draw the well-studied reader's mind back to the prophet's writing in **Isaiah 35:1,2** where it is said the the coming of the Messiah would lead to times of great restoration when the glory of the Lord appears, and I'm suggesting to you that this statement by Mark is a strong allusion to these times being upon them. Jesus has this crowd seated on a green meadow in the middle of the wilderness.

### C. The Glory Of Jesus (**Mark 6:45-52**)

1. Upon the conclusion of this miraculous meal, Mark says *"Immediately, He made His disciples get into a boat and go ahead of Him to the other side..."* The fact that Mark uses the word *"immediately"* tells me that we ought to connect what we are about to read with what just took place, and we're going to see how that is done in just a moment. The narrative tells us that while Jesus has sent His disciples ahead of Him, He goes alone up on top of the mountain to pray and we can assume to allow Himself some time to recover from what must have been a long day. That night as the disciples are out on the water in their boat, they again come across a great wind storm that is making it difficult for them to row.
2. Jesus sees this taking place during the night, and early in the morning He begins to walk across the water towards where He is going. Mark tells us that He *"wanted to pass by them."* This might seem like another strange detail to add until we consider that this phrase again can be found in the Old Testament, and coincidentally, or not, we just read about one of these passages in our Walking Through HlStory study this past week. In **Exodus 33:12-23**, God has told Moses that He will not go before them as they make their way to the promised land, but Moses pleads with God that He would lead the way. God obliges to Moses's request, and then he makes one more. He asks that God would show His glory to Moses once again, and He again obliges with the placing of Moses in the cleft of the rock and passing by in such a way that Moses can see His back.
3. A similar story is found in **I Kings 18:9-18** where Elijah is at the end of his rope as a prophet, and he emphatically states that he has had enough and desires for the Lord to take his life. He finds himself in the wilderness when the Lord appears to him and asked why he is where he is. He again states his exhaustion as a faithful prophet because of the people's rebellion and seeking for his life. God tells him to go up on the mountain into the Lord's presence, and there the text tells us that *"The Lord passed by."* The power of the Lord was on full display as a mighty wind, earthquake, and fire passed by before Elijah heard the soft whisper of the Lord. God's mighty strong arm was on full display as He passed by followed by these incredible natural powers. Both Moses and Elijah experienced the glory of the Lord and it would invigorate both of them to go on in their continued journeys of faithfulness.

4. Therefore, this intention of Jesus to pass by the Apostle's boat seems to be an opportunity for these men to see the power of their Lord in the midst of the storm and trust in Him as they followed Him to shore. But sadly instead...we see them flip out! They cry out in terror thinking that Jesus is a ghost, but He calls out to them and tells them, *"Have courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."* He gets into the boat with them and the winds cease to blow leaving the Apostles completely astounded. We might not blame them too much for such a reaction considering that they were seeing someone walk on water, but Mark doesn't seem to give them much of a pass. Instead, he calls them out by writing, *"They were completely astounded, because they had not understood about the loaves. Instead their hearts were hardened."* I don't know about you, but that seems to be a strong slap in the face to the Apostles to say that they were possessing hard hearts at this moment and didn't understand. Yet, it simply shows us that these men were human and flawed even as we are. Yet, what did they not understand?
5. Mark tells us that they didn't understand about the loaves. This shows us that Jesus didn't just do miracles to show His power or to do good things, but He performed miracles as moments where He wanted to make a point or teach something. In the miraculous feeding of the 5,000, I am convinced that Jesus (and Mark by the way he sets up the story) is trying to show the people and the Apostles that He had come to be what the people were in most need of...a true Shepherd and Leader. Before their very eyes, Jesus had come to fulfill the role of the Good Shepherd as David wrote about in **Psalms 23**. He was going to be the One who led His people/sheep into every good blessing. Their needs would be fully supplied. Their weakness would be strengthened. Their fears would be alleviated by His immense power. Yet, His own disciples missed it! They were unfortunately caught up in the same mindset as the stubborn and rebellious Israelites as they are described in **Psalms 78:17-20**. The unfaithful Israelites refused to see the true goodness and power of God as a provider of every need, and the Apostles were falling into the same trap of thinking, and it would be quite some time before they truly figured things out.

#### D. The Healing Of Jesus (Mark 6:53-56)

1. Thankfully, many of the people of the surrounding areas understood the goodness and power of Jesus and continued to flock to Him. They came from all around bringing their sick so that they might lay them at His feet and only even touch the end of His robe that they might be healed...and they certainly were healed! These people had great needs, and they knew those needs could be fulfilled and satisfied in Jesus! They came with nothing but belief in His power and they were satisfied.
2. This surely should lead us to think about two final texts in Isaiah. First, consider **Isaiah 35:3-7** which speaks the great restoration that would come at the hands of the glory of the Lord being revealed. **(35:2)** Everyone who was stricken would be healed and the desolate land would be restored and renewed. Yet, what would be the price of such restoration? What would it cost those who desired to experience such a blessing? This leads us finally to **Isaiah 55:1-3** where the prophet speaks of the thirsty and hungry coming to the Lord with nothing to offer and yet finding satisfaction in Him because of the permanent covenant that would be made based upon the faithful kindness of David. Those who were left unfulfilled and dissatisfied with what the world was offering could find true satisfaction in the Messiah of God...Jesus of Nazareth who had come to bring such real satisfaction.
3. What we see in this text only shows us a glimpse of His power. He was coming to do so much more than fill bellies and heal the sick and lame. He came to give perfect peace and satisfaction through the forgiveness of sins. In Him, our greatest needs would be fully satisfied without a single thing lacking.

## Application Questions

### A. Am I tired of never finding true satisfaction in the things of the world?

1. Am I truly tired of realizing time and time again just how little this world has to offer me? Do I find myself frustrated over and over again with the dissatisfaction of the things of this world? Wealth, experience, status, and the like are all fleeting because there is always something to which we have not attained. There is always more wealth to obtain, a new experience to be had, and a higher status to achieve. This life is only a rat race in which we reach a new height only to quickly desire more.
2. Yet in Jesus...we truly have all that we could ever want because we recognize that what He offers is so much more than what this world seeks to offer. What good does wealth, experience, and status truly do us in the long run? None of those things are able to be exchanged for the forgiveness of sins, justification, sanctification, and hope in eternal life. They have zero eternal value, and the reality is that wealth, experience, and status are fleeting. They will all one day pass away, and once they are gone...our standing before the Lord in righteousness will remain and our hope will be realized. Even if we truly have nothing in this life outside of the hope of eternity with the Lord...we can still live a truly satisfied life.

### B. Am I willing to pursue Jesus as the only true source of satisfaction in this life?

1. Yet, that satisfaction will only be experienced if we are willing to do as the crowds were doing in this text. They all continued to pursue Jesus. They realized their great needs, and they were determined to search out and find the One who they believed could bring real and true satisfaction. They didn't simply wait for Jesus to come to them, but they sought Him out with open arms because they knew only He could give what was truly needed.
2. Which is more than can be said about the Apostles. Here they were with front row seat so the greatest experience this world could offer in seeing the Messiah, God in the flesh at work, and yet they were hard hearted and not able to comprehend the gravity of what they were seeing. The question is which group will we be like? Will we pursue Jesus because we recognize Him as the only true source of real lasting satisfaction in life? Or will we harden our hearts and continue to pursue satisfaction in those things that will truly never bring it? The choice is ours, but I do hope it has been impressed upon us this morning the simple and yet profound fact that Jesus is the only One who brings true satisfaction for our greatest needs.

**Main Point/Conclusion:** *In Jesus, our greatest needs will always be fully satisfied.*

What a great life we would have if we would all simply stop seeking satisfaction and fulfillment in all of the wrong places. So often we are our own worst enemies because we allow ourselves to be tricked by the evil one into thinking that this world has things that can actually bring true satisfaction. The reality is that even the best things of this world will also come up short if for nothing else than the fact that they will end. Even the things that bring us the most joy currently will one day be gone because of the enemy of death. Therefore, we must stop putting our hope of fulfillment and satisfaction in anything else in this life other than the fact that Jesus came, died for us, and was raised so that we might believe upon Him and gain immortality in the next life. Friends, true fulfillment and satisfaction can only be found in Jesus and knowing that we'll live with Him forever because of the grace, mercy, forgiveness, and renewal that He brings. May we stop seeking satisfaction in all of the wrong place and realize truly that it all begins and ends with Jesus, the great Servant who came to bring true and real satisfaction of which nothing found within this world can beat.