

Mark 6:30-44

“True Manna”

- I. **Introduction**
- II. **Vs. 30-34 Burn on or burn out?**
- III. **Vs. 35-44 Manufacturers or distributors**

I. **Introduction**

I am amazed at the training methods and risks Jesus took when entrusting the greatest message and only hope to unlearned and inexperienced people. The fact that He did astounded experts in the book of Acts as they noted that those who they had just debated, were unlearned and uneducated fishermen with only one qualifying detail, “*They had been with Jesus*”! In the rabbinical schools the pupils from a very young age had to show increased academic aptitude that was designed to eliminate students until you were left the best and brightest. The pupils that didn’t make it would be dropouts that would filter to different trades. It is clear that Jesus didn’t choose His disciples from the rabbinical schools but rather from the cast off trades. His were not the best and the brightest, far from it! His disciples were not trained daily in the class rooms but were with Him observing His methods and manners. It is here that we pick up our story in the 6th chapter of Mark as the 12 have come back having been parried up and sent out with His power and authority. As you look at the whole of this passage you see the ebb and flow of the Christian life: A continuous going into the presence of God from the presence of people, and coming out from the presence of people and back into the presence of God. You can not be effective at our work for God unless you have spent time at rest with God! But you will be restless if you have not been engaged in your work for God, we need both!

II. Vs. 30-34 Burn on or burn out?

Vs. 30-31 Know doubt Jesus knew that these men needed some debriefing but his story is far more than a story of personal time interrupted. It has been said that, “*If you don’t come apart to a deserted place and rest you will just end up coming apart!*” Saints, it is always wiser decision to make preparation to **burn on** so that you won’t just end up **burning out!** Mark places the beheading of John the Baptist between the sending out of the 12 disciples of verses 7-13 and their return and report of verses 30-31 to give context of the time and situation in which the disciples were sent out. Jesus recognized that these disciples were in danger on three fronts and He had accounted for this and made provision for it.

- First there was the danger from the increased boldness of the opposition
- Second, there was the danger from exhaustion and fatigue as we are told that “*many were coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.*”
- Finally, though not in this text we are informed in the other gospel accounts that by far their greatest danger was from pride and an over estimate of their accomplishments. The disciples were very excited during their debriefing so much so that Jesus had to warn them in Luke 10:20 not to “*rejoice that the demons are subject to them in His name but rather that their names are written in heaven.*”

Vs. 32-34 The feeding of the 5,000 must not be confused with the feeding of the 4,000.

Though they happened the same year the feeding of the 5,000 took place close to Bethsaida in the Spring just before Passover whereas the feeding of the 4,000 took place later in the same year near Decapolis at the other end of the Sea of Galilee. In the feeding of the 4000 we are told by Jesus that their feed was necessitated because they were “**very hungry for they had been with Him for three days and hadn’t eaten.**” But here we know that they had followed Jesus on foot as He and his disciples were crossing the lake. And even though Jesus had taught all day the request of the disciples to “**send them away**”

was perfectly reasonable as they had time to get back and get food. This suggests to us three things:

- a. **That this feeding was not a necessity:** Though a deliberate action by Jesus it was not one born out of the necessity of the physical needs of the multitudes. To be sure some of the folks were no doubt tired having ran around the lake but they were not in danger of starving. It is impressive that the multitudes had taken the effort to run after Jesus and stay there through out the day to hear Him teach and to have their inflections ministered too, but in John's account we are told that "*Jesus knew what He was going to do*" which is an assessment that this was not a spontaneous event but more of a calculated one.
- b. **That this feeding was not about food for the body:** This feeding was not about just the multitudes it was also about the disciples who had just returned from their being sent out doing His work in the villages. The timing was very near Passover, the location being out in the wilderness all of which no doubt would have given them time to reflect upon the nation's wondering in the wilderness. John records Jesus' words a day later in chapter 6 and reminds us that it took place in the same spot as the feeding of the 5000. The lesson Jesus was trying to convey is found in His words a day later, "*I am the bread of life. He who comes after Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.*" "*I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die.*" These disciples were to learn that it was far more exciting to be with "THE BREAD OF LIFE". They were given the privilege to give the multitudes the true "Manna" which in partaking of Him will leave the person not only satisfied in this life but full forever.
- c. **This feeding was about finding your true fulfillment:** I come to this conclusion based upon the number of baskets filled with the crumbs, 12. The number 12 is a very biblical number as it not only represented the number of Jewish tribes it also represented the number of disciples. The point of this seems to suggest that our deliverance of Jesus as the bread of life is the surest way to never hunger ourselves. That which Israel was longing for in manna was only temporary and was pointing to Him who will forever satisfy what we hunger for. Ministry is a basket, nothing more! Its usefulness is not in the straw or branches that are woven together but it what it is designed to gather "*The bread of life*"!

III. Vs. 35-44 Manufacturers or distributors

Vs. 35-44 All four gospel accounts record this event with differing details: Matthew tells us that the decision to depart was timed with the hearing that John had been beheaded.

Three of the accounts tell us that Jesus was "*moved with compassion and healed the sick*

because they were like sheep without a shepherd” and only Mark tells us that He “*began teaching them many things*”. Mark also tells us that the feeding of the 5,000 came after the day was “*far spent*”. And three gospel accounts tell us then that “*the disciples told Jesus to send them away, that they may go into surrounding villages and buy themselves bread; for they have nothing to eat.*” Only John tells us that Jesus seeing the large multitude coming forward asked Philip “*Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?*” And that Jesus said that testing him, for “*He Himself knew what He would do.*” Matthew, Mark and Luke all record that Jesus then challenged them saying, “*You give them something to eat*” it is then that Philip answered that “*200 day’s wages were not enough to purchase the bread necessary to feed the multitude even if everyone had only a little.*” To which Jesus replied, “*How many loaves do you have? Go and see.*” John tells us that the disciples came back from this scavenger hunt with the answer from Andrew, Peter’s brother, that they had found a “*lad who had five barley loafs and two small fish*” and the disciples added “*but what are these among so many*” to which Luke’s account adds that the disciples said “*unless we go and buy food for all these people.*” From here each account describes the picturesque grouping of the multitude in 100’s and 50’s upon the green spring time grass and how Jesus took up the five barley loaves and two fish and blessed it and broke it giving it to the disciples who in turn passed it out then went back and took up twelve baskets full of fragments.

Vs. 35 According to Matthew chapter 10:36-38 Jesus had sent out the 12 because He had compassion on the multitudes but this time the multitudes came to Jesus and His disciples wanted to send them away. There is a difference between Jesus view of the 5000 and the disciples view of them:

- The disciples saw them through the eyes of their needs and said, “*Send them away, were weary!*”
- Jesus saw them through the eyes of their need and said, “*Come unto me all you who are weary!*”

The disciples had two suggestions for solving the problem:

1. **Send them away**: Give these people ample time to go and find their own provisions. I’m of the opinion that this is the one that the disciples preferred as it would mean less work for them and more down time with Jesus.
2. **Raise enough money and go and buy enough bread so that all could have something to eat**: A denarion was a silver coin worth about \$35 today and 200 would be \$7,700 or an average year’s wage. This didn’t seem feasible as they didn’t have enough resources for such a large crowd, so that everyone would be able to get even a little. Not to mention that they would have to go to several villages to find enough bread to purchase for 5000 men plus women and children.

What an effective committee of problem solvers these 12 were! Someone has well described *a committee as a group of people who as individuals aren’t willing to do anything so they come together with the collative purpose to decide that nothing can be done!* Saints, *Jesus isn’t interested in what we lack His only interest is in what we have!*

They adopted a “*corporate business plan*” to assess the situation which was to “*measure their available resources*”. But Jesus offered them the “*Biblical Plan*” which was to “*Determine God’s will and then trust Him to meet the need.*” Jesus had the disciples sit the people down in groups of hundreds and fifties in the spring time green grass. The Greek word for “*sit down*” is one used for a person to recline at banquet and suggests that Jesus meant it to illustrate to the disciples that theses 5000 were attendants at His banquet and were waiting to be served. These loaves were barley loaves the food of the poorest of the poor and the size would have been not like our loaf of bread but like our dinner roll. The two fish would have been salted and small in size. Then Jesus took the little lad’s lunch that Andrew had found and did three things that we must remember:

- **BLESSED IT**

- **BROKE IT**
- **GAVE IT**

The Greek has the word “*broke*” *the loaves* and “*gave*” *them* are in **different verb tenses**.

The verb tense for “*broke*” is in the **aojist tense** which means that the action was “**instantaneous**” where as the verb tense for “*gave*” is in the **imperfect tense** which means that the action was “**continuous**”. Jesus broke the five loafs and two fish and the disciples kept on giving it out. Jesus illustrates for us is that, “*Blessings and breakings always proceed feedings.*” We must allow the Lord to bless our lives and break our lives if our lives are going to be a nourishment for others! What a lesson for these corporate disciples that they were not “**manufacturers**” they were only “**distributors**”! They were to get what ever He had given them into the hands of Jesus so that He could “**BLESS IT**” “**BREAK IT**” it is then that we “**DISTRIBUTE IT**” so that He can “**MULTIPLY IT**”! In the hands of Jesus our little becomes much more than a meal, if we put ourselves and what He has given us into the hands of Jesus where He can bless us, break us and give us away there is no telling what He can do!