

Supernatural Supper

(Mark 6:30-44)

(preached 1/18/15 Pine Grove BC; Sunday AM)

Introduction

Let's say that there is a family of four.

A husband, a wife, a teenage son and a teenage daughter.

They are planning a week to the beach, but the father can't come until Tuesday.

So, the wife and kids will take one of the cars and go down on Saturday, and Dad will come later.

In the days leading up to their trip, the dad checks the car that his wife will be driving.

Checks the oil level, the tire pressure, and other parts of the car to make sure that it will be safe for his family.

As part of the preparation, he takes his son outside and shows him where the spare tire is located.

He even shows his son how to operate the jack.

And then he even lets his son change the tire in the driveway, just in case they have a flat along the way.

When everything is packed and ready, the car pulls out on Saturday and the dad is confident that he has done all he can to ensure the trip goes well without him.

But on the way to the beach, one of the tires does in fact go flat.

Mom steers the car to the shoulder of the road, looks at her son and asks him to change the tire.

The son responds with, “I don’t want to do it. Why don’t you do it.”

The mom answers, “I don’t know how and then asks her daughter to do it.

Since, she doesn’t know how to do it either, mom calls for help and a man comes to change the tire for them at a cost of \$200.

Here’s the question...

When Dad arrives on Tuesday, where will his displeasure and wrath be directed?

The truth of the situation is that all of his family refused to change the tire...

But will he be upset with all of them equally?

Well, certainly not.

Even though mom and daughter didn't change the tire, he will be most upset with his son.

And why?

Well, he had shown his son how to do it.

He had given him clear instruction on what to do.

And though he refused just like his mom and sister, he refused in spite of having more knowledge than them.

In the eleventh chapter of Matthew, Jesus says the following...

20 Then He began to denounce the cities in which most of His ^[u]miracles were done, because they did not repent. 21 "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the ^[v]miracles had occurred in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago in ^[w]sackcloth and ashes. 22 Nevertheless I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you.

What is he saying?

Jesus is saying that the towns of Bethsaida and Chorazin will experience a greater judgment than the towns of Tyre and Sidon.

In other words, though all those towns rejected Jesus and be judged for that,....

Chorazin and Bethsaida will get a hotter part of hell than Tyre and Sidon.

And why is that?

Tyre and Sidon were horrible places of sin.

They were seaport towns, which were often very sinful places for various reasons.

Yet, they will not be judged as severely as Chorazin and Bethsiada.

And the simple explanation for that is this...

They refused to believe in Jesus despite having a front row seat to his miracles.

Just like the son who knew how to change the tire but refused, these cities will experience more wrath from God.

Though everyone who rejects Jesus will be judged, there will be a harsher judgment for those who were exposed to the truth but rejected it.

That is why the seats in front of me are dangerous places for unbelievers.

For people to sit in churches and be exposed to the miracles of Jesus week after week....

And then refuse to repent of sin and submit to Jesus' authority...

Is simply a very dangerous practice in this life.

You may think that God will take it easier on you if you just lend an ear to Jesus once a week, but that is not the case.

Exposure to the truth of God's word actually makes you more accountable in the judgment.

For everyone who has been given much, much is required.

And today in our text, the town of Bethsaida will be given much.

In fact, they will witness one of the 2 greatest miracles in the Bible.

And I say that because the miracle that we will read about it is one of only two miracles that are mentioned in all 4 gospels.

The first miracle that is mentioned in all four gospels in the miracle of Jesus' resurrection from the dead.

And the second miracle that is mentioned in each of the gospels is the feeding of the 5000..

Which we will see is actually the feeding of the 20,000...

Because the Bible says that 5000 men were counted besides the women and children there.

So it is safe to assume that 20000 people were fed from 5 loaves of bread and 2 fish.

And because Bethsaida had a front row seat...

Because that miracle was done in her midst...

And because they still rejected Jesus after such a supernatural act was done in their midst...

They will be judged more severely than other cities.

But don't let be true of you today.

You are going to hear and witness the same miracle today.

But don't join with the people of Bethsaida and refuse to believe in Christ.

Today can be the day that you see the power, compassion and love of Christ.

Today can be the day that you see that Jesus is God in the flesh.

Today can be the day that she embrace Him as Lord through repenting of your sin and placing your trust in Him alone.

Today can be the day when part ways with the folks of Bethsaida who rejected Jesus.

Today can be the day when you stop living in fear of judgment and embrace the hope of heaven.

Today can be that day for you.

So, let's begin by looking at the verses that lead up to this incredible miracle.

And that begins in Mark 6:30...

Now, what we are going to see in this passage is that Jesus is constantly teaching his disciples something in these verses....

The first lesson that he teaches is found in the first 3 verses of this section...

I. The Need to Rest (6:30-33)

Verse 30...

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

If you remember from 2 weeks ago, the disciples were sent out to teach around Israel.

Jesus sent them out to give them a taste of what the rest of their lives would be about.

Though they don't understand yet, Jesus is going to die and be resurrected.

And then He is going back to the Father and leave the spread of the gospel in the hands of the disciples.

So, he gives them a preview of that by sending them out in towns around Israel.

Most likely, they paired up and were gone for a few weeks or months before returning to Jesus in these verses.

And though we don't know what they reported, we do know that they were tired.

And Jesus makes a plan to get them some rest.

Which is certainly an important principle of ministry.

The disciples needed rest in order to continue ministry at a high level.

And here Jesus is simply saying that they needed to take time to care for their bodies in ministry.

They have gathered on the northwest shore of the sea of Galilee at their home base in Capernaum.

So, Jesus suggests that they jump in the boat and go to the less populated eastern shore of the sea of Galilee.

And though, Mark doesn't name the town, we know from the other gospel writers that their destination was in the area of Bethsaida on the northeastern shore.

So, they hope in the boat to give a little privacy and to take the shortcut to the eastern shore.

Unfortunately, their plan to escape doesn't go unnoticed.

One of the funniest things about being a parent are the moves you make trying to get out of a bedroom where one of your little has fallen asleep.

You will try the slide move, where you don't sit up in the bed and get up.

No, you try to slide your way out kinda like a snake slithering out of a tree.

Then once you are out of the bed.

You make these very exaggerated steps so that you don't step on the part of the floor that creaks.

Because a kid can sleep in a really loud environment but will wake up in an instant if the floor or bed makes the slightest creak.

That is the nature of the crowd in Capernaum.

They are watching Jesus every move, not because they have saving faith, but because they need healing or other physical needs.

So, they won't let Him out of their sight, and the same is true on this day.

He tries to leave in a boat, but the people see Jesus and the disciples leaving in verse 33...

And the Bible says that they ran along the shore and actually beat Jesus and the disciples to the place that they were going.

The only rest that the disciples would get would be in this private boat ride with Jesus.

Because when they reached shore, Jesus went right to work....

It is true that there is a NEED TO REST...

But in this second section of our passage, Jesus also shows.....

II. The Need to Teach (6:34)

Verse 34....

³⁴ When Jesus went ^[a]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.

I played high school basketball under two really good coaches.

And he had a simple philosophy of “Keeping the Main thing the Main Thing,” even when it came to the game of basketball..

He told us over and over...

The main thing is to get the ball into the basket and keep the other team from getting the ball in their basket.

He would often say, everything else we do is designed to accomplish those two goals.

And that was important to remember because it is easy to get distracted by making a nice pass...

Or trying to remember how to play defense...

When you are under pressure in a game, you don't need to have your head filled with a bunch of thoughts of what to do...

You simply needed to remember....

We need to score and we need to stop them from scoring.

Well, Jesus has one main goal in his ministry on earth...

And we have seen this time and time again.

He came to teach and preach.

And you can't miss this in this verse.

Jesus steps out of the boat, looks over the crowd that has assembled...

And has incredible pity for them.

If you were here a few months ago, we went through Psalm 23.

And though that Psalm is usually only seen at funerals, it has so much to teach us about the nature of God.

If you want to know what God is like, you can find it in Psalm 23...

Where David describes God as a shepherd.

If you were not here, we talked about how dumb sheep are.

They are so helpless that they cannot make it on their own.

For instance, they do not have enough sense to look for green grass if their field is all brown.

They will not seek fresh water to drink, and if they are around fresh water...

They get so excited that they will dive into it and drown because their wool gets wet and they can't escape.

They have no sense of satisfaction.

They will literally eat themselves to death in a green field if they aren't made to lay down.

And then laying down is dangerous because they are so top heavy...

That if they roll on their backs, they can't right themselves again.

And those are just a handful of the issues that shepherds deal with in a flock.

And that is why a good shepherd is so vital to the well-being of the sheep.

Without a good shepherd, they have no hope.

They are weak creatures that are unable to protect themselves and even provide for their own needs without the care of a shepherd.

And guess what animal the Bible compares people to the most?

Sheep!

And Jesus steps out of the boat, and his shepherd's heart immediately kicks in.

He looks out over the people and sees them as sheep without a shepherd.

Which would be the worst kind of flock.

Without a shepherd, they had no chance of survival.

A real flock would be dead in a matter of days or weeks.

Predators would destroy a flock with no shepherd.

And the ones that weren't eaten would starve or thirst to death.

Yet, that is what Jesus compares this large group of people when he steps ashore.

Now, put yourselves in Jesus' shoes on that day.

You look out over a crowd of 1000s of people.

There would be sick people and poor people.

There would be children dressed in rags this day.

There would be people who haven't bathed or cared for themselves.

It would be a sad sight through anyone's eyes...

But you can't miss this here.

What does Jesus do as a result of what he sees?

Does he call all the disciples together and tell them to go gather some good clothes for all the people?

Does he tell the disciples to give each of these families some money?

Does he have a food drive for these families?

The truth is that he looks out over the group of pitiful people, and he does what he came to do.

He teaches them the Word of God.

And in that simple act, we see such an important truth for all of us.

Jesus' primary mission is to preach the gospel, and when he got up to teach them, you know what he was teaching.

He was teaching about God's kingdom and he was teaching that the only way into God's kingdom is through repentance and faith.

In Jesus' action on this day, we also see our purpose as the church in the world.

We preach the gospel to the world.

This is our primary purpose.

Look, it is no different today.

Take a look around you and what do you see?

You see people everyday who look like sheep without a shepherd.

You see broken families and broken children.

You see broken homes and broken lives.

And I am not just talking about the poor here.

The richest man in the world – if he isn't saved – is like a sheep without a shepherd.

But we see all this brokenness and sadness around us.....

And sometimes, churches lose sight of their mission to these people.

They will have food drives, and clothes drives, and they will give money to the poor...

And look, those are fine missions in the world, but if you pass out coats and food without preaching the gospel...

They may be warm and have a full belly, but they are still headed to hell.

Let us look at the lost through Jesus eyes.

And when we do, we will see that the most important need of the lost people...

Is to be taught the truth of the gospel.

Does that mean you don't care for their other needs?

Certainly not.

Give them food, give them clothes, provide for their physical needs....

But never do that without addressing their spiritual needs.

Always teach the gospel while you minister to their physical needs.

Do you know why I get up to preach every week?

Some of you would say, “Well, that is what I have always seen in church.”

And you know why you have always seen it?

Because that is the purpose of the church.

We don't gather each Sunday at 10:45 to pass out scarves or have a community lunch for everyone who shows up.

We meet and I preach because our purpose is to proclaim the truth to every person who walks through the door on Sunday morning.

This picture of Jesus stepping off a boat and then preaching is the model that we still follow today.

And you know why?

People's needs haven't changed.

People first and foremost need the truth of God's word.

Everything else is secondary to that purpose.

And we must remember that here at Pine Grove in day where 1000s of churches have forgotten it.

And again to remind you, that doesn't mean we ignore the physical needs of people.

We just know that spiritual needs must come before physical needs...

And interestingly enough, that is what we see right here in this passage...

After Jesus has been preaching for some time, the disciples come to him with a request to meet the people's physical needs...

And in these final verses, we see the final lesson for the disciples....

III. The Need to Trust (6:35-44)

Verse 35...

³⁵ When it was already quite late, His disciples came to Him and said, “^dThis 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 ^ssomething to eat.”

Though this may seem like a compassionate plea from the disciples, I think we are giving this group too much credit to say that.

Most likely, they are tired and hungry and looking for the rest that Jesus promised when the day began.

The crowd simply becomes an excuse to meet their needs.

It is like the times that I use my kids to get what I want.

“Well, Tonya, the girls want to go to Outback and get a steak.”

“I would hate to disappoint them.”

And though I can't be sure, I think the disciples are more concerned about what they want than what the crowd needs.

Jesus gives a quick answer back to them...

Verse 37...

37 But He answered them, "You give them something to eat!"

Why did Jesus say this?

People who have looked at this passage closely disagree.

Maybe the disciples had the power to do it.

They had just returned from a trip where they preached and cast out demons.

Maybe they still had power given to them by Jesus to accomplish this.

Or maybe, Jesus is looking for one of them to reply that Jesus do it.

They have already seen his power to heal the lame and calm the wind and sea.

Feeding 20000 folks shouldn't be that hard when you calmed a body of water that is 13 miles long and 8 miles wide.

But none of the weak faithed hard headed disciples understood.

So, Jesus plays along with their weak faith in verses 37 and 38...

And they *said to Him, “Shall we go and spend two hundred ^[u]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.”

The point of this interaction is to fill the disciples head with the clear fact of the matter, which is this...

“There isn’t enough food for 20000 people.”

And Jesus established the fact to point to the incredible nature of the miracle that He is about to perform...

And the miracle begins in verses 39-40...

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

And this is certainly part of the miracle.

When I did my student teaching, it is hard to get a group of 10 kids to do the same thing.

Much less 20000 people on a hillside.

Yet a sovereign command from the Lord is obeyed by all the people and they sit in an ordered way to make food distribution easier..

And then the miracle closes with verses 41-44...

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.

The One who created the world out of nothing creates fish and bread out of thin air.

For 20000 people!

And HE even creates enough that there are leftovers.

Some of you are sitting here saying, “Well, I would have had the bread but I would have passed on the fish.”

There are always a couple non-seafood eaters in a crowd.

But you would have eaten this and you know why?

The fish and the bread on that day were not under the curse.

The fish had never swam in the cursed waters of this world.

The bread was not made from grain that grew in cursed soil.

The loaves and the fish were as pure as the hands that created them on that day.

And they would have tasted better than any fish and bread that you have ever tasted.

The crowd on that day loved it.

The text said that they ate and were satisfied.

And with that , the disciples see that Jesus is a provider of all things.

They would be men who would probably be starving at times in their ministry.

Some would be in prisons because they preached Jesus to the people.

John would live alone on a deserted island.

Yet, they all got a first hand look at the power of Jesus to provide.

And they would need to remember that in the times of need that would come to them.

Conclusion

We have seen the valuable lessons that Jesus taught the disciples this day.

Though the disciples didn't rest much on this day, they must have learned that lesson well.

We can't be sure of the ages that each of them died, but tradition tells us that most of them lived many years after Jesus ascended back to heaven.

The only one who died quickly was Judas.

So, they must have applied the truth of rest in their ministry since their bodies seem to hold up for years of ministry.

We also know that they learned to trust in the Lord's provision in this life.

All with the exception of Judas, became preachers and shared the gospel all over the known world in their day.

Did they learn that sharing the gospel is their primary mission in the world?

Remember when Peter and John are approaching the temple in the book of Acts and see a lame beggar asking for money?

They don't give him money, but they do give him the name of Jesus.

And then we see all throughout the book of Acts that the main activity is preaching the gospel to the world.

So, I would say yes, the disciples learned something very important here.

But I must close with what wasn't learned here.

And that is this...

Most of the people on that hillside never learned who Jesus was.

They simply enjoyed the miracle and then went back to the lives of being lost sheep.

And the incredibly sad part of that is the fact that they were exposed to the greatest of miracles...

And because of that, they will receive the greatest of judgments.

Don't let that be you this morning.

You have watched Jesus created bread and fish out of thin air.

And the point of seeing that is to see Him.

He is the God-man.

And the fact that He performed miracles is proof that He was God's Son.

Today, He is calling to repent of your sins and place your faith in him to save you.

If you came in like a sheep without a shepherd, today you can leave with the greatest Shepherd of all.

If you are lost this morning, get found and become part of God's flock.

By believing in the Good Shepherd.

Let us pray.