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It's Me, God

Mark 6:33-56

INTRODUCTION

If you grew up in the first century in a Jewish family in Jesus' time, you would have known this story:

[read Ex 16]

If you were an aspiring Jewish religious leader in the time of Jesus, you would have known this story:

[read Ezekiel 34:1-31]

Now, imagine yourself knowing these things since you were young and in addition you live with the further expectation that God would someday send a prophet like Moses, a good shepherd like the one of Ezek 34, who would right all the wrong of this world and establish His Kingdom on earth, just as He intended it. Not only was this an expectation that someday..., but **some of you** also carried the hope closely seeing it as not some abstract promise, but that the King of God's Kingdom would come even while **you** are alive. That He would come not just to relieve your people's pain someday, but that He would come **now** and deliver **you now**.

Some of you would have had that urgent thought. Others probably just had a hope that someday in some way...who can tell for sure?!

Now, listen to the events that took place amongst the Jewish people in the times of Jesus. Turn with me to Mark 6...

[Catch people up to the story line]

[Then read Mark 6:33-44]

[Prayer for the reading of God's Word]

We have an apple tree in our back yard. This past fall the kids from our community group liked to pick the apples -- we are talking buckets of apples. That tree helped me organize my thoughts this week. The kids picked the apples that were hanging low -- right there for the taking. Some concerned parents asked if it was OK for the kids to pick so many. It certainly was because there were so many more. From two feet back and two feet higher I could see more apples. If I had gotten up on my roof to clean my gutters, which I should have done before the rains so I didn't have to do it in the middle of the rains of the last couple of weeks, I would have seen from the roof that there indeed were even more apples higher up and deeper into the foliage. This morning we will see that this passage holds for us some easy pickings. Some apples that can only be seen by stepping back being a bit taller and some that you can only see from above. We'll do our best not to let any go to waste, but I'm sure we'll miss a few.

I. Insights from the Under the Tree

Lower Branches: Easy pickings: First Reading Gleanings. What we know by looking at the passage in it's closest context.

A. Jesus is Compassionate

1. His compassion was incited because they were "like sheep without a shepherd." I have wondered what their situation was that made Jesus look upon them with compassion? **What type of shepherding did He assess they needed?** Was it providing food for their bellies? Was it protection? Was it leadership? Was it all of those? A hint lies in the actions Jesus took as their compassionate shepherd.

V 34

2. **His compassion prompted Him first to teach them.** I find this significant and informative in my own pastoral shepherding. What is important is knowledge – particularly knowledge of God. I'm doing my job as a pastor if I'm teaching you the things Jesus was teaching them.

3. **His compassion also led Him to feed them physical food** using His disciples as servers.

B. Jesus is Lord

Jesus is still the capable Lord of all His disciples, even after He gave them authority and sent them out He did not intend them to continue in autonomy from Him but in relation to Him – a relationship of Lord and servant – an honored servant with authority, but a servant of the Lord non the less.

1. They still had more to learn from Him

a. **I get a kick out of the disciples telling Jesus what to do**

i. It's getting late, people getting hungry, send them away...

V 35

b. **I get a kick out of the disciples arguing with Him**

i. V.37

c. **He must get a kick out of it when we try to do the same thing**

2. They needed to learn that He was still the Lord -- their Lord.

a. **His wisdom was greater than theirs**

b. His plan was to be implemented, not theirs

i. "You give them something to eat!" (6:37)

3. They needed to learn to serve the people Jesus had compassion on

4. They needed to learn to under-shepherd in partnership with Jesus

V 38

a. V. 41 -- Ministry the Way It Ought to Be

- i. Let Him Lead
- ii. Inventory what you have
- iii. Bring it and give it to Jesus for God's Blessing
- iv. Receive it Back multiplied to accomplish His will
- v. Give it Away/Serve it up – again and again and again...
 1. ILLUS. – Karate Kid – Wax on...Wax off
 2. Can you imagine 5000 times, here's your bread and fish, here's your bread and fish, and here's your bread and fish

These are some of the accessible lessons.

But there are more apples on that tree. That is not all Jesus intended to communicate to His people. Some would be taking in this miraculous multiplication and seeing more than a miracle. We know that His disciples missed the main point because of what happens next. " Let's read the next few verses beginning in verse 45...

[Read 6:45-52]

II. Insights Gained from 2 Feet Up and 2 Feet Back

If we back out of this immediate passage and look up [body language example] at it in the context of God's unfolding story already recoded in the Old Testament, we gain significant insight – hopefully we gain the insights the disciples missed.

A. What Did They Miss?

1. They missed Jesus' true identity – They saw what He did and missed who He was, which is the main concern of Mark's gospel, which is why we are doing this series.

2. They missed that in Jesus God was fulfilling His OT promises

Pastor Culver has already helped us to see that **God reveals Himself and His intentions in "Types" which He later fulfills in "Antitypes."** He makes Promises and Fulfills them first partially, then later more completely. God's overall plan is to restore fallen creation into it's right relation to Him. Front and center in this plan is God's relationship with mankind. He wants the intimate, Father/Son relationship first experienced by Adam before the Fall and ultimately like the relationship He enjoys with Jesus, to be restored between Himself and you. God has demonstrated this intention in part in His OT dealings with His people by types of prophets and deliverers and kings all of which looked forward to the One Prophet, Savior and King who would come and dwell with man to do this work of restoration. God's big plan, the big story of which this story is just a part, is that Jesus is the One. He is breaking into time and

space and doing this work of restoring all of creation into the order God originally intended.

So some – from 2 feet back and 2 feet up -- would see this story in it's larger context; and when they did they would see not only the miracle, but more importantly, the **identity** of the miracle **worker**. They would see Jesus as the ultimate one who would come like Moses – Jesus the Son of God and King of the Kingdom of God and Savior and Provider for the People of God.

Let's unpack this just a bit by looking at just two of the OT events which stand behind the miracle of Jesus feeding the 5,000.

OT Picture 1 – God Provides Mana via Moses

Ex 16

a. God Developed in His People an Expectation that an Ultimate One Like Moses would come and do in full what Moses had done in part.

Mk 6:34

i. God used Moses to Feed His People as He Delivered Them from Egypt -- Exodus 16

ii. Moses asked that God would provide another person after him to care for the people so they would not be "like sheep without a shepherd" -- Numbers 27:15-17 esp. 17

15 Then Moses spoke to the LORD, saying, 16"May the LORD, the God of the spirits of all flesh, appoint a man over the congregation, 17 who will go out and come in before them, and who will lead them out and bring them in, so that the congregation of the LORD will not be like sheep which have no shepherd."

iii. In a similar exchange God assured Moses

"I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. 'It shall come about that whoever will not listen to My words which he shall speak in My name, I Myself will require it of him.'" Deut 18:18-19

iv. This language informs the understanding that God would bring One particularly anointed prophet/shepherd who would uniquely and ultimately deliver and provide for His people; speaking only what God would put in His mouth, One who we are all required to listen to.

b. Then came Jesus in this story as the fulfillment (antitype) of Moses the provider of bread to his sheep and the speaker of God's words.

i. [John 1:45](#) -- Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote--Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

ii. Peter, after the resurrection of Christ and the giving of the Holy Spirit, in his first sermon clearly identifies that Jesus is the ultimate fulfillment of the prophet who would come like Moses.

...and that He may send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you, whom heaven must receive until the period of restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time.

"Moses said, 'THE LORD GOD WILL RAISE UP FOR YOU A PROPHET LIKE ME FROM YOUR BRETHREN; TO HIM YOU SHALL GIVE HEED to everything He says to you.'" Acts 3:20-22

iii In John 5:45-47, Jesus alludes to this passage being fulfilled in Himself

45"Do not think that I will accuse you before the Father; the one who accuses you is Moses, in whom you have set your hope. 46"For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for he wrote about Me. 47"But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?"

iv. Keil&Delitzsch (K&D) understand Jesus to have Deut 18:18-19 in mind when He says in John 12:48-50

49"For I did not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me a commandment as to what to say and what to speak.

50"I know that His commandment is eternal life; therefore the things I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me."

v. K&D also credit Dt 18:18-19 as informing the Samaritans view in John 4: ²⁵The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming (He who is called Christ); when that One comes, He will declare all things to us." ²⁶Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am He."

By Jesus doing what Moses did more completely, some would have seen the fulfillment of the Messianic expectation God had developed in His people. With excitement some would have concluded, "This is the One!"

OT Picture 2 – God Would Provide a Shepherd for His People

a. Ezekiel 34:1-31 esp. 23

b. First David -- Type

c. Then Jesus -- Antitype

Larry Hurtado concludes: "...this allusion to these OT passages by Mark suggested to the reader that Jesus is here fulfilling the role of the longed-for king of Israel, the Messiah, who, like Moses, teaches (6:34) the people and feeds them... the event here is not to be seen simply as a great miracle, but also as full of particular prophetic significance. The way the event is described depicts Jesus as Messiah, the divinely sent provision for Israel and the fulfillment of OT prophecies of a future salvation."ⁱ

The disciples saw the miracle and missed who did it.

B. CAUTION: What They Missed, We Can Miss Too

The disciples apparently missed the Man behind the miracle. If they had not missed it, that is if they had seen Jesus as God's Messiah, the one who would restore all things to their perfect order, then they would neither have been frightened nor astonished to see Him walking on the water. They would have rather been filled with hope and excitement: Here is God's Savior coming close to us again in our struggles.

Their error/thick-headedness can be ours. If we don't take two steps back and go two feet up to the larger context.

Story of Kualoa Ranch -- chasing bull and Abraham bashing it on it's head with 4 inch steel pipe. We can be like that that stubborn thick-headed bull. Loose the bull and be teachable. Be one of "the some" who thoughtfully listen to God's disclosure.

From Gen to Rev we need to become readers of God's word.

1. Mark 6:53-56 – A Four Verse Test

a. From the passage itself we see Jesus as a super good healer.

b. From the OT background laid in type (Biblical Theology) we see the ultimate healer coming from God to restore a sick world. He demonstrates that power to those who would be drawn to faith in Him as God's Messiah and King because they hear that...

Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and report to John what you hear and see:

the BLIND RECEIVE SIGHT and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the POOR HAVE THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO THEM. "And blessed is he who does not take offense at Me." See Mat 11:4-6

But there are even more apples on that tree. We stand on this side of the cross and therefore have an even higher vantage point – we have more pieces of the puzzle, more chapters of the story.

III. The View from the Roof

A. The Rest of the Story

1. Regarding Jesus Healing Everyone Who Reached Out to Touch His Cloak

From “the roof” we see Jesus, the Son of God who has all authority in heaven and on earth and who can heal at His discretion any infirmity, and who will when He comes again bring all sickness to an end, but who has a bigger agenda than our physical health – the restoration of all things to the way God intends them to be.

2. Regarding Jesus in General (The Feeder of Thousands, The Walker on Water, The Healer of all)

- **Increasing Conflict with the Religious**
- **Last Supper with the Disciples**
- **Betrayal**
- **Arrest**
- **Scourging**
- **Crucifixion**
- **Resurrection**
- **Commissioning disciples to make disciples**
- **Charging of the disciples to be His witness...**
- **Ascension to the Right Hand of God**
- **The Promise of His return**

All of these events yet future to the story to date in the Gospel of Mark feed our understanding of each single passage and what Jesus was masterfully revealing about Himself in these events.

Conclusion & Communion Set Up

What Jesus did always served the communication of who He was! God did not intend the first century people just to be impressed that Jesus could do miracles. The greater purpose of all those demonstrations of power that He and His disciples did was what that communicated to the people of the day about who Jesus was: that Jesus was God’s Son, the One promised from of old who would restore all creation including and especially man to God his heavenly father.

Each of you are created in the image of God for the purpose of intimate relationship with Him; the relationship of an honoring child to his or her perfectly loving father. We are going to receive communion and we do it this morning full of preparatory images of Moses feeding the people of God with bread from heaven; of Jesus feeding 5,000...and images of Jesus Himself being the ultimate bread of life who came down out of heaven to meet our eternal needs.

Paul helps us prepare by instructing us in 1 Cor 11

So first let us prepare by letting the Holy Spirit search our hearts...

Then let us remember and thank God that He came to us in bodily form and laid that life down that we might live. [Take the bread and pray then distribute instructing to hold until the song is over and we'll take it all together]

Then let us remember also that with the cup that with the blood of Christ shed once for all the need for all the preparatory sacrifices of bulls and goats of the Old Covenant has come to an end because the blood of the Lamb of God is sufficient to take away the sins of all. [Take the cup pray for and distribute reminding to hold.]

During this worship song, remember Jesus and all He is and all He has done. Remember also that He wants us to commune with Him as He communes with the Father and the Spirit. As the worship song is played, confess your sins, receive His forgiveness, remember His love and His desire for intimacy with you. Hold the bread and the cup and we'll take it together at the end of the song.

Song

The bread, the body of Christ.
The cup, the blood of the new covenant in Christ's blood

Closing prayer.

Invitation to stay and fellowship.

Benediction

Mark 6:31ff

31 And He said to them,
"Come away by yourselves to a secluded place
and rest a while."

(For there were many people coming and going,
And they did not even have time to eat.)

32 They went away in the boat to a secluded place by themselves.

Five Thousand Fed

33 The people saw them going,
and many recognized them
and ran there together on foot from all the cities,
and got there ahead of them.

34 When Jesus went ashore,
He saw a large crowd,
and He felt compassion for them
because they were like sheep without a shepherd;

[Note Jesus' heart towards people]

and He began to teach them many things.

[Jesus assessment of people w/o understanding of Him.]

[Note how Jesus shepherded the people – w/teaching.]

35 When it was already quite late, His disciples came to Him and said,
"This place is desolate and it is already quite late;
36 send them away so that they may 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 spend two hundred denarii on bread
and give them something to eat?"

38 And He said to them,
"How many loaves do you have? Go look!"
And when they found out, they said, "Five, and two fish."

39 And He commanded them all to sit down by groups on the green grass.
40 They sat down in groups of hundreds and of fifties.

41 And He took the five loaves and the two fish,
and looking up toward heaven,
He blessed the food and broke the loaves
and He kept giving them to the disciples to set before them; [disciples learned to serve by
repetition]ⁱⁱ
and He divided up the two fish among them all.

Ministry with Jesus – The Way It Ought To Be

Jesus takes the little His few bring and multiplies it to meet the needs of many.

42 They all ate and were satisfied,
43 and they picked up twelve full baskets of the broken pieces, and also of the fish.
44 There were five thousand men who ate the loaves.

Jesus Walks on the Water

45 Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat
and go ahead of Him to the other side to Bethsaida,
while He Himself was sending the crowd away.
46 After bidding them farewell,
He left for the mountain to pray.
47 When it was evening, the boat was in the middle of the sea,
and He was alone on the land.
48 Seeing them straining at the oars,
for the wind was against them,
at about the fourth watch of the night
He came to them,
walking on the sea;
and He intended to pass by them.
49 But when they saw Him walking on the sea,
they supposed that it was a ghost, and cried out;

[their understanding of Jesus didn't explain this]

- 50 for they all saw Him and were terrified.
 But immediately He spoke with them and said to them,
 "Take courage;
 it is I,
 do not be afraid."
- 51 Then He got into the boat with them,
 and the wind stopped;
 and they were utterly astonished,
- 52 for they had not gained any insight from the incident of the loaves, [Note tie back to previous]
 but their heart was hardened. [What insight does this text suggest they should have gleaned?]

Healing at Gennesaret

- 53 When they had crossed over they came to land at Gennesaret,
 and moored to the shore.
- 54 When they got out of the boat,
 immediately the people recognized Him,
- 55 and ran about that whole country [Jesus recognized as healer]
 and began to carry here and there on their pallets those who were sick,
 to the place they heard He was.
- 56 Wherever He entered villages, or cities, or countryside,
 they were laying the sick in the market places,
 and imploring Him [What did the people look to Jesus for? Healing]
 that they might just touch the fringe of His cloak;
 and as many as touched it were being cured. [Universality of healing for those who touched.]

ⁱ Hurtado, Larry, New International Biblical Commentary: Mark, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, p.100

ⁱⁱ Karate Kid – Wax on, wax off... serve bread, serve fish... do that 5,000 times and you might remember that Jesus wants us to serve others using the little we have brought to Jesus and multiplied into more than enough to meet the needs of the people we are ministering to.