

Mark 6:33-56

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[0 : 00] Mark chapter 6. Our verse this morning will be Mark chapter 6 starting in verse 33. We'll go to the end of the chapter which gets us down to verse 56.

! In Matthew and Luke, we call Matthew, Mark, and Luke the synoptic gospels. They share a lot of similarities. There are a lot of parallel passages there. John tends to be unique in much of his accounts. Many of the things he records are not found elsewhere in gospel writings. But yet the account we read this morning is an account that is recorded in all four gospel accounts. You know it as the feeding of the 5,000. And because of that, we are very familiar with it. We have read it and heard it a multitude of times. And as always, when we come to a portion of scripture in which we are familiar, and we believe that we know the story, so to say, the challenge for the pastor and the challenge for the listener is not to let the familiarity of the text remove the weight of it.

[1 : 21] And we pray and we ask the Lord to give us fresh eyes to see and help us to understand it as we ought because we tend to read portions of scripture, at least I do, thinking, well, I know what this says.

And we kind of drone it out. And we don't come to it fresh. And we don't come to it saying, Lord, speak to me anew. But that's our cry this morning is while we have heard so often about this, may it be fresh upon our minds as we read it this morning.

So if you're physically able and desire to do so, would you join with me as we stand together and we read the word of God found in the sixth chapter of Mark. Let's go back and read verse 32. For it helps us to understand the context of what's taking place. If you remember, the apostles have just come back to Christ. He has sent them out in pairs, two by two.

They have ministered in his name, done great wonders in his name, came to him and reported to him. And so many people were around, they couldn't even eat. So Jesus said, let us go away to a secluded place. And it tells us in verse 32, They went away in the boat to a secluded place by themselves.

[2 : 32] 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. When Jesus went ashore, he saw a large crowd and he felt compassion for them because they were like sheep without a shepherd.

And he began to teach them many things. When it was already quite late, his disciples came to him and said, This place is desolate and it is already quite late. Send them away so that they may go into the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat.

But he answered them, You give them something to eat. And they said to him, Shall we go and spend 200 denarii on bread and give them something to eat?

And he said to them, How many loaves do you have? Go look. And when they found out, they said five and two fish. And he commanded them all to sit down by groups on the green grass.

And they sat down in groups of hundreds and of fifties. And he took the five loaves and the two fish and looking up toward heaven, he blessed the food and broke the loaves and kept giving them to the disciples to sit before them.

[3 : 40] And he divided up the two fish among them all. They all ate and were satisfied. And they picked up twelve full baskets of the broken pieces and also the fish. There were five thousand men who ate the loaves.

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. After bidding them farewell, he left for the mountain to pray.

When it was evening, the boat was in the middle of the sea. He was alone on the land, 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.

But when they saw him walking on the sea, they supposed that it was a ghost and cried out, for they all saw him and were terrified. But immediately Jesus spoke with them and said to them, Take courage, it is I, do not be afraid.

Then he got into the boat with them, and the wind stopped, and they were utterly astonished, for they had not gained any insight from the incident of the loaves, but their heart was hardened.

[4 : 46] When they had crossed over, they came to the land of Gennesaret, and moored on the shore. When they got out of the boat, immediately the people recognized him, and ran about the whole country, and began to carry here and there.

On their pallets, those who were sick to the place, they heard he was. And wherever he entered, villages or cities or countryside, they were laying the sick in the marketplaces, and imploring him that they might just touch the fringe of his cloak, and as many as touched it were being cured.

Let's pray. Father, we thank you for this day. We thank you for the opportunity we have of gathering together. We thank you that we can take time to be still, to read your word.

We pray now, Lord, that you would speak to our hearts and minds. We pray that it would be the truth of scripture that would captivate us, not the wisdom or the thought of man. Lord, may it be the very word of God that penetrates to the very depth of our being.

And may it mold us and shape us to become more and more like you for your glory. And we ask it all in Christ's name. Amen.

[5 : 52] You may be seated. I want you to see from this familiar text this morning what it looks like to welcome with compassion. To welcome with compassion.

Because here we find Christ doing that which he is modeling to the disciples and to us. How we ought to welcome others with a compassionate heart and a compassionate mind.

It is telling because we have understood that wherever Christ has went, popularity has followed him. He has made it his common practice to withdraw. We've read that elsewhere.

It is after withdrawing to a secluded place and praying all night that he chose the 12 apostles. He pulls away to be renewed and refreshed. We looked at that reality last week that we find our rest in Christ.

We separate ourselves for a time of renewal. But Christ, undoubtedly every moment that he pulled away, people would follow him and come after him.

[6 : 56] And we see this even in this text. With the understanding that the desire of the apostles was to be renewed and Christ was sending them to a secluded place yet the people saw where they were going and if you get the image correct, the people outran the boat and beat them there.

And they were waiting for them when they got to the place. Now, most of us have this thought. If I just need to get away, then just let me get away.

And yet, even while they were trying to get away so they would have time to sit down and eat, the crowd beat them to the shore and when they went on shore, they saw a multitude already waiting on them.

And so we ask ourselves, how do we respond to that? How did Christ respond to that moment?

Now, we are not Christ, but yet we are his ambassadors in the world he has put us in.

And therefore, he has called us to follow his example and he's called us to walk in his ways. And we see here that he welcomes them with compassion.

[8 : 08] One of the other gospel accounts when retelling this event tells us that Christ saw the crowd and welcomed them into his presence. It extends the thought and the meaning that the crowd was welcomed to be around him, not just endured by him.

That though he had left to a secluded place, he welcomed them around him while they were there. And with him were the apostles who needed to quote-unquote be renewed by a time of isolation.

We are told multiple things through this, some things that are unique. It is John that tells us that the loaves and the fish were brought by a young lad. We rejoice in the mother that packed that boy's lunch so that the Lord could use that lunch to feed that crowd.

We are told by Matthew that it was 5,000 men, not counting women and children. Therefore, the numbers could easily go from anywhere up to 20,000 individuals. We are told that it was during the Passover season by Luke, and we understand it is during the Passover season even with Mark,

because Mark tells us that the grass was green, which implies that it was during the springtime of the year, for the grass is not green any other time of the year in that region of the world except for during the springtime of the year in which Passover would fall.

So we know kind of historically the setting of how it all took place. We know much about this account. It is one of the rare occurrences that we know so many different aspects.

[9 : 40] This is why we rejoice in the reality that all four Gospels record it for us because we understand something a little bit different from each one of them. But there's one driving thing that is going on here.

Not only do we understand there is a supernatural, miraculous event that takes place. It is not just the bypassing of the normal production of grain and the normal production of fish, but rather it is a miraculous event of the feeding of the 5,000.

We will get to the feeding of the 4,000 in just another couple of chapters, and we will see that it is happening again. And what we understand here that this miraculous event is partnered with the walking on the water.

And it tells us that the reason that they did not understand who he was is because they did not yet understand the event that took place with the feeding of the 5,000. So it's so much more than just something historically happening.

The fact that it is a miracle is without doubt, but we don't want to just get caught up in the miraculous because in the midst of that stands the Savior, and we want to see how he responds.

[10 : 47] How does he welcome in this crowd with compassion? Not to say, well, come on in, I guess since you're already here, but rather to have a compassionate response and welcome them into his presence.

Three things. I'll tell you there are three things. I'll go ahead and tell you in advance. To welcome with compassion, you have to see, serve, and separate. You say, wow, we only have three, but I'm going to go ahead and tell you within those three, there are nine sub points.

Okay? You have to see, serve, and separate. Number one, we have to see that these are people before us.

We see them as people in need. What does it tell us? When 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.

So here we have this multitude who understands, and you know why they are running. They are running because the sick are healed, the lame are walking, the deaf hear, the mute speak. They're going because of everything he can do for them and all the miraculous deeds which they have seen.

[11 : 59] And they are going because they are needy people. I mean, let's just be honest. They are needy people. These are the ones that are drawn to Christ, and they're going because of what he can do.

They have heard of his name. The twelve have just went out in pairs and ministered in his names. It tells us that everyone kept hearing about Christ, which is a wonderful testimony for as they labored and worked, people did not hear about them, but people heard about him.

And so they heard all that Christ could do. And so we can't blame the crowds for wanting there, but what we want to see is how did he respond because he knew their hearts. And it says, and when Jesus went ashore, he saw a large crowd.

It's amazing in these passages which we read, there is this repetition of Christ seeing something. Jesus first sees the crowd. Here in just a moment, by the way, these aren't three differing accounts. This is really one big grand account recorded in three different stories. He sees the crowd. Later on, he sees the disciples in the boat, and then he will see all the sick being lain near him in the marketplace.

[13 : 13] But the one thing that we notice is that he sees them as people in need. It says that he saw the large crowd and had compassion for them because they weren't a hindrance or an inconvenience or even a cause for really just being upset.

He saw them as people in grand need, just like when the disciples are rowing in the midst of the storm. And he sees them, though they're in the middle of the sea.

And he sees them. He sees them not as people struggling, but he sees them as individuals in need. The first thing that we need to understand as we welcome with compassion is that we must see the people that are in need rather than seeing the inconvenience it may be.

And he sees them as people. And these people in need, he also understands that they are people with a problem to be addressed. And he began to address their problem.

We'll get to that in just a moment, how he addressed the crowd's problem. We are told in the other gospel accounts that he heals a multitude of them. We are not told in the gospel of Mark that he does any healing, but we understand we reconcile that with the others.

[14 : 44] It's surely part of their need were their physical ailments, which is what the majority of them believe they had, by the way, let's stop right here and just consider this. The distance by boat was a shorter distance, mileage-wise, than the distance around the shore.

Okay? Now, maybe Christ and his apostles weren't trying to speed the boat across the sea. They were just on a leisurely road to get there. But yet, to outrun a boat around the shore would require quite a bit of energy.

So let's just go ahead and state the obvious. If you can outrun the boat, you're not really that physically in need. They probably picked up some needy ones along the way.

But their greatest need was not the physical healing. And that's not what Christ sees first. That comes later. But he sees that there is a problem.

It says he has compassion for them for they are like sheep without a shepherd. And he's concerned about who they are as individuals. When he looks at the disciples, which he put into the boat, by the way, and we've already stated this reality that sometimes Christ sends us into the storms of life.

[15 : 57] He puts them into the boat and he sends them on ahead of him to the other side. And he who is the maker and creator of all things, and he who holds the storehouses of heaven in the palm of his hand, knows that the storm is coming and he sends them out.

But when he sees them straining at the oars, he doesn't say, oh, look at those weak fishermen. He says, these are people in need. By the way, that has something to do with the whole phrase and he intended to pass them by.

But we'll get to that in just a moment because he's meeting the need. You say, well, how does it meet their need when you walk right by them? We'll get to that in just a moment. Stay with me, okay? But he sees not only these people, but he sees there's a problem to be addressed.

How often do we really see people and we look and we see that here's a problem that they have that they can't address on their own? Which must lead us to the third thing that we see, and that is the possibility that we may be able to have an impact upon their lives, that we may be there for a reason that we may be introduced into that circumstance that we are put before these people with a problem because there's a possibility that God could use us in that moment.

Just this past week, it's a great testimony of how God just sovereignly works matters out. Last Sunday, I was walking through the halls and someone came and said, I met someone who knew you this week.

[17 : 20] And I said, really, who? And they stated a name. And I said, wow, haven't seen that individual in years. They said, yes, he's in the hospital. So I happened to be going. I just happened, right? That's how the Lord works. He just happened. So I heard that Sunday.

Well, Monday, I happened to be going to the very city that they were in the hospital. So I stopped by the hospital. I haven't seen this man in probably 15, 16 years. I don't know. It's probably been more like 20 because later he would tell me, I remember I was there when you preached your first sermon.

He said, you were nervous as a cat. And he said, but you just kept going. But anyway, so I went and saw him. This is amazing. Let me tell you, as Paul Harvey would say the rest of the story, I walk in and I see him and I'm talking to him, just visiting with him.

He expects he's going home. And he looks at me and it's amazing. He says, Billy Joe, I can hear you. I said, you can? He said, yes, I can't hear anybody. He said, am I hearing? I can't hear anybody.

He said, I can't hear my wife. I can't hear anybody that comes in the room. I can't hear your daughter. He said, I can hear you. He said, I can understand every word you're saying. I said, well, that's amazing. So I took some time and I prayed with he and his wife.

[18 : 23] And I said, if you ever need something, call me. My number's easy to find. Google the church's name. My number pops up. Google my name, my number pops up. It's not that hard. It's scary. I know.

Google my name, my number pops up. I said, or you know how to get in touch with the lady that had been to the hospital prior to me. You know how to get in touch with her? She knows how to get in touch with me. Wednesday night, I stood before this church Wednesday night and I called his name out.

I said, pray for this individual. On Wednesday night, I said, pray for salvation. Stated his name.

Thursday, I get a call from the lady who said, I ran into somebody who knows you.

Says, his wife is wanting to know if she can have your number. I said, yes, give him a number.

We're Thursday. I get a call. The individual did go home. He went home for a day. Ended up in another hospital. The doctors walked in and said, hey, he's dying. He tells his wife, said, find Billy Joe.

So I had an obligation Thursday. So I sent a message to the elders. I said, pray that God spares and gives me an opportunity to be a number of hours before I can get there.

[19 : 23] And God was gracious and merciful and allowed me. I went in there. Others had been to the hospital and couldn't hardly talk. I was there that evening and he took the oxygen off his face, said he was in critical care there and we talked for over an hour.

He's broken. Confessing and repenting and he understood everything I said. Nurses came in there. His wife came in there. He couldn't understand anything they said. We talked for an hour.

Share the gospel repeatedly. You say, well, did you lead him to the Savior? I introduced him to the Savior. It's Christ who does the saving, right? I'm trusting he gives him the peace and the assurance of his heart.

But he knows the gospel and understands the gospel. What was going on there? Am I anything?

No. There was a man that was in need and I saw the possibility that maybe God might have sovereignly, providentially worked it out where I could be the person who could stand there.

Is there anything to boast in on myself? Absolutely not. I would have never been there if another person had not been in that room and saw that maybe they were possibly the ones that God was using to introduce them.

[20 : 31] What if that... ... with a problem?

Possibly you are the one who can help address that problem. It's amazing when you begin to say, yes, Lord, here I am. Do what you will, how you will, but here I am.

You say, well, what do I do when I'm there? Share the gospel. Talk of Christ. You don't have to tell someone, by the way, if someone's laying in a hospital bed, you don't have to tell them how bad they are.

I promise you, they already know. You just need to tell them, as S.M. Locker used to say, where a bad man could be made good and where a dead man could be made alive.

Talk of Christ. There's a possibility. Do you see it? Number two, serve. How do we welcome with compassion? We serve.

[21 : 32] The crowd's gathered around and it becomes late because Christ begins to teach them. We'll get to that in just a moment. And the disciples say, all right, Jesus, it's getting late. It's time to send them away. I mean, we came here because we didn't have time to eat.

You say, well, you're kind of ad-libbing a little bit, right? I am, just a little bit. I say, we came here because we didn't have time to eat, but Jesus, now it's time to eat. And it's really time for them to eat. So why don't you send them away so they can go find something to eat?

And that's how the apostles wanted to serve them. But Christ had a better way of doing it, right? We want to serve. So how do we serve these people with a problem and possibly we are the ones who do it? Number one, we serve by the proclamation of the truth.

When Jesus saw the crowd before him and he felt compassion for them, for they were like sheep without a shepherd, he didn't immediately start healing them. What does it tell us in the Gospel of Mark?

He began to teach them many things. Go ahead and tell you, you say, what about that individual?

[22 : 34] Is he still alive? Yes, he's still alive. Did I have any power whatsoever? Did anyone have any power whatsoever to go in there and make him physically better? No, not really. Much of it's been self-inflicted harm.

He understands that. But you know, his greatest need was not to be able to get up and walk out of the hospital room. His greatest need was to know the truth. Here's a comforting word for each and every one of us.

We have the answer to the greatest need not of our own hearts, but the greatest need of every heart of every person who has ever walked to the face of the earth. People need to know the truth. And you have the opportunity to understand.

Jesus says, I am the way, the truth, and the life. Right? And his word is true. You say, well, pastor, I don't know what I would tell him at that moment. Well, then just tell him the word of God.

You'll never fall short. Don't give a false assurance. Don't give a false opinion. Don't tell him that you can take care of things. Don't say, well, I'll do this or I'll do that. Don't make it so much about you.

[23 : 34] Just tell him about Christ. Point him to the truth. Because the greatest way to serve people is to declare the truth of the gospel to them.

That's their need. Even if you say, oh, no, well, they need financial help or they need physical help or they need this help. When people call me, and they do, they call the church, because like I said, you Google the church and phone rings.

When you Google church and you call and people call and they say, oh, well, we need food or we need this or we need that, you know, really what I'm hearing is no, you need to know Jesus Christ is your Lord and Savior. And sometimes, some of you know, my compassion scale is very little so I have to really work on this because people say, well, my light bill needs to be paid.

I don't want to respond so compassionately a lot of times. I mean, I'm willing to help people that are honest with me. I'm willing to help that and I don't mind. I have care and concern for an individual but I want to just bypass that at times.

I'm just being honest, okay, sometimes I need to do that. I want to be like, well, let me introduce you to your greatest need first and then we'll take about the rest later. And thankfully, now we begin to do things like that as a church.

[24 : 37] Begin to, you know what I found out though? people push back against their greatest need because many people are convinced they only need temporal things. You say, oh, then if you softened your responses at church, no, actually we've heightened it a little bit because we know we want to meet the great need not a temporal need.

So what if we make them comfortable temporarily but we don't do anything for them eternally? We are accountable for that then, right? So what do we do? We serve them by the proclamation of the truth which is exactly what Christ did.

And within that serving, not only do we serve them with the proclamation of the truth, we serve them, Jesus says, you feed them. I love that. Jesus, we need to send them away so they can feed them. Jesus said, no, these are people, these are sheep without a shepherd, you feed them.

By the way, I've done that so often. I see a need, I see people in front of me, I say, Lord, why don't you meet that problem? Lord, send them somewhere for help and then he taps me on the shoulder and goes, I did, you're here, right?

So you feed them, by the way, that's a wonderful word from the Savior because if you're following Christ and all of a sudden you encounter people with problems and possibly you're the one to meet that problem and you're proclaiming the truth to them, guess who's going to meet that need?

[25 : 51] You are. So I say this, an all loving, don't try to pass your people with problems over to other people because you're the one in the gap.

If you come to me and say, well, pastor, I know these people and I've been walking, I've had this, I've had people come to me and say, you know, these people, they've got all these issues in their life and they've got all this and you know what I tell people, I say, wow, praise be to God he put you in that place because you've already got a relationship with that person, they trust you, they know you, you know how much harder it would be for me to go in there and build a relationship with that person and gain the trust you already have?

You're the person. How can I support you as you meet that problem? Because we're all in Christ called to be those people, right?

Jesus says, you feed them. We say, well, I can't do it. Well, here's how you do it. You serve them with the provisions you already have. Whatever Christ has provided you is enough to meet the need of the people before you.

Serve them with the provisions you already have. Jesus says, what do you have? Now, we know, it tells us in the other Gospels that it was Andrew who went and found the boy. Jesus asked them, what are we going to do about this, right?

[27 : 08] And so, we know there's a lot that's going on here. By the way, good case study in Scripture. Look at Andrew. Some of you know about Billy Graham's ministry, right? The Billy

Graham Evangelistic Association and you know about Billy Graham and Billy Graham used to have a thing when he did his crusades and he would go to these great cities.

He called it the Andrew Ministry. Did you ever hear about that? Anybody ever heard about the Andrew Ministry? And so, before the crusade came, they would raise up a bunch of Andrews in that city because everywhere you find Andrew in the New Testament, he's bringing somebody to Jesus. Andrew brings his brother. Andrew brings the people with questions at the end of his life. Andrew brings the boy who has a sack lunch. Andrew's always, Andrew doesn't do a whole lot but bring people to Christ, right? So, Billy Graham used to say, you being Andrew, you just bring people and we'll tell them about the Savior.

And it's a wonderful ministry, right? So, we know that Andrew brings it up. So, Jesus says, what do we have? They said, should we take 200 denarii? By the way, that's eight months worth of wages. More than likely, they didn't have that amount. Some Bible scholars say, well, they probably had that amount on hand and maybe that's all they had. Maybe they said, should we empty our treasury to take care of this? Jesus said, no, what do you have? because, you know, he is the supplier of our needs.

[28 : 18] So, we meet them and we serve them with the provisions we've already had which is another thing. Listen, not only for the church but also for the individuals. Have we ever considered the reality that everything we have been given, we have been given to be used for the sake of the kingdom?

And so, therefore, if someone shows up in our life and what we already have can meet their need, possibly the reason it's there was so that we can meet that need. You say, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, wait a minute, pastor.

If I do that, then, then what about, well, stay with me to the end. What if we just served with the provisions we already had? We don't need to go find something else, we just serve with the provisions we already have and we serve them in the position they already stand.

They were there, there were people in need, he told them to sit down but look at the position of the disciples, this is where we get to this, these last two in the serving. The disciples are in the boat, Jesus put them in the boat, told them to go to the other side, we'll get to wine in just a moment there and they were in this boat straining and struggling and he went there to where they were at.

Jesus didn't go to the other side because the intention was let's meet on the other side because it tells us he sent them ahead of him which implies that he would meet them on the other side but yet their problem was taking place in the middle of the storm so he didn't address their problem when they got to the other side.

[29 : 43] Well you work your way through the problem and I'll find you and I'll give you a little bit of hindsight in that. No, he met them where they were at in their position. He walked to them in the middle of the sea.

We've said this before, discipleship is messy and when you meet people, people aren't always in a nice neat environment because the reality is is none of us live in a nice neat environment, right? Life is messy and it has problems and it has issues and every one of us have issues. We know that. Some of us are better at covering them up than others but the wonderful thing is we get to walk beside people where they're at.

Meet them in that position and say I'm here to serve you where you're at but well you don't know where I'm at. You don't know the place I'm at. No, but I know the one who does. I know the one who saw you there and he's the one that sent me here and I want to meet you where you're at so as they're straining at the oars, Jesus goes to them and he meets them in the middle of the sea because that's where the problem exists.

He doesn't say well if they get through this I'll take care of them. No, he meets them in the middle of it and he said that's where the problem is so that's where I'm going to meet them and so we meet them in the position we find them.

[30 : 51] That means at times it's going to get messy, it's going to get a little bit uncomfortable and maybe we'll find ourselves in an environment we're not really at home at. That's okay. I've had some odd questions over the years given to me.

Odd questions. I've been in some odd environments and it's okay because that's where the people are at and that's where we're called to be not just me but all of us and in this serving we serve them in the presence of the Savior.

Do you know why Jesus intended to pass them by? Well it's because one time there was a man who led a people out of Egypt and they were out in the wilderness for a little while. You may know him, his name's Moses and they were hanging out there and Moses ended up in this crisis in his life and he just wanted to see his glory and Moses is crying out God show me your glory and it was his cry and it's amazing when he cries out show me your glory he's already seen all these other things but he's got a problem and the problem is he's got all these people and these people are whining and complaining and there's all these issues right? So Moses has this huge problem and Moses says God I just need to see your glory because things are falling apart right now and so God says well go up into the mountain right? And so he goes into the mountain and puts him in the cleft of the rock and what does God do? [32 : 06] He passes him by in the midst of his problem God passes by him and hides him and he sees the trail of his glory it is then that most people believe that Moses said in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth that is he began in the right to Pentateuch because he saw the trail of God's glory why?

When he passed him by in the middle of all of his struggles here are 12 disciples in a boat in the middle of a struggle and Jesus is going to pass them by his glory is going to go over them they'll see the trail of his glory as he walks by them he doesn't say I'm going to come get you out of the problem I'm just going to show you I'm in control of the problem now we don't have recorded in the gospel of Mark that Peter gets out of the boat and begins to sink and that's because Mark he is writing after listening to the preaching of Peter and Peter probably didn't like to bring that up a lot right?

Peter didn't want to talk about the whole oh I walked on water one time you know for about half a second and then I took my eyes off Christ and I sunk but we know that happened there too but the intent was not just to walk by them just so he could say I'm better than you his intent was to let the glory of the Lord pass by them in the midst of their struggle friend listen to me sometimes in the midst of all of our mess he just wants his glory to pass by us so that we can see the trail of his glory and go it's okay it's okay because we serve in the presence of the Savior so we see them we serve them now we separate and we do this as a model of Christ and it seems to be kind of against every other premise as we're stating here but it is the reality that when we are welcoming with compassion there has to be a time where we separate ourselves it says immediately in verse 45 immediately

Jesus made his disciples get into the boat and go ahead of him to the other side of Bethsaida while he himself was sending the crowd away now the 5,000 have just been fed 5,000 men upwards possibly up to 20,000 individuals have just eaten Mark paints the picture that when they separate themselves in groups of 50s and 100s really the imagery is that there is the green grass and it is like a well arranged garden of people that are out here eating in groups and they're going up and down the aisles and Mark is really painting the scene for us to see the disciples serving this multitude of people they take up 12 basketfuls by the way the baskets implied here are the baskets that individuals would carry with themselves that would contain their provisions for the day's journey so let me just go back here so you understand when you serve from your own provisions Jesus will fill your basket back up if you give him what you have so all 12 of them left with their baskets full because they took up 12 basket fulls of provisions now when he feeds the 4,000 there's a different word there it is large baskets seven large baskets that's not the personal provision that's that's what that is a massive like transportation basket but anyway when they served with what they had each one of them had their basket filled and they left that is the 12 that were serving

I don't think 12 is an accidental number he's just reminding them if you give me everything you got I promise I will fill it back up but now he separates them he sends them all away we are told in the other gospel accounts that the reason Jesus sends them away is because they intended to make him king because if you have a man who can do the miraculous who can feed the multitudes or something like that that would be a good king and so they want to make him king by this time they've heard the truth they've seen a lot of healing take place and now they have all been well fed and they want to make him king so this is why we separate first we have to separate because of the temptation to seek after popularity Jesus never left focus the devil had an opportune moment with the crowd wanting to make him king it is the same temptation that Christ was given in the wilderness by the way where Satan said I will give you the throne over all this if you bow down and worship me now the people were intending to make him king and the reason Jesus sent the twelve

away is because he didn't want the twelve caught up in all the excitement because how cool would it be to be a disciple of the king right they saw this so he didn't want them caught up in it and he knew that it wasn't a popularity contest and let's let's just be honest there is a temptation when we're welcoming people with compassion and we're serving those people there is the temptation each and every one of us must wrestle against and that is the temptation of relying and drawing on popularity the reason we see so many pastors fall is because popularity becomes a big issue in their life it is an issue and a struggle that every individual whoever stands in front of people need to address it is something that I try to guard myself against because in my heart

[37 : 17] I am a people pleaser and the reason I am a people pleaser is because I like to be popular I'm just trying to admit it to you and I'm not saying that with any false sense of humility I say that the reason I try to be so transparent when I preach is not because I want anybody going oh man look at him no I do it for myself so that you maybe can see a little bit a glimpse of I'm just as messed up as anybody else popularity is a dangerous place to be so at times we have to separate ourselves so that we understand it's not all about us we're just being used in that moment by the savior to serve and it is the temptation of popularity which causes us to pull back and say okay because guess what the work of the lord god almighty goes on with or without us we are the benefactors in that we get to do his work he is not relying upon us but he compassionately welcomes us to join him in his work he is not dependent upon us because what does the word of god say that if we are faithless he is faithful still his work will go on with or without us sometimes the temptation is to say well god is blessed because i'm here no we are blessed because god has allowed us to be here to be used by him for his purposes big difference so sometimes we separate ourselves because we understand the temptation of popularity and finally we must separate ourselves because we understand there is a posture we must assume after bidding them farewell it says he left for the mountain to pray before he saw them he was on the mountain he was many miles away from them after he had fed this multitude of people immediately prior to his walking on the waves of the storm before he gets to the city where people will just touch the fringe of the cloak of his garment and be healed jesus himself goes on the mountain to pray that's a humbling picture of a posture assumed by the one who is god in the flesh and if he needs to separate himself because of the temptation and draw of popularity and assume the posture of prayer how much more so we that we would fall on our faces before the lord god almighty and be reminded really who it's all about that we are humbly before him being used by him for his glory not our own and assuming the posture of prayer because we only know that by being in his presence are we fit at all to be used by him for his work and we go before him and we say lord here i am you are in control you're in charge and i'm just being used by you so may you help me to welcome the people around me with compassion as you did we can't do the supernatural but we do know the supernatural one so the one thing we do is we assume that posture we say lord you do the work and may you do it through us for your glory let's pray father we thank you for this day we thank you for the grand opportunity we have of being together and lord we want to give you all the praise and the glory and the honor i praise you for each one that is here we praise you

for the way you work in our lives we pray that we would come before you we we pray that as we come before you lord may we be mindful of the reality that you see us in all of our problems in all of our issues you see us so lord jesus may we just come and we bow down before you and worship you and adore you and fall in love with you in a greater way each and every day because you've welcomed us into your presence there's one here today who doesn't know that reality i pray that it would rest upon their heart the love of a savior that sees us with compassion and father for those of us that know that may we take that same compassion and extend it to those around us for your glory not our popularity but for your glory and we ask all in christ's name amen miracle miracle