

丰富预备的主——马可福音 6:30-44 The Lord Who Provides Abundantly – Mark 6:30-44

Introduction, outline

- Scripture reading: Mark 6:30-44; Psalm 23
- Teaching text: Mark 6:30-44

30 The apostles gathered together with Jesus; and they reported to Him all that they had done and taught. 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. 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; and He began to teach them many things. 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; and He divided up the two fish among them all. 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.

- It was the spring of 29 AD, around March or April, by the shore of Galilee. The Creator of the whole universe chose to perform a most extraordinary miracle before a huge crowd. Of all the miracles of Jesus, except for the resurrection, the feeding of the five thousand is the only miracle recorded by all four gospel writers.
- Food is the most basic need of human life. This miracle of creating food shows us Jesus is the Lord who abundantly provides for all our needs.
- Outline:
Title: The Lord Who Provides Abundantly
 1. He Provides Rest for Body and Soul (vv. 30-32)
 2. He Provides the Teaching of Truth (vv. 33-34)
 3. He Provides the Opportunity to Serve (vv. 35-38)
 4. He Provides Our Daily Bread (vv. 39-44)

He Provides Rest for Body and Soul (vv. 30-32)

- “The apostles gathered together.....”: They just returned from their first preaching trip (vv. 7-13), giving their report to Jesus. The first-time experience can be difficult, so the apostles must be both excited and tired at this moment.
- “Come away by yourselves and rest a while.” The Lord knew they needed rest. They must rest well to regain strength for ministry. Rest is not doing nothing, but a time being alone with Him.

【Principle】 People who don't rest are often lacking in trust in God and find no rest for their souls. Both our body and soul need rest. When our body is over exhausted, it affects the state of our soul. Servants of the Lord must be diligent to nurture their spiritual health - they need to be alone with the Lord! Quality time alone with the Lord daily brings rest to the weary soul and provides strength to serve the Lord. Learn to say no; make plans; exercise self-control; and cultivate habits. In any case, you must find time to be away from the crowd and spend time alone with Jesus.

- “For there were many people coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat. ”: This is why Jesus took them away from the crowd.

【Principle】 Time for rest needs to be intentionally scheduled; otherwise, life can easily become overwhelmed by a busy schedule.

Matthew 14:13 shows us another reason they needed rest: the news of John the Baptist's death! The disciples were not only physically tired but also emotionally burdened. They needed time alone with Jesus to know how to cope with John's death. They needed rest to refresh their soul for the journey ahead toward the cross. So, Jesus took them away to rest.

He Provides the Teaching of Truth (vv. 33-34)

- “The people saw them going..... and got there ahead of them.”: This was entirely outside of Jesus' plan. Jesus just said in verse 31, "Come away by yourselves to a secluded place and rest a while", and in verse 33 when they arrived, they immediately began working without a moment of rest. Jesus' humanity is completely real, and there are even times when His plans get interrupted with unexpected changes.

【Principle】 Allow your plans to be interrupted by God! God's servant has a schedule set by God, and so we must be flexible and obedient, always ready for God to assign us new tasks. One of the most revealing tests of your Christian character is how you react when your plans are interrupted by God.

- “He saw a large crowd, and He felt compassion for them”: Not a hint of discontentment for having His plans interrupted. Jesus' focus was entirely on the needs of others. The key word here is "compassion," which literally means "to have feelings in the guts." A large group of lost people moved Jesus deeply. This is what humility is all about. True humility means that your thoughts and concerns are directed outward, toward others, rather than inward, toward yourself (cf. Philippians 2).
- “like sheep without a shepherd”: Jesus knew the greatest need of people – to be shepherded. Most people have no idea about this need. If you didn't grow up in a church, you probably never heard of

this need until you came to faith. People need to be shepherded, why? Because people are like sheep – weak, foolish, prone to wander, frequently getting themselves into trouble, and often falling into various dangers. A flock of sheep without a shepherd to guide and protect them is a very pitiable sight indeed.

- “He began to teach them many things.” : Teaching the truth is how Jesus shepherds His flock. The teaching of truth is God's mercy toward us, for He knows how miserable our lives can be when we depart from the light of truth.

【Principle】 The way Jesus shepherds His flock through the church today remains the same: by teaching the truth at the core. It's not by establishing man-made rules or planning activities that everyone likes. While rules and activities have their place, only a clear understanding of the principles of God's Word can guide God's flock in the right path. The place of pulpit ministry is irreplaceable in the shepherding work. No amount of activities can compensate for a lack of teaching from the pulpit. What truly gives life is the truth of God's Word. It's only by receiving truth from the heart that a person can undergo an inward transformation and change from the inside out.

【Principle】 It's easy to change people externally. Just make more rules, or give more superficial incentives, and you'll surely see superficial changes. However, this isn't real life transformation. Jesus said He came to give life to His sheep, and that life would be abundant. External changes are easy, but it is hard to change people from within by continually teaching them the riches of God's truth. Jesus took the hard way and shepherded His flock through continuous teaching of the truth tirelessly.

He Provides the Opportunity to Serve (vv. 35-38)

- “send them away buy themselves something to eat.” : An entirely impractical request. There's no way to buy enough food in the wilderness for such a large crowd in the middle of the night. The disciples made an appearance of caring, but in reality, they were most likely just trying to get rid of the people.

The disciples' tone was almost as if they're teaching Jesus, as if Jesus has no concern at all for the physical need of the people. Sometimes, we may also have a wrong attitude in prayer, as if God totally overlooked some important consideration, and we try to teach God what He should do. In the end, God always corrects us, showing us how little we know who He truly is.

- “You give them something to eat!”: But we have nothing to give! How could twelve poor men provide food for thousands? If the sole purpose was to provide food, Jesus could've skipped verses 37-38. However, He is not only the Creator who provides daily food but also the Lord who uses His disciples to serve, making us useful men as we rely on Him!
- “Shall we go and spend two hundred denarii on bread and give them something to eat?”: Such a mocking tone. Totally missed Jesus' compassionate intentions. This statement was meant to be sarcastic, mocking Jesus for coming up with such an absurd idea.
- “How many loaves do you have? Five, and two fish.”: The Gospel of John tells us that a young boy in the crowd had these five loaves and two fish. As he gave his meager offering to Jesus through the disciples, Jesus would show him how He could use the smallest offering to accomplish great

things. Imagine what a faith-building experience this must've been for this child! Though everyone experienced the subsequent events together, what this boy saw was how his own personal offering was greatly used by the Lord!

【Principle】 God gives us opportunities to serve with our various small offerings. The opportunity to give is itself a gift from Him, for everything we have is given by Him. How much of your time, money, talents, gifts, etc. should be given to the Lord's use? Do you desire to see Him use your offerings more extensively to build His kingdom?

He Provides Our Daily Bread (vv. 39-44)

- “Jesus commanded them...to sit down on the green grass”: What kind of scene is this? Earlier, Jesus saw these people as sheep without a shepherd, and now He has them sit down on the green grass. What scene is this?

Psalm 23:1-2 “The Lord is **my shepherd**, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in **green pastures**; He leads me beside quiet waters.”

【Insights】 Such is the scene where Jesus shows His power to provide food for all. Jesus is indeed Yahweh the Lord. He is our Shepherd who supplies our daily bread, and in Him we lack nothing. Without Him, we are like lost sheep, pitiable indeed; but when we seek Him, He provides us with our daily bread, and we lack nothing.

- “looking up toward heaven, He blessed the food”: A thanksgiving prayer for the meal, thanking the Heavenly Father for providing our daily sustenance. Such prayer acknowledges that our most basic needs in life are supplied by the grace of our Father, and it's something we should remind ourselves of daily.
- “He kept giving them to the disciples”: And the disciples distributed them to the people. Jesus wanted to share the joy of serving with His disciples. What a beautiful work it is! Jesus kept giving to the disciples, and the disciples kept passing it on, becoming channels through which God's grace flowed.
- “twelve full baskets” : One for each disciple. Just an hour ago, they had nothing to give and were asking Jesus to send the crowd away. But now, an hour later, everyone's fed to the full, and the disciples each hold a full basket of food. Yahweh Jireh, the Lord provides indeed.

Conclusion:

The miracle of feeding the five thousand shows us that Jesus is Yahweh, the Lord who abundantly provides for all our needs. We have nothing by ourselves, but when we come to Jesus empty-handed, we will find ourselves lacking nothing.

God doesn't want our strength but rather our weaknesses. He doesn't want our richness but our poverty. Even when all we have left is but five loaves and two fish, if we are willing to offer it to Him, God will give us the experience of His abundance.