



Satisfies

Jesus satisfies by providing for our needs.

MARK 6:30-44

Discontented people are dangerous people. Those who are unsatisfied in their hearts are prone to actions that might possibly harm themselves or others. Even a cursory glance at the general public reveals a dangerous discontentment. Sometimes the slightest life disruption—or threat of such—results in unwise and unstable reactions. A lack of satisfaction in one’s marriage, family, job, and spiritual life creates vulnerability to temptation. A wise person will stop and consider the level of satisfaction within his or her heart.

How satisfied are you really with the current state of your life?

UNDERSTAND **THE CONTEXT**

MARK 6:1-56


After healing a woman who suffered from bleeding and raising the daughter of Jairus from the dead (Mark 5:21-43), Jesus and His disciples traveled to his hometown of Nazareth. The townspeople rejected Him and His mission, hindering the work He could have performed there.

From the beginning of His ministry, Jesus told the first disciples that they would be involved in a work focused on people (1:16-18). Later, He included them in a call of twelve apostles to be with Him and share in His ministry (3:13-15). Eventually, Jesus commissioned these men to go out and do the same ministry He had done. His instructions to them about possessions and lodging assumed a level of simple trust and contentment.

The preaching of the disciples caused word to spread about Jesus, and King Herod heard about Him. Herod's conscience was uneasy because of his execution of John the Baptist. Undisciplined desire, fanned into flame by a young girl's dancing, ensnared him in a moral quandary in which he chose to save face rather than refuse a request for John the Baptist's execution (6:14-29).

After the miraculous feeding of 5,000 people (6:30-44), Jesus sent His disciples via boat to Bethsaida and dismissed the crowd, perhaps with parting words of encouragement. While en route, they encountered a great storm. Jesus miraculously came to them and joined them in the boat, offering assurance. Their amazement toward His miracle of calming the storm revealed both their smallness of faith and hardness of heart (6:45-52).

Although the boat wound up at a different location than originally intended, there was still a great opportunity there for ministry. Jesus healed in a similar manner there as He did previously with the woman who had internal bleeding (5:25-34). The crowd that followed Jesus believed that He could meet their needs, and He didn't let them down (6:53-56).

 **As you read Mark 6:30-44, look for examples of both satisfaction and dissatisfaction within the characters mentioned.**

EXPLORE THE TEXT

REST (MARK 6:30-32)

³⁰ The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all that they had done and taught. ³¹ He said to them, “Come away by yourselves to a remote place and rest for a while.” For many people were coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat. ³² So they went away in the boat by themselves to a remote place,

VERSE 30

Jesus sent out the Twelve in teams of two and commissioned them as *apostles* to exercise authority over demonic spirits and preach a message of repentance (6:7-13). They did that and saw significant impact for God’s kingdom. They then returned to Jesus and ***reported to him all that they had done and taught***. In their report we see balanced ministry. There was a combination of teaching and service, proclaiming a spiritual message but also attending to the physical needs of people.

VERSES 31-32

Active service for Christ can be physically taxing, and Jesus recognized that the disciples needed restoration. They had been besieged by *many people* and ***did not even have time to eat***. When both solitude and even proper diet are impacted by serving people, it is time for a change of pace and a change of place. Jesus directed the Twelve to get away ***to a remote place and rest for a while***.

Ours is a hurried and harried society. Lives lived without any margin of rest lead to restlessness. The state of our bodies and emotions impacts the state of our souls. God has ordained rest to be a part of the rhythm of life. We neglect this at our own risk. Part of the disciples’ ministry training from the Lord was the need for rest from spiritual labor.

Jesus joined them in their trip to a remote place. True rest doesn’t come to us independent of Jesus. It is a part of His work on our behalf and in us. He promised it to those who would come to Him in humble submission (Matt. 11:28-30). In a spiritual sense, trusting the sacrifice of Jesus to cover our own sinfulness and justify us in the sight of God brings rest. Trying to secure our own salvation through good works brings restlessness and uneasiness.

How can a lack of rest impact one's ability to serve well?

BIBLE SKILL: Memorize a Bible passage and apply it to your life.

Memorize Mark 6:31 in your preferred Bible translation. Write out the verse on several different index cards and place them in visible places that you will see throughout the day. Each time you see the verse, say it aloud. Reflect on ways you can include Jesus's invitation to rest in the normal rhythm of your life.

RESPONSE (MARK 6:33-34)

³³ but many saw them leaving and recognized them, and they ran on foot from all the towns and arrived ahead of them. ³⁴ When he went ashore, he saw a large crowd and had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. Then he began to teach them many things.

VERSES 33-34

Jesus and the disciples were unable get away from the crowds. A large crowd **arrived ahead of** the boat to its destination. The intensity of their pursuit of Jesus was proportionate to the sense of the need they possessed.

While we aren't told what the disciples' response was to the waiting crowd, Jesus **had compassion on them**. He understood **they were like sheep without a shepherd**. His compassion was not mere pity; the word indicates actual help and involvement in the life of another person.

Jesus's response was to **teach them many things**. Before He would feed the crowd with bread, He fed them with divine truth. In our humanity, we crave the satisfaction of our physical needs. Yet our needs run deeper than the physical. Everyone has a spiritual need, although some perceive it more than others, with some not at all. A leader in the ancient church named Augustine once wrote, "Thou hast made us for thyself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it finds its rest in thee."

RESOURCES (MARK 6:35-38)

³⁵ When it grew late, his disciples approached him and said, “This place is deserted, and it is already late. ³⁶ Send them away so that they can go into the surrounding countryside and villages to buy themselves something to eat.” ³⁷ “You give them something to eat,” he responded. They said to him, “Should we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give them something to eat?” ³⁸ He asked them, “How many loaves do you have? Go and see.” When they found out they said, “Five, and two fish.”

VERSE 35-36

After Jesus instructed the crowd for a period of time, the disciples informed Him about some problematic circumstances. They pointed out that their location (a deserted place) and the lateness of the hour necessitated that Jesus conclude His teaching so that the people could leave and find food to eat. Perhaps they were annoyed that their quiet time with Jesus had been interrupted. *Send them away* was their advice to Jesus.

“Any evaluation of a problem which doesn’t take the power of God into account is inadequate.”

The assessment made by the disciples of the situation was not erroneous. It was getting late in the day, and they were not near any source of food. However, they failed to factor in Jesus, the Son of God, to whom they presented their pessimistic appraisal. Any evaluation of a problem which doesn’t take the power of God into account is inadequate. The picture here is that of the disciples lamenting a problem while standing right beside the very Messiah of God who possessed the power to solve it.

One can’t help but notice that the crowd did not seem to be aware of the lateness of the hour. They must have been mesmerized by the teaching of Jesus. For His part, the Lord seemed not to care what time it was. When people’s spiritual needs are being met, those who both receive that blessing and the ones delivering it are focused on the importance of that moment. However, those who are not fully engaged with the message being shared seem to instead have a close eye on the clock.

VERSES 37-38


Jesus challenged the disciples, ***You give them something to eat.*** Previously, the Lord had involved them in His work and made them partners in the fulfillment of His preaching and healing ministry. At this point, He was continuing to grow and develop them for an expanding role in His ministry. They were receptive to that partnership previously, but this seemed to go further than they wanted to go.

The disciples' response to Jesus lacked faith. Buying enough bread for the crowd would have cost ***two hundred •denarii***, equivalent to about eight months of salary for a typical laborer. This was no small amount. Their words were tinged with sarcasm, perhaps supporting the notion that they resented the crowd interrupting their vacation time. Anytime we look at people as problems rather than opportunities for God to do His work, a renewed perspective is needed.

Jesus asked the Twelve, ***How many loaves do you have*** and then instructed them to ***go and see***. He doesn't direct us to count our resources so that we can then sadly conclude, "Well, there's nothing we can really do." Instead, His purpose is two-fold. First, He wants us to become a part of the solution He will provide. Second, He wants us to see how He is always enough. We can address the needs of people even with limited resources if we are confident in the provision of God.

“Jesus satisfies our needs but also wants to use us to satisfy the needs of others.”

Jesus was more than able to satisfy the spiritual and physical needs of the crowd. But He also wanted to involve the disciples in the process of doing that. The same is true today. Jesus satisfies our needs but also wants to use us to satisfy the needs of others.

 **Why are we prone to focus on problems instead of considering what God can do?**

RELIEF (MARK 6:39-44)

³⁹ Then he instructed them to have all the people sit down in groups on the green grass. ⁴⁰ So they sat down in groups of hundreds and fifties.

⁴¹ He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, he blessed and broke the loaves. He kept giving them to his disciples

to set before the people. He also divided the two fish among them all. ⁴² Everyone ate and was satisfied. ⁴³ They picked up twelve baskets full of pieces of bread and fish. ⁴⁴ Now those who had eaten the loaves were five thousand men.

VERSE 39-40

An interesting detail in verse 39 is the description of *the green grass*. Previously, Mark described this location as “deserted” (v. 35), using the typical word for a wilderness or desert. How are we to understand this green vegetation in such a hostile environment? One of the themes throughout the Gospel of Mark is the wilderness motif. (See Session 1.) The wilderness was the place in the Old Testament where God intervened on behalf of His people and provided for them in a supernatural manner. Although not specifically stated in the text, perhaps the growth of *green grass* in the desert is a miracle in itself. One of the descriptions of the Messianic age is that the desert will bloom (Isa. 35:1-2).

The people were organized in *groups of hundreds and fifties*. In light of Exodus 18:25, this also might be a part of a wilderness theme. At the advice of his father-in-law Jethro, Moses organized the people of Israel in a similar manner while in the desert. It is possible that this might have been a part of Mark’s intent to show Jesus as the greater Moses providing bread for His people and sustaining them in the wilderness.

**“Jesus satisfies us with both who He is
and what He provides.”**

VERSES 41-42

Jesus took *the five loaves and the two fish* and gave thanks to God for them. What He did with the bread—*blessed, broke*, and distributed—was normal practice for a Jewish father at a meal. What was not normal was that out of those actions Jesus *kept giving* loaves of bread *to the disciples to set before the people*.

This simple supper stands in contrast to the lavish banquet King Herod gave for all the powerful people of Galilee (Mark 6:21-29). That pagan party, marked by intoxication and seduction, resulted in the death of a holy man. Jesus’s gathering of His sheep in the desolate plain was marked by godly instruction and abundant provision. No one left Herod’s party feeling satisfied; no one left Jesus’s feeling empty, for *everyone ate and was satisfied*.

Jesus satisfies us with both who He is and what He provides. No one in Jesus's presence that day went away unsatisfied, either physically or spiritually. The verb used for *satisfied* means "to eat one's fill." Any person who hears the message of Christ and sincerely trusts in Him will discover that Jesus is enough for all of life.


VERSES 43-44

Jesus also satisfies those who serve Him. Our passage began with the disciples in need of rest. That was not to be the case for them. They were thrust into a situation where they had to distribute food to **five thousand men**, which didn't include the women and children. Surely this was no small task for men who were already exhausted from service.

Jesus provided for them both the energy needed to perform the task and food to eat after the miracle was done. There were **twelve baskets full of pieces of bread and fish** collected afterwards. We learned in verse 31 that previously they had been deprived of even the opportunity to eat. The leftover baskets of food were how Jesus took care of His own disciples.

"There is always satisfaction when we allow Jesus to use us for His service."

It sometimes seems that church members are leery of stepping into positions of ministry and service because they fear their own deprivation. In those situations, Jesus can be counted on to provide what His servants need. There is always satisfaction when we allow Jesus to use us for His service.

 **How do we find genuine satisfaction with all the things that Jesus provides?**

KEY DOCTRINE: *God the Son*

God the Son now dwells in all believers as the living and ever present Lord. (See Galatians 2:20; Hebrews 13:8.)

APPLY THE TEXT

- + Believers should make sure they and others find rest.
- + Believers need to feed their souls with the truth of God’s Word.
- + Believers can look to God when facing a challenge.
- + Believers should find satisfaction when Jesus uses them.

○ Discuss with your group how serving in ministry roles can sometimes leave us in a depleted condition. What can the group do for each other to encourage each one to find adequate rest in service to Jesus and to the church?

○ What problems are currently occupying your attention and focus? What can you learn from the direction the disciples received from Jesus? How does His example help you constructively address problems? How is the instruction you are receiving from Him through the Scripture adjusting your perspective on the situation?

PRAYER NEEDS
