

Series: Book of Mark
Scripture: Mark 6:30-44
Title: The Compassionate Shepherd
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if we take a look at Jesus' ministry in the first several chapters of Mark, we will see that things are quite crazy. Jesus and the disciples are super-busy.

In Mark:

1:28- his fame has spread everywhere throughout all the surrounding region of Galilee.

1:33- the whole city, which Capernaum was the largest in the area, is gathered together at the door.

1:37- Everyone is looking for Jesus.

1:45- People were coming to Jesus from every quarter

2:2- There are so many people that some guys have to tear a hole in the roof to get their friend healed.

2:13- All the crowd was coming to him.

3:9-10 Jesus says to have a boat ready for him because of the crowd, 'LEST THEY CRUSH HIM', and people with diseases PRESSED around him to TOUCH him.

3:20-21 There are so many people that they can't even eat and his family hears of it and they want to come and take him away.....they said, "He is out his mind."

4:1 A VERY large crowd has gathered so that Jesus has to teach from a boat in the water.

5:24 The large crowd THROGGED (*Swarmed*) about him to touch him.

5:31 The crowd is 'PRESSING' on him to touch him. The woman with the blood issue touches him and his disciples are amused that he asks, "Who touched my clothes?"

In **Luke's gospel, chapter 12 verse 1**, he tells us that there are so many thousands of people following Jesus that they are *'trampling one another'*.

It's very busy.

So, we come to the passage today.

The disciples had been sent out and now they have returned. Let's read verses 31-33.

31 "Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while." For many were coming and going and they had no leisure even to eat. 32 And they went away in the boat to a desolate place by themselves. 33 Now many saw them going and

recognized them, and they ran there on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them.

I hope you can feel the stress in your chest.
It's busy. It's tiring.

There's no privacy, nor is there any free time.

Jesus says the words that you've been longing to hear.
"Rest!" "Come away, just you and me and let's have a little retreat."

Jesus and the disciples are so busy....they can't even eat. Now, I don't know about you but I would be quite frustrated.

When I was an serving as an Associate Pastor in the USA some years ago, I remember at times our Senior Pastor {who was always very busy} would go on a family vacation to the beach...there would be a death in the church and he would have to fly back to do the funeral. Just when you think you can get away.....something happens.

Let's take a look at Jesus' response versus the disciples response.

WHAT WAS JESUS' RESPONSE?

34 When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had *compassion* on them, because they were like *sheep without a shepherd*. And he began to *teach* them many things.

Looking at Jesus' response, I want us to notice a few key words.

1. COMPASSION: This feeling that Jesus has for the great crowd means 'pity in his gut'. It's an ache. A hurting. A deep-seated love. In the scriptures, this word is only used of Jesus. Only he has this kind of compassion. Why does he feel this way?

2. They are SHEEP WITHOUT A SHEPHERD: This is the reason that he feels so deeply for them. They are lost, helpless, defenseless, uncared for, wandering. They're hungry. They're in need of guidance. They are open to attack.

Jesus, the good shepherd, cares for the people.

Psalm 23:1 The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. 3 He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. 4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. 5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with

oil; my cup overflows. 6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

The **feeling** that Jesus has for the crowd is compassion. The **reason** he feels this is because they are like sheep without a shepherd. And his **response** is what? What does he do for them?

3. HE BEGAN TO TEACH THEM MANY THINGS.

What is the primary job of a shepherd? To feed the sheep. He first feeds them what they really need....to be taught. He feeds them spiritual food now and later feeds them physical food.

Jesus sees these spiritually helpless people with no one to guide them. He sees their true state. He sees their hearts. And seeing the state they are in...he feels a deep seated compassion for them....so he teaches them.

What about the disciples?

WHAT WAS THE DISCIPLES RESPONSE TO THE CROWDS?

35 And when it grew late, his disciples came to him and said, “This is a desolate place, and the hour is now late. 36 Send them away to go into the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat.”

It may seem at *first glance* that the disciples are also feeling compassion for the crowds. They're concerned. That's why they suggest that Jesus do the right thing and cancel the teaching session so that people have enough time to go find food before the light goes out.

But, if we read the other gospels, we will find that John's gospel says that Jesus knew what he was going to do and he was testing the disciples.

The disciples say, "**Send them away.**"

Jesus says, "**You give them something to eat?**"

He feels compassion. He sees an opportunity. The disciples see inconvenience.

Are we like Jesus or are we like the disciples?

I believe this is a timely word for us today. For the church of Jesus Christ and for our church; For my heart for sure. Perhaps for yours.

We need to see people as he sees people. We need God to give us his heart for people! We need the compassion of the Lord.

We need to be broken. We need to cry out to God for mercy. We need the zeal of the Lord. We need compassion for the lost.

Sure, we are tired. Things are busy. There are needs all around. We get tired of serving. Tired of working. Tired of people with needs.

BUT, Is there any greater work to be done than kingdom work? Any greater effort to spend ourselves on, to pour ourselves out for....than the kingdom; for souls??

Do we see the crowds around us? In our building or neighborhood? On the train. The bus. The university adjacent to our church. Are our eyes open? Are our hearts open?

Do we have compassion...like Jesus.... for people?

It's so easy to say, "Send them away Lord?"

And he's saying, "You give them something to eat."

I believe it goes beyond ourselves as individuals, or the church but even as a **city**. Our city has seen our Chinese cousins across the border as an inconvenience and not an opportunity. God forbid that we believers say, "Send them away Lord." We should have compassion. We should shepherd them. We should teach them.

What an opportunity. The crowds are coming. We are tired and need rest and maybe sometimes just want to keep Jesus to ourselves.

But he says, "You give them something to eat."

What will our attitude be toward the crowds?

Opportunity or inconvenience?

In closing, I want to leave you with a quote from **Charles Spurgeon**, the greatest English preacher of the 19th century. He said,

"It is our duty and our privilege to exhaust our lives for Jesus. We are not to be living specimens of men in fine preservation, but living sacrifices, whose lot is to be consumed."

Prayer:

Oh Jesus, compassionate shepherd..Have mercy on us. Forgive us for our carelessness and pour out your compassion on us...that we might have your heart and your eyes and feel for people as you feel. Wake us up! Shake us up! Get our eyes off of ourselves and put our eyes on Jesus and his kingdom. Free us from the entanglement of the world and set us free to serve you with boldness and zeal...and give us many souls for Christ.

