

“You Give Them Something to Eat”

«Դուք Տուէք Աստուծոյ որ Ուտեն»

Mark 6:30-44

We live in a very advanced world, yet we have not solved the problem of hunger in the world. According to the UNICEF’s statistic, nearly 10% of the world’s population – up to 811 million people went to bed hungry in 2020.¹ And I don’t have recent numbers when the Russia-Ukraine war affected the oil prices. Everything is going up. We are witnessing how prices are jumping in our market. Imagine how it affects countries who are already living in poverty. My topic today is not about the tragedy of the hunger in the world or in the US and the reasons that lead to this tragic phenomenon, but a topic relates with the human phenomenon, “sheep without a shepherd.”

We are reading the Gospel according to Mark. Last week Badveli Kevin covered the story of the beheading of John the Baptist. He described how corrupt was the royal life; and, he did emphasize how costly was and is to be a disciple of Jesus. We are continuing to read chapter 6 where Jesus will feed 5000 people. What can we learn from this passage?

Jesus’ family rejected him. That did not stop him from sending the twelve, his new family, to the mission field. Their mission was successful. They came back **tired** but with **great stories** from the mission field. They all needed a **break**.

The apostles returned to Jesus and told him all that they had done and taught. ³¹ And he (Jesus) said to them, “Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while.” For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. (Mark 6:30-31 ESV)

Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, “Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.” (NIV)

But the people did not leave Jesus and the disciples alone. They followed them. In fact, they arrived to the **desolate, (remote)** place before Jesus and the disciples did! **“Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they ran there on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them”** (Mark 6:33 ESV). Jesus and the disciples needed rest and renewal. But the crowd was chasing them.

- I love what William Barclay says in his commentary on Mark:
“The Christian life is a continuous going into the presence of God from the presence of men and coming out into the presence of men from the presence of God. It is like the rhythm of sleep and work. We cannot work unless we have our time of rest; and sleep will not come unless we have worked until we are tired.”²

Even though Jesus needed rest, he was moved with compassion towards them.

“When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had *compassion* on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. And he began to teach them many things” (Mark 6:34 ESV).

The Greek word for **compassion** is used in the NT only of Jesus. Here we find that his compassion means **“teaching them many things”**³. His first response to their need is to teach them. “Jesus has compassion on the crowd and cares for the leaderless people of Israel by giving them first an abundance of teaching, then an abundance of food.”⁴

- Jesus saw a group of people who **were lost**.
- Sheep without a shepherd means they do not know where to go for green pastures (food).
- Sheep without a shepherd means they do not have protection from danger (evil).
- Sheep without a shepherd means they were searching for direction (lost).
 - Food:** economy, business, money...
 - Evil:** Spiritual warfare, lost in wrong ideologies, drugs and alcohol, addictions..
 - Lost:** life without meaning, no purpose. Just exist for pleasure...

Do you find “sheep without a shepherd” in our culture today?

How about our youth at the schools? Who is guiding them?

Jesus had compassion. He taught them. Now time was running during the day, and there was no McDonald’s available. In addition to reaching out to their spiritual need, Jesus went another mile to assist them in their physical need.

And he began to teach them many things.³⁵ **And when it grew late, his disciples came to him and said, “This is a desolate place, and the hour is now late.”**³⁶ **Send them away to go into the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat.”**³⁷ **But he answered them, “You give**

them something to eat.” And they said to him, “Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give it to them to eat?” (Mark 6:34-37 ESV)

I am not sure what the reaction of the disciples in this situation was. They were on their way to a **remote area** so they could be alone and **rest**. Now, they are facing people who spent all day **listening to Jesus**; then they are facing a practical problem: **all are hungry**. Who will feed these people?

Question: Do you have a husband who brought an unexpected guest to have dinner with you? How do you think our wives will feel when we bring along unexpected guests?

These guests were 5000. **The logical solution** was to send them away to nearby homes so each one managed his/her own food. **That is the human solution; that was the disciples’ solution**; in fact, this would have been my solution as well.

“This is a desolate place, and the hour is now late. Send them away to go into the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat.” (Mark 6:35-36)

I love Jesus’ answer. **“YOU GIVE THEM SOMETHING TO EAT.”**

I believe Jesus is teaching the disciples, his audience, and us today that our **provider is our Heavenly Father**. It started from the **Garden of Eden** where God provided for His newborn creation; then **out of Egypt** in the **desert** He provided manna; how about in **the desert when Satan tempted** the hungry Jesus. Satan failed and God provided food for Jesus (and the angels were ministering to him. Mark 1:13).

What is going on? are you serious?????

This is the reality of following Jesus; your life will never be dull.

Seriously, think about it; being a disciple is costly, being a disciple is full of taking streps of faith.

³⁸ And he said to them, “How many loaves do you have? Go and see.” And when they had found out, they said, “Five, and two fish.” ³⁹ Then he commanded them all to sit down in groups on the green grass. ⁴⁰ So they sat down in groups, by hundreds and by fifties. (Mark 6:38-40 ESV)

Jesus said to the disciples, **“Go find the food.”** They did find it. Five loaves of bread and two fish. A ridiculous solution facing an impossible situation.

I think God wants our **“limited resources”**, whatever we have.

41 And taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing and broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples to set before the people. And he divided the two fish among them all. (Mark 6:41 ESV)

- **First, Jesus asked the disciples to organize the group:**

“So they sat down in groups, by hundreds and by fifties.”(Mark 6:40)

- In the same way **Moses organized his people** in the wilderness (Exodus 18:21,25).

- The bread and fish parallel to manna and quail in the desert.

- Jesus is the provider to the people in the desert what Moses could not.

- Jesus asked them to sit on green grass. How interesting that they were in desert, and we find green grass. They know Psalm 23 by heart. The Lord is my shepherd, in green pastures....

- The arrangement certainly recalls **God’s miraculous provision for Israel in the wilderness.**

Now Jesus is the New Covenant. God is repeating his provision through Jesus, the New Covenant.

- **Then Jesus blessed the food.** Most likely Jesus prayed what any Jew would pray those days:

“Praise be to you, O Lord our God, king of the world, who makes bread to come forth from the earth, and who provides for all that you have created”.⁵

How about the words Mark used to describe the banquet?

“...Took the bread... looked to heaven....

He broke the bread...Blessing... he divided the food between them...”

take, break, divide... this is the new covenant.

Isn’t this preparation for the last supper?

-By the way, how different is this banquet than Herod’s banquet that was discussed last Sunday?

“Jesus’ banquet for the rabble of Galilee **foreshadows the messianic banquet** and **contrasts** with the **drunken debauchery** of Herod’s feast. Herod’s feast, with its

exotic fanfare and dancing girls, cannot ultimately satisfy human hunger... Only the spread offered by Jesus in the desert can satisfy human needs. Jesus brings life-giving bread with an abundance of leftovers. His disciples feed and serve others.”⁶

-Something wonderful happened.

⁴² And they all ate and were satisfied. ⁴³ And they took up twelve baskets full of broken pieces and of the fish. ⁴⁴ And those who ate the loaves were five thousand men. (Mark 6:42-44 ESV)

The disciples distributed the food, and it was abundant. **Twelve baskets of leftovers.** Why 12? The tribes of Israel are replaced by the new family of Jesus, the 12 disciples.

So, this is much more than feeding the 5000. Please do not stop at the miracle of the multiplication of food. Yes, Jesus can provide. Yes, God is Jehovah Jireh, the Provider. These events were deeply imbedded in Israel’s history. **Adam failed, God worked through Abraham, and eventually through Israel, to be “the new Adam” and restored the society.** They failed. Jesus came and took the role of Israel to fulfill what God started with the Israelites, to restore humanity, to save humanity, to save the universe. Jesus became the New Adam and the new humanity.

Application:

I have three questions for all of you:

1. You give them something to eat. Do you give?

Jesus could do a miracle without asking disciples to bring whatever they had. He did not. Jesus took whatever the disciples brought.

Am I keeper of my brother? Yes, I am, we are.

And believe me we have plenty that we can share and pass to others.

2. What motivates you to serve?

When someone knocks your door, do you see opportunity to be hands of Jesus? Jesus served because of **His compassion.** He said, **“I came to serve and not be served.”**

Jesus was teaching his disciples what it means to have **compassion.**

Because Jesus does, we will do as well. Jesus should motivate me to serve. I have to remind myself again and again, especially when I am tried from serving.

He is our teacher... and our example

We all need to learn to have compassion. Only Jesus can give us compassion. His love *hesed, agape*, his unconditional love can give us compassion. When I am filled with His love and experienced his compassion, I can have His compassion in me.

When we serve, we are representing Jesus. Not our might, or strength.

3. What do we serve?

Jesus asked Peter many times, **“Do you love me?, then feed my sheep.”**

The divine banquet had two parts.

-Food for heart and mind

-Food for our bodies.

-Jesus fed the people with His Word. Then He fed them with physical bread and food. Together they make up the true feast, which is the Word of Christ and Body of Christ. This will satisfy us, and nothing else.

4. Where are the lost Sheep?

All around us. Do we see it? Do we care? Do we have time? Do we want to spend time with them?

Video...

We need those eyeglasses that can be given to us only by Jesus.

1. <https://data.unicef.org/resources/sofi2021/#:~:text=Nearly%20one%2Dtenth%20of%20the,world%20hunger%20increased%20last%20year.>

Further, it is projected that around 660 million people may still face hunger in 2030, 30 million more people than in a scenario in which the pandemic had not occurred, due to lasting effects of COVID-19 on global food security. The setback makes the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goal for zero hunger and ending all forms of malnutrition more challenging.

The report indicates that progress has been made for some forms of malnutrition, but the world is not on track to achieve any global nutrition targets by 2030. Globally, 44 percent of infants under 6 months of age were exclusively breastfed in 2019 – up from 37 percent in 2012 but the practice varies considerably among regions. Child malnutrition still persists at an alarming rate – an estimated 149 million children were stunted, 45 million were wasted and 39 million were overweight in 2020. The report presents new projections of potential additional cases of child stunting and wasting due to COVID-19. Based on a conservative scenario, it is projected that an additional 22 million children in low- and middle-income countries will be stunted, an additional 40 million will be wasted between 2020 and 2030 due to the pandemic. Comprehensive and urgent efforts are required to address the detrimental effects of the pandemic and achieve the 2030 global targets.

Overcoming hunger and malnutrition in all its forms, including undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies and overweight, is about more than securing enough food to survive: what people – and particularly children – eat must also be nutritious. Over the past year, COVID-19 — and the unprecedented measures to contain it have exposed and intensified the vulnerabilities and inadequacies of global food systems. Recognizing that food systems

bear a critical responsibility for the nutritional quality, safety, affordability, and sustainability of diets, this year's report outlines six pathways to transform food systems and achieve healthy diets for all.

2. William Barclay, *The Daily Study Bible , the Gospel of Mark* P155

3. James Edwards, *The Gospel According to Mark*. p191

4. Hooker (*Mark*, 165) comments: "Jesus has compassion on the crowd and cares for the leaderless people of Israel by giving them first an abundance of teaching, then an abundance of food." One can translate 6:34 that Jesus taught them "at length" instead of "many things" (see the use of *polla* in 5:23, 43; 6:20; 9:26). From NIV Commentary on Mark. p 253

4. James Edwards, *The Gospel according to Mark*. p192

5. David E. Garland, *The NIV Application Commentary*, Mark P 254 "Jesus' banquet for the rabble of Galilee foreshadows the messianic banquet and contrasts with the drunken debauchery of Herod's feast for the high officials, captains, and the leading men of Galilee (6:22). Herod's feast, with its exotic fanfare and dancing girls, cannot ultimately satisfy human hunger. Herod serves up only death, with the head of John the Baptizer brought to him on a platter (6:28). His lackeys bind (6:17) and behead (6:27) others. Only the spread offered by Jesus in the desert can satisfy human needs. Jesus brings life-giving bread with an abundance of leftovers. His disciples feed and serve others.