

Ben Leney

Salvation's Plan

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Mark 6:30 "Then the apostles gathered to Jesus and told Him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught."

I quite like Paul Barnett's comment on this:

In these few verses Mark skilfully narrates how those who were gathered in the wilderness feeding—the Twelve with Jesus and the 5000 Galilean men—came to be there.

Their mission completed, the six pairs of apostles converged from various places around Galilee. They gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done—cast out evil spirits and healed the sick—and taught—the imminence of the kingdom of God and the call to repent—during their weeks and months away from him.

But they were not alone. Each pair of disciples was followed by people from all the towns they had visited. As a result, so many people were coming and going during their reunion that Jesus and the Twelve did not even have the chance to eat together. Therefore, Jesus said that they should come with him by themselves to a quiet place and get some rest.<sup>1</sup>

1 Barnett, P. (1991) Mark: The Servant King. Sydney, South NSW: Aquila Press (Reading the Bible Today Series), pp. 107–108.

The only reference to the apostles. Cranfield says: From Hebrew 'saliah - authorized agent or representative, whether a private person, or a corporation. Function not status - when the mission has been carried out, the appointment lapses. The authority is derived and dependent. 'a man's agent is as himself,' So Jesus gave them this function but it ended when they came back.

| Matthew 10:40 (NKJV)

| "He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me.

Donald English in his Bible Speaks Today commentary makes the same point - the emphasis in Mark is not that they went out on mission, but that they came back. The root of their ministry is Jesus himself. They all came back.

He's called Teacher or Rabbi 9 times in total in Mark, even though we don't get much of his teaching (as compared to Matthew, for example!).

The Gospel of Mark contains four uses of the title rabbi (Mark 9:5; 10:51; 11:21;

14:45). It is possible to read these instances as either "lord" or "teacher."

People repeatedly address Jesus as "teacher" and speak about Him in ways reflecting that role (e.g., Mark 4:38; 5:35; 10:17; 13:1; 14:14).

| Luke 10:21 (NKJV)

| <sup>21</sup> In that hour Jesus rejoiced in the Spirit and said, "I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from *the* wise and prudent and revealed them to babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight.

Donald English - "churches are more committed to status than function."

Mark 6:31 "And He said to them, "Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while." For there were many coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat."

Mark 6:32 "So they departed to a deserted place in the boat by themselves."

| Mark 4:38 (NKJV)

| <sup>38</sup> But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him and said to Him, "Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?"

| Hebrews 4:15 (NLT)

| <sup>15</sup> This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testings we do, yet he did not sin.

There are few unfortunately in the church of Christ who need these admonitions. There are but few in danger of overworking themselves and injuring their own bodies and souls by excessive attention to others. The vast majority of professing Christians are indolent and slothful and do nothing for the world around them. There are few comparatively who need the bridle nearly so much as the spur. Yet these few ought to lay to heart the lessons of this passage. They should economize their health as a talent and not squander it away like gamblers. They should be content with spending their daily income of strength and should not draw recklessly on their principal.

Ryle, J. C.. *Expository Thoughts on the Gospel of Mark: A Commentary* [Updated] (p. 91). Aneko Press. Kindle Edition.

How do we rest when we do need it?

1. Come aside by yourselves.

"If we don't come apart and rest, you will come apart." Vance Havner.

2. We rest simply. It's a deserted place.

3. Just rest for a while, not for too long.

4. Be aware your rest may be interrupted.

Jean-Pierre de Caussade, taught that if we surrender to God, we feel desperation

and fear that it's stopping you from being centred, do you find this, what about me, what about this detail, and he says, paraphrased, that we should pay attention to God's presence and trust him to provide for all our needs.

"Everything turns to bread to nourish me, soap to wash me, fire to purify me and a chisel to fashion me in the image of God." Jean-Pierre de Caussade, *Abandonment to Divine Providence first pub. 1861*

God pledges to sustain us when the needs of others interrupt our plans. It's a test of our own hearts. Lord, wash me. What's coming out of us, out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks (Luke 6.45), might be sinful or self indulgent. We need the pressure of ministry to purify us and fit us for heaven.

Mark 6:33 "33 But the multitudes saw them departing, and many knew Him and ran there on foot from all the cities. They arrived before them and came together to Him."

It was probably about 4 miles by boat, and more like eight miles by foot. If it was in Bethsaida there was actually a river to cross - it would have been a trail run.

The running crowds in Mark seems to epitomise the difference with the gospels. In John 6 it speaks of the crowds coming towards him and following him. You don't get the crowd 'running' in the other accounts. Luke 19.11 the multitudes followed. In Matt 13 they followed on foot. It's only in Mark that we get running.

It's worth bearing in mind Jesus is building up to the biggest miracle Jesus has done so far in the gospels - Jairus' daughter being raised was behind closed doors. This was a very public miracle of provision.

According to

| John 1:44 (NKJV)

| <sup>44</sup> Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.

It's been identified with et-Tell, an archaeological site, but there is some disagreement. was located on the Plain of Batiha, northeast of where the Jordan River enters the Sea of Galilee.

Thompson, F.C. and Jauchen, J.S. (eds.) (1997) Thompson Chain Archaeological Supplement. Updated and Expanded. Indianapolis, IN: B.B. Kirkbride Bible Co., Inc. (The Thompson Chain-Reference Bible).

It's worth noting that in Matt 14.14 and Luke 9 it says Jesus performs healing miracles.

Another aspect is the fact that some of these men running to meet Jesus had an ulterior motive; let's take a look at this verse which is just after the feeding of the 5,000:

| John 6:15 (NKJV)

<sup>15</sup> Therefore when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king, He departed again to the mountain by Himself alone.

the crowd try to make Jesus king after this point.

Mark 6:34 " And Jesus, when He came out, saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them, because they were like sheep not having a shepherd. So He began to teach them many things."

This last meaning, unusual in secular Greek, is the predominant one in the Bible (cf. Prov 12:10; Wis 10:5), especially in the NT, where the entrails (corresponding to the Hebrew *raḥamîm*) are the seat of compassion (Gen 43:30; 1 Kgs 3:26; Jer 31:20). The feminine singular *reḥem*, moreover, refers to the uterus, the mother's womb; so that the entrails are the locus of the mother's pity for her children (Isa 49:15) and are said to shudder (Isa 16:11; Cant 5:4), to resound and make noise (Isa 43:15), to bubble or seethe (Lam 1:20), or to be in turmoil. It follows that in the Synoptics, where this compassion is twice attributed to God (Matt 18:27; Luke 15:20), once to the Good Samaritan, and nine times to Christ—almost always to account for a miracle—the word means first of all a physical emotion, true compassion in the face of a neighbor's misery, literally a movement of the entrails at the sight. So translating the passive *esplanchnisthē* as "he took pity" is almost opposite the true sense; "he was taken by (or moved with) pity" would be better. The exact sense is "he had a visceral feeling of compassion."

Spicq, C. and Ernest, J.D. (1994) *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers.

Jesus then added a simile, which draws upon an Old Testament description of Israel (Numbers 27:17; 2 Chronicles 18:16; 1 Kings 22:17): 'like they were sheep without a shepherd'. The shepherd was a common symbol for a king, or a ruler, in the ancient world, both inside and outside the Bible and among both Jews and Gentiles. Jesus was saying that the people of Israel were like they were because they had no leader, no prince, no Messiah.

Bolt, P.G. (2014) *Matthew: A Great Light Dawns*. Edited by P. Barnett. Sydney, South NSW: Aquila Press (Reading the Bible Today Series), p. 92.

Ezekiel 34:23 "23 I will establish one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them—My servant David. He shall feed them and be their shepherd."

Zechariah 10:2b (NKJV)

Therefore *the people* wend their way like sheep;

They are in trouble because *there is* no shepherd.

The Lexham Bible Dictionary (New Testament)

In the Gospels, Jesus is portrayed as the "good shepherd":

- He exhibits compassion for the helpless (Matt 9:6; Mark 6:34)

- He seeks out his lost sheep of Israel (Matt 18:12–14; Luke 15:3–7)
- His mission is to gather those who have been scattered (Matt 10:6; 15:24).

We can learn here from Jesus how our heart should be towards those who need Him - in other words, all those around us. Jesus says this of himself:

John 10:11–14 (NKJV)

<sup>11</sup> "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. <sup>12</sup> But a hireling, *he who is* not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. <sup>13</sup> The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep. <sup>14</sup> I am the good shepherd; and I know My *sheep*, and am known by My own.

James Cardinal Gibbons has said 'There are no office hours for leaders', and John MacArthur points out that 'involvement' is key: True leaders are always in the middle of the action.