

YOU GIVE THEM SOMETHING TO EAT

Mark 6:30-44

Key Verse: 6:37a

"But he answered, 'You give them something to eat.'"

In the last passage we learned that King Herod was lecherous. As a result, he was occupied by demons and he suffered endlessly like Cain, who lived all his life with a sense of punishment and uneasy wandering. We also learned that Herodias' vanity to become a queen of Israel made herself lawless. Finally, she made John the Baptist a martyr. But because of her sin, Herodias is suffering in hell in the burning sulfur forever. We also learned that John the Baptist fulfilled his mission as the forerunner of Jesus by talking to everybody and anybody about the message of repentance, even to King Herod. At that time, to talk about the message of repentance to King Herod was totally impossible for anyone. But John repeatedly rebuked him again and again by saying, "It is not lawful that you take your brother's wife, Herodias." When Herod heard John, he was greatly puzzled; yet he liked to listen to him (20). He was suffering from his prick of conscience and the torment of demons. In today's passage we learn something about Jesus. To his disciples, he said, "You give them something to eat" (37). It meant, "You should be responsible." We also learn the compassion of Jesus.

I. The disciples' report on the evangelistic campaign (30)

Finally, the apostles gathered around Jesus after the evangelistic campaign (30). The evangelistic campaign was so successful when they obeyed Jesus' instructions and went out two by two. They could cast out demons. They could heal many sick people and teach [the Bible](#). It was a mere rookies' [training](#) campaign. But when King Herod overheard the story of the apostles' evangelistic campaign, he began to tremble, gnashing his teeth and knocking his knees. It was merely basic training for the disciples. But the sinner, King Herod, who was possessed by demons, trembled violently. During the time of reporting, Peter, the man of big mouth, said, "When I said to a demon-possessed man, 'Demon, you get out!' then immediately the demon got out of the man and ran away like a mountain dog, shrieking." Peter was most happy that he had experienced the power of God for the first time. Bartholomew said with a mosquito voice, "When I prayed and laid my hand on a sick man, he became whole. The man who was healed said to me, 'Thank you, thank you, thank you.' I said, 'Peace be with you.'" In this report meeting, everybody might have said something. John spoke up, "I saw a man of demon possession. I rolled up my sleeves, clenched my fists, and shouted, 'You demon, get out of him.' Then the demon came out, saying, 'Hey, you man. Why do you drive me out from the man who is my prey?'" John was very happy because for the first time he experienced the power of God. John went on to say, "The power of God is wonderful. It is amazing. When I obeyed the word of God and joined in the evangelistic campaign, God gave me authority and power to cast out demons." Matthew said, "I saw an ailing [man on the street](#). I prayed and laid my hand on the sick man. He got well and he said, 'Thank you, thank you.'" They were happy to share their reports. The report on the evangelistic campaign was endless, and their joy bubbled up.

It is important for each of us to experience the power of God

through absolute obedience. Those who do not experience the power of God through absolute obedience remain as old wineskin Christians or like one of the Pharisees. Without experiencing the power of God through absolute obedience, anyone becomes powerless, even to attend Sunday worship service. He is even more powerless to study for his final. He remains as a permanent student in a junior college. We have seen so many young and handsome and dynamic students. They look so gorgeous. But we find that so many of them have remained in junior college for five to seven years; still they are freshmen. These days, the word "obedience" is taboo to many young people. But without obedience to the word of God, we cannot experience the power of God nor can we be normal human beings who can maintain our families properly. We have seen so many couples. Both husband and wife are godless and they are always nagging love from each other. Finally, they break up. These days we are very sorry that there are so many divorces. But all the divorces are the work of demons.

II. Jesus had compassion on them (31-34)

While the evangelistic campaign report was going on, Jesus noticed that so many people were coming and going that he and his disciples did not even have a chance to eat (31). In a sense, the crowd of people following Jesus was senseless and shameless. Jesus was sorry that his disciples had not slept or eaten for several days, as we studied in former passages (4:35; 5:2,18,21). Jesus said to them, "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest" (31). Jesus thought his disciples needed some rest and some food desperately. This time our Lord Jesus Christ urged them to hurry up and leave that place and go to a quiet place to get some rest.

"So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place" (32). While they were reporting about the evangelistic campaign, they didn't feel hungry or tired. But when they were on the way to a solitary place by boat, they felt extremely tired, because they had not eaten or slept for several days. When Jesus urged them to escape from the crowd, it was really urgent for the disciples. They needed some rest, even for a while. What happened?

Look at verse 32. "So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place." The disciples felt lucky. But many who saw them leaving recognized them and ran barefoot around the lakeshore. Finally, from all the towns people got there ahead of Jesus' company (33). Their needs were urgent. So their running speed was faster than Jesus' escape by boat. When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd (34). They were shameless people. They were annoying to Jesus and his disciples. Their annoyance was endless and unbearable. Possibly, Matthew was upset and said, "You shameless guys! I think I must drive you out by striking you with a baseball bat!" It is possible that all the other disciples grumbled against them, saying, "Oh! They are going to finally drain us to death!" The disciples' feeling was very bad. But how did Jesus see them? Jesus landed and saw a large crowd saying, "Good morning, sir! How are you, sir! You are good to us, sir! We need you, sir!" Jesus and his disciples were surrounded by them and had no way to get out from among them. What did Jesus think about them?

Look at verse 34. "When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had

compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things." In this verse we learn that Jesus was different from his disciples. Instead of thinking that they were annoying people, Jesus had compassion on them because they were like sheep without a shepherd. What is compassion? Compassion is God's heart. Compassion is endless pity on a person. Compassion is the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Without believing in God, we don't know what compassion is. Without knowing the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, we don't know what compassion is. Compassion makes people different. One who has compassion can grow as a man of integrity with the divine nature. One who has compassion can love others as himself. One who has compassion never thinks about divorce in all his life together with his wife. There was a young man. He exalted himself so highly. No girl looked as if she could be his fiancée. So he ended up as a bachelor. He thought he was very handsome. But he lost all his hair in the course of living a selfish life without any compassion. So he grew a beard and moustache to make up for his bald head, and looked at the mirror more than one hour every day. He wanted to soothe his melancholy. So he drank little by little. He was no more a handsome man.

On the other hand, when we have the compassion of God, we are compassionate toward anybody. There was a medical missionary to Korea. He was a Christian hospital director. He was very compassionate because he loved God. As a director, he must administer his hospital properly. But he admitted too many free patients. He distributed all the rice and other rations to the poor, going around to the railroad stations. Finally, his hospital confronted a financial deficiency. The Board of Directors of the hospital dismissed him as the hospital director. Still, the hospital supply was always too short. It was because he was always giving away anything available to any needy people. He never stopped admitting free patients.

Finally, he was sent back to America. Then he went to Bangladesh. From that time on, he received donations from those who were eager for Bangladesh mission. The doctor began to visit the people of Bangladesh. He passed out gospel tracts and some food to the poor. When his money was used up, he came back to America and received another donation and went back to Bangladesh and distributed what he had to the poor. He went to Bangladesh fourteen times altogether when he was over seventy years old. He was so warm and kind that people liked him very much. But the people in any kind of establishment despised him.

In verse 34, we see the compassion of Jesus toward people. From a human point of view, the crowd deserved a sort of punishment because they chased after Jesus persistently and did not give Jesus or his disciples time to rest or eat. But Jesus did not think so. Jesus saw them as his own sick and hungry children. Jesus saw them as sheep without a shepherd. This is the compassion of God in Jesus. This scene reminds us of John 3:16. It says, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." Once Martin Luther said, "If I were God, I would destroy all humankind once a day." Martin Luther was a man of courage and a lover of the truth. But his statement was far away from the compassion of Jesus. Jesus saw the people and he was very compassionate toward them. Jesus saw each of them as one of his own children who was ailing and gradually dying. We live in "Generation X." People are

selfish. They think of themselves only. Some people call them the "I, my, me" generation. They have no idea about their wives or children. They do as their egos direct them. Jesus' disciples also had no compassion; they felt very tired and regretted that they were following Jesus. But they needed to have the compassion of God so that they could be happy about themselves and happy toward others. Without compassion, man cannot be happy. Without compassion, man cannot rest. Without compassion, man becomes strange. Without compassion, a man is beside himself. Without compassion, they are ruthless and selfish. To satisfy his own passion, a man can ruin many girls in his ignorance. Therefore, we must have the compassion of God in our hearts. The disciples grumbled in their hearts, but didn't complain to Jesus about this crowd. From this we learn that his disciples had grown tremendously.

III. "Go and see" (35-38)

What did Jesus do when he saw that the crowd arrived before him and his disciples on the other side of the lake? Jesus did not provide bread or drinks. Jesus did not say any word of sympathy. Jesus taught them the word of God. His teaching was endless. Jesus seemed to teach them until they were enlightened with the word of God and became new people. The contents of his teaching was very short and he repeated it again and again. But people liked it so much that they did not know they were sick or ailing. They did not even know they were hungry. While he was teaching them, the sun was gradually going down the edge of the western horizon. The sky was colored by the dusk with a beautiful color.

Jesus' disciples were quite forbearing. They endured fatigue and boredom to listen to Jesus speak the same message again and again until the sun was setting. Then the disciples had a conference and came to Jesus with a conclusion: "This is a remote place, and it's already very late. Send the people away so they can go to the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat" (35,36). The disciples were reasonable. What they said was right and correct. They hoped that Jesus would scatter the crowd so that each one might be responsible for his own lodging and dinner. It was a reasonable and very brilliant idea in dealing with this crowd of people, for they were intensely listening to Jesus until they were very hungry and had no place to go, and it was late. Reason is good, but reason doesn't solve man's problem fundamentally. The disciples' reasonable suggestion was a way to escape the responsibility to take care of the people. These days, people live with reason. But reason sometimes requires responsibility. People say many things with their reason. But when they have to apply their reason in practice, they escape. Therefore, Francis Schaffer wrote a book entitled, "Escape from Reason." People can escape, but there is no hiding place in the world. Let's see what Jesus said.

Look at verse 37a. "But he answered, `You give them something to eat.'" What did they answer? They said to him, "That would take eight months of a man's wages! Are we to go and spend that much on bread and give it to them to eat?" (37b) His disciples became obviously upset and answered ironically. What they said meant, "Shall we go out and make money in the amount of eight months of a man's wages and buy bread and feed them?"

Look at verse 37a. "But he answered, `You give them something to

eat.'" Then they said to him, "That would take eight months of a man's wages! Are we to go and spend that much on bread and give it to them to eat?" (37b) If they went out to make such a huge amount of money and came back with bread, what would happen to the people who were waiting for them? What the disciples said was reasonable, but it was an irresponsible response to Jesus. When Jesus said, "You give them something to eat," he meant, "You must be compassionate instead of thinking of them as annoying people." When Jesus said, "You give them something to eat," he meant, "You must have a shepherd heart for them. Therefore, even if you have no bread, you must feed them by any means." Where there is a shepherd heart, always a miracle happens. When Jesus was on the way to Jericho, one blind man shouted, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" (10:46-52) People rebuked him to be quiet and blocked him from approaching Jesus. But Jesus, out of his shepherd heart, brought him to himself and asked, "What do you want me to do for you?" "I want to see," he said. Jesus immediately learned that his blindness made him fatalistic and a beggar. Jesus healed his blindness and made him live a new life.

Look at verse 38. "'How many loaves do you have?' he asked. 'Go and see.' When they found out, they said, 'Five-and two fish.'" It was too small an amount. It might have been a boy's lunch box. It had dried up while he was listening to Jesus. Jesus said in verse 38, "How many loaves do you have? Go and see." Jesus taught them the truth that when things look impossible, they must go and see. They should not just sit down and despair. Jesus' words, "Go and see," are the way to success. Many women want to be in favorable situations. But they do not "go and see" in order to be in a favorable situation. At last, they become overaged girls who have not much of a chance to get married. As we know well, the world situation is always desperate. Nobody can dare to do something good. But we have many examples of "go and see" faith. Hudson Taylor was a medical doctor with a weak body. But he decided to go to China as a missionary. Soon he went by himself to China, shaved his head and wore Chinese clothes. But because of his Caucasian features, nobody recognized him as Chinese. He learned the difficult Chinese language. Next, he brought his wife Mary and his son. The Chinese people liked Hudson Taylor. Many Chinese people followed him. Later, many missionaries came to China to cowork with Hudson Taylor. Finally, the number amounted to 300. Unfortunately, once in China, where Hudson Taylor lived, pestilence spread and 200 of his coworkers died. Not only that, his wife and his son also died because of the pestilence. It was a great disaster. But he did not sit down and despair. He cried for a while and prayed again. He asked his fellow members in England to send more missionaries. Miraculously, another 200 members went there and worked hard. This was Chinese mission. Chinese mission was possible. They called their Chinese mission, "China Inland Mission." Now it is called, "OMF."

UBF direction is to spread our missionaries to the world power nations so that through the world power nations we might reach out to the small nations. Nevertheless, many missionaries went to China and are working hard in an unstable situation. They have already occupied Hailaer, Haerbing, Yanji, Changchun, Shenyang, Dalian, Yantai, Windao, Lianvungar, Changzhou, Shanghai, Xhoushan, Ningbo, Huangyan, Wenzhou, Fuzhou, Xiamen, Shantou, Shenzhen, Haikou, Sanya, Zhanjiang, Zhuhai, Guangzhou, Guilin, Kunming, Guiyang, Changsha, Nanchang, Quanzhou, Quzhou, Huangshan, Hangzhou, Jindezhen, Zhangjiajie, Chendu, Chungqing, Wuhan,

Nanjing, Hefei, Xuzhou, Zhenzhou, Xian, Lanzhou, Wulumuqi, Changzhi, Jinan, Tianjing, Taiyuan, Shijia Zhuang, Qinhuangdao and Beijing. They are more than 200. They are all self-supporting and they are all learning the Chinese language through self-study. They all have to change their residence once a month. In spite of this difficulty, they do not sit down and despair. They "go and see" where they can pioneer more districts. In quality, our missionaries are the best kind in an impossible situation. They cannot write to other countries because Chinese officials inspect each letter. They cannot write their return addresses when they send letters. If they write their return addresses, they are immediately arrested and all other missionaries are investigated through one person's mistake. But UBF China mission grows day by day.

UBF missionaries are not supported; they are all self-supporting. Missionary Abraham Park was in Kuwait as a Korean Embassy officer. But he gave his position to another coworker and he went to Jordan. His ministry is growing day by day. Here we see that our missionaries are not "sit down and despair" people. They are people who "go and see." Many people in America live in a favorable situation, except in Las Vegas or on Wall Street in New York. But many of them complain that their situation or environment is not good enough. They are people who are not listening to Jesus' words, "Go and see." If Americans go to Africa and see the situation, they will complain less when they come back home. Those who do not "go and see" are not normal people. Those who do not overcome impossible situations and do something good and great are not normal people. We are born to conquer the world. Conquering is impossible because enemies are stronger. But if we listen to Jesus' command, "Go and see," nothing is impossible. We can be conquerors of the world.

IV. Jesus coworks with his disciples (39-44)

When they brought the five loaves and two fish, Jesus told them to have all the people sit down in groups on the green grass (39). So they sat down in groups of hundreds and fifties (40). Jesus coworked with his disciples by letting them make people sit down on the grass. Jesus never works all by himself. Jesus always coworks. Then what happened? Jesus took the five loaves and two fish and, looking up to heaven, he thanked God and prayed that God would feed his children (41). Then God blessed him, and enough bread and fish came out of the five loaves and two fish to feed five thousand people. They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces of bread and fish (42-43). Here we learn two things. First, we must listen to Jesus' command, "Go and see." "Go and see" must be our life philosophy. "Go and see" must be our life of faith. When they obeyed Jesus' command, "Go and see," they fed five thousand people. But the actual number was more than five thousand. Verse 44 says, "The number of the men who had eaten was five thousand." At that time men were numbered, but women and children, who had no labor power, were not numbered. They were not properly respected. Mark, who wrote the standard gospel, states that the five thousand were men; there might have been many women and many more children, too. When the disciples of Jesus went and saw, God's blessing overflowed. Their blessings were left over. Verse 43 says, "...and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces of bread and fish."

Don't sit down under the apple tree and hope that an apple will fall into your mouth. You must look around and see the apple tree, go up and

take an apple, put it in your pocket, come down and rub the apple and eat it deliciously. May God bless you to not sit down and despair in this hard world, but to "go and see" so that you may obtain God's abundant blessing.