

Wednesday with the Word @ Wheat Street Baptist Church

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What Does Jesus See: Need versus Need Mark 6:30-42

The state of the people is the key to this passage. Jesus is concerned with the state of the people, the need of the people. What was the state of the people? The experts, the teachers of the day was leading them astray. They had the wrong focus. The leaders of the day was calling what Jesus was doing satanic.

Mark 3:22-30

22 And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, “He has Beelzebul, and by the ruler of the demons he casts out demons.” **23** And he called them to him, and spoke to them in parables, “How can Satan cast out Satan? **24** If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. **25** And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. **26** And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but his end has come. **27** But no one can enter a strong man’s house and plunder his property without first tying up the strong man; then indeed the house can be plundered. **28** “Truly I tell you, people will be forgiven for their sins and whatever blasphemies they utter; **29** but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit can never have forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin”— **30** for they had said, “He has an unclean spirit.”

These leaders were actually attacking Jesus not following Jesus. They stood against the miraculous ministry that Jesus was doing amongst the people. The leadership had turned from God to worshipping their way and when your way becomes more powerful to you than God’s way you are in trouble. This is where tradition gets churches in trouble. We get so bent on doing what we have done we don’t ask what God wants. We have the ?? Annual ???? and we go on. This gets us into trouble and it makes it hard for us to hear from God. It makes it hard for us to hear God. When our minds are made we turn a deaf ear to what God is trying to whisper in our ear. The state of the people in Mark 3 is liked to what Ezekiel faced in Ezekiel 3:4-11

Ezekiel 3:4-11

4 He said to me: Mortal, go to the house of Israel and speak my very words to them. **5** For you are not sent to a people of obscure speech and difficult

language, but to the house of Israel— **6** not to many peoples of obscure speech and difficult language, whose words you cannot understand. Surely, if I sent you to them, they would listen to you. **7** But the house of Israel will not listen to you, for they are not willing to listen to me; because all the house of Israel have a hard forehead and a stubborn heart. **8** See, I have made your face hard against their faces, and your forehead hard against their foreheads. **9** Like the hardest stone, harder than flint, I have made your forehead; do not fear them or be dismayed at their looks, for they are a rebellious house. **10** He said to me: Mortal, all my words that I shall speak to you receive in your heart and hear with your ears; **11** then go to the exiles, to your people, and speak to them. Say to them, “Thus says the Lord God”; whether they hear or refuse to hear.

Back to Mark 6:30-42

So this passages opens with a question:

Mark 6:30

30 The apostles gathered around Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught.

The disciples were out teaching and doing the things that Jesus had taught them to do and teach. This was their primary work. Their primary work was to share the teachings of Jesus that were to also inform the values, principles and practices of ministry. They were teaching the people. This is why quality Christian education is so important to the church. We have to be taught the Bible if we are going to live according to the Bible. A biblically illiterate church is a church bound for disaster. When we have no Bible to inform what we do we then can easily fall in the trap of honoring tradition over scripture. What happens then is we find ourselves in an idolatrous position. We have made an idol of what we do because we are not willing to ask why we do it and is it biblical!

★ **Book recommendation:** [Pagan Christianity: Exploring the Roots of our Church Practices](#) by Frank Viola and George Barna

Mark 6:31-32

31 He said to them, “Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves 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 deserted place by themselves.

Here we find the principle of retreat. Jesus is calling his team to a place to come together, get themselves together and reflect. What you see Jesus doing throughout his ministry is this ministry of retreat / huddle / regroup. Jesus is trying to get those in ministry to reflect on ministry and he is also calling them to a time

of rest. They had been out teaching and doing ministry and now Jesus is saying let's take a break and reflect. This is a principle I encourage the church to have, ministries, ministry leaders and individuals. You need to take time to pause and reflect.

Mark 6:33-34

33 Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they hurried there on foot from all the towns and arrived ahead of them. **34** As he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things.

We spoke earlier about the condition the people. Jesus saw the condition of the people. Leaders are called to see the condition of the people and then to do something about it. Jesus couldn't leave the people in the state that he found them. He had to stop and teach them. The text says, "they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things." This is what Jesus saw. He saw a hurting people. A people without a shepherd and he was called to that place at that time and he had to feed them. Jesus is always moved by the need of the people. Jesus is responding to the cry of the people which implies that he is in touch with the people. The more we are in touch with the people the more we will be moved to respond to them because of their need and not our need. In reality their need is our need and God has called us to meet their need and also meet our need but if we don't see them, touch, love them and feel them we will miss the need (their and ours). We think they need us but in reality we need them.

This is a needs issue in this text. Jesus and his disciples need rest but the call of the people led Jesus to put his rest off for the he saw them, he felt them, he loved them, therefore he began to teach them. Remember we said earlier a key to Jesus' ministry is his teaching.

Mark 6:35-36

35 When it grew late, his disciples came to him and said, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is now very late; **36** send them away so that they may go into the surrounding country and villages and buy something for themselves to eat."

Here is the tension in this text. What did Jesus see versus what the Disciples saw? Jesus saw the people need. The Disciples saw the people as a burden. They were more concerned with the treasury than the need. They were looking at what they had versus what the people needed. They were sitting there with

Jesus, the miracle worker and they missed it. Before we judge them, we miss it to. We can get so caught up in our circumstances that we forget we serve the miracle worker. This was a real issue and I don't want to belittle them. It was getting late, they had enough food to feed themselves and all of these folk have followed them to this remote place. What do they do?

Mark 6:37-38

37 But he answered them, "You give them something to eat." They said to him, "Are we to go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread, and give it to them to eat?" **38** And he said to them, "How many loaves have you? Go and see." When they had found out, they said, "Five, and two fish."

Jesus knew how much they had but he wanted to see what they had so they could be clear on the miracle they were about to witness. This is the principle of counting what you got so you know what you need. It is good to know how bad off you are because you know what to ask God for or should I say you know what to pray for. When you look at your reality it doesn't get in the way of God's ability to do what you need. When you need a miracle you need God. This is what they are in need of and part of this is to be honest about where you are! We have to face reality.

What is also interesting in this part of the text is that the Disciples immediately go to how much it is going to cost. They are focused on the cost not the need. Now, I am not discounting the seriousness of this issue but what I am saying is that when we change our perspective we will be amazed at what we see. What if instead of worrying about the cost they said: "We don't anything to worry about we are with Jesus and he always comes through we are going to be alright."

In the opening of this part of the text Jesus is taking directly to them and to us when he says, "you give them something to eat." The Disciples were going to make sure they ate but the people had to go somewhere. The Disciples suffered from a focus of taking care of themselves, they were going to take care of each other but these folk. The church can be this way sometimes. We talk about the "members", "church kids versus community kids", "are they a member", "if they aren't a member....." But Jesus said, "you feed them." Their retort was not OK..have them sit down and lets do this. They immediately went into why they couldn't do it versus asking Jesus to help them do it. We can spend so much time talking about why we can't do what God has called us to do that we begin to talk ourselves out of being obedient to God's will and then miss the blessing of God as God does a miracle right before our eyes. For us to see God do mighty

stuff we have to change our conversation and how we see the struggles we are encountering.

Mark 6:39-42

39 Then he ordered them to get all the people to sit down in groups on the green grass. **40** So they sat down in groups of hundreds and of fifties. **41** Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to his disciples to set before the people; and he divided the two fish among them all. **42** And all ate and were filled;

The principle of order. We have a responsibility to create some order for God to bless. I don't see in scripture where God blesses mess. Jesus always calls for some type of order before he performs a miracle. Jesus says, "sit down in groups on the green grass." Don't miss this. They were in an area where there was both green grass and dirt. He said sit them in an area that represented growth and fertility. He said not just sit down in groups but he said in groups of hundreds and fifties. Order....this is so important for the house of God to have some order. While God blesses order the inverse of this is chaos and out of order or people doing whatever they want to do. Can you imagine what this scene would have looked like if these folk knew how little food was in the basket, they were hungry...and you know a fight would've broke out. This is why we have to work hard to create order to produce ministry that makes a difference. We can't do what we want but rather we must do what God wants of us.

After order was established Jesus blessed the little. We have to be thankful for what we got and bless what we got. After we bless what we got we are not to hold onto it but rather we are to find ways to give it away to bless others. Jesus blessed it and then told them to give it away. We have to order ourselves, bless what we have and then find ways to bless those who are not a part of our church with what God has given us. This is the importance of outreach. When we reach out to give we are actually ensuring our blessing.

Mark 6:43-44

43 and they took up twelve baskets full of broken pieces and of the fish.
44 Those who had eaten the loaves numbered five thousand men.

In the end we will have left overs. God calls us to be willing to give it away to those who have need and in the end we will get back what we have given. Some scholars suggest that the message in this lesson is that the Disciples end up with

what they started with. What they were afraid of sharing, in sharing it, they didn't lose it but retained it. In giving we get but if we refuse to give because we are trying to hold onto what we got we die. We starve, the church starves, the community starves and we are all broken. The focus has to be on the need of the people and not on what we do not have. Sometimes we do not have because we haven't given and served in the way God would require us to give and serve. We have been so consumed by budget and money that ministry and service has taken a back seat. And I get why this happens. When you don't have money to pay the bills this is a legitimate concern but we have to refocus for be faithful. The Disciples almost slipped into this trap of focusing on the lack of resources and I get it. They began to look at what they had versus the people need and they missed the fact that they were sitting with Jesus. When the Disciples changed their focus, order the people, saw the need, blessed what they had, gave it away God proved to be faithful. In the end this is about faith. The faith in a God that tells us to give away what we have to get more. A God who subtracts to add and divides to multiply.