February 15, 2024

Sermon 21

Mark 6:33-44

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Alright, turn in your Bibles to Mark 6. We’re going to pick up where we left off. I just want to real quick do a little recap. If you remember, a couple of weeks ago we looked at Jesus sending out the twelve disciples. Remember, He sends them out two-by-two, and it’s really cool because He gives them authority, not only to go preach – they’re going to preach the messages they’ve heard Christ preaching, so He gives them authority to go do that – but He also gives them authority to cast out demons and to heal people. So, they are actually performing miracles, and they’re doing the things that they have been watching Christ do, which is just amazing. Then, we kind of got that weird little story. Weird is not the right word; disturbing would be the right word, where Herod, this supposed-to-be-king over Israel, is throwing this crazy party just for the elite in Israel, the yes-men who work underneath him, and it escalates to this really weird place where the story ends last week with John the Baptist being beheaded. Then, it rolls right from that to where we’re going to be tonight, which is the feeding of the 5000.

So, Mark 6, starting in verse 30, says this,

*30 The apostles returned to Jesus and told him all that they had done and taught. 31 And he said to them, “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.*

We will pause there. They come back and they are telling Jesus, they are giving a report, of all the awesome things they’ve been doing and seeing. They are celebrating that, and Jesus says, “Hey, listen. Let’s go away, just us, and you can give me a good debrief. We’ll get to rest.” Mark adds in that things were so crazy in the ministry, they were constantly going, and there was no end to the needs that people are bringing to them. There is no end to the opportunities to proclaim the Gospel, to teach about the kingdom, that it says they could hardly get a break to eat, to take a snack, to get a meal together. So, Jesus says, “Let’s go away, just us. We’ll stop, we’ll eat, and you guys can tell me all about it.” It’s this really cool picture of how in ministry there is a time for rest. It’s okay to pull away for a little while. I’ve heard so many people start to go down that trail, when studying this, but the reality is that doesn’t happen.

 Pause here. One of the things I love about this passage is that, aside from the resurrection, this is the only other miracle that shows up in all four gospel accounts. That’s fairly significant. There are 35-ish miracles that we have in the Gospel stories, but only two show up in each of the four gospels, which is really helpful, because we get fuller context to understand what’s going on here. We know from some of the other Gospel accounts, that when this miracle happens it is right around the time of the Passover. That’s significant, because the region they are in right now would have tripled, if not quadrupled, in size, just with the foot traffic of people coming in, preparing to celebrate the Passover. Jesus is already making waves by teaching with authority, performing miracles, but now the disciples have gone out, right? Six groups go out into all these different villages, and they are preaching, and they’re performing miracles, and they are doing it all in Jesus’ name. So, that is all that anybody is talking about. That’s all that’s going on. People want to hear Jesus preach; they want to see Him; they want to see Him perform a miracle; maybe they themselves need to be healed or they want to get somebody to Him. That’s all that’s going on. So, they try to go across the sea in the boat, but people see them. They see Jesus get in the boat, they see Him start across, and so they actually start running, and Mark tells us that a lot of them beat Him to the other side.

We will pick up there.

*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. 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. 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.” 37 But he answered them, “You give them something to eat.” And they said to him, “Shall we 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 do you have? Go and see.” And when they had found out, they said, “Five, and two fish.” 39 Then he commanded them all to sit down in groups on the green grass. 40 So they sat down in groups, by hundreds and by fifties. 41 And taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing and broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples to set before the people. And he divided the two fish among them all. 42 And they all ate and were satisfied. 43 And they took up twelve baskets full of broken pieces and of the fish. 44 And those who ate the loaves were five thousand men.*

Matthew actually tells us there were 5000 men, besides the women and children. So, if there were 5000 men, we can probably guess there were 5000 women, roughly. And if you have men and women together, there are going to be kids, right? There are children. So, who knows? 15000, 25000, 30000? It’s a lot of people.

I want us to pause right here, because this is such a familiar story, isn’t it? Don’t raise your hand, but how many of you, as I’m reading it, you are already filling in some of the other details from the other Gospel stories. You’re like, “Didn’t somebody? There was a boy. It was the boy’s lunch.” The disciples didn’t have it. The boy had food and they found him. And “the lad,” if you read the King James Version, brought his five loaves and two fish, whether willingly or not, right? Maybe you’ve heard this preached, where the main point of the sermon is ‘the boy who shared.’ He took his little bit and put it in the hands of God, and look at what God did. To which I would say, we don’t even know if he wanted to share. Andrew was probably a lot bigger than him. “Hey, kid! Whatcha got there? Bring it.” Maybe he didn’t want to. Or there was one good mom – out of everybody who was there – there was one good mom who packed a to-go lunch, and he got it taken away. Right? But we’re so familiar with this story, and it’s so easy to jump to teachings that we’ve heard on it before – this is about sharing, or this is about giving God your little bit – but I don’t want to miss the point of this miracle. Jesus wasn’t performing miracles only to meet temporary, physical needs. They always have a bigger purpose, always. John tells us at the end of his letter, “Hey, listen! There’s all kinds of stuff that we got to see Jesus do. If we could write them down, there are not enough books in the world, or not enough libraries to hold the books, that would be written about everything that Jesus did. But these things were written – we intentionally wrote these things - for a purpose. What? So that you can see who Jesus is, see that He’s the Son of God, and believe in Him.” There is always a bigger purpose to the miracles. I don’t want to miss that just because I’m familiar with it. I don’t want to gloss over what’s happening here.

So, I want us to picture the crowd of people who are running. It’s pretty impressive if you look at the topography of the sea, and where they are most likely going, and it’s not easy terrain. They were cutting across the middle in a boat, and these people are running around the edges. It’s crazy that some of them would even beat them there. That’s how desperate they are to get to Jesus. And they come up, and they start filling in the mountainside, and Jesus steps off the boat. Remember, they are on vacation. They are like, “Let’s take a week off.” And you know that all the disciples are like, “Yesss, yessir! Let’s get away from everybody.” That’s if they are anything like me. My people battery runs out quickly. They’re like, “Yeah, let’s go recharge. Let’s hang out, just us,” but then they step off the boat, and they look up, and there are all these people. And Jesus, it says, “He has compassion on them.” And here’s the key phrase, I think, in our whole story. It says,

*… he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd.*

So, He’s going to meet their need. We know from the other accounts that He spends all day, all day, preaching about the kingdom. He’s telling them who God is. He’s revealing to them what it’s like living underneath the rule that He’s going to bring in. He’s revealing himself to them.

Now, Mark doesn’t go into the details of that sermon. But I think he does this one better, because he tells us about the miracle that accomplishes the same purpose as the sermon. The miracle is revealing the nature and character of Jesus and the mission of Jesus.

It would seem like a problem pops up and Jesus is like, “I know, let’s get them food.” But in John’s account, He’s asking Philip, and He says, “Give them something to eat,” and John says, “Now, Jesus said this to test him.” We get a little insight. Jesus knows what He’s going to do. He knows He’s going to perform this miracle, and it’s awesome. He takes this boy’s supper, and prays over it, and multiplies it.

I’ll read you this quote. Listen to this quote.

Natural processes that normally took a season to complete – sowing seed, growing grain, harvesting, threshing, and baking bread – were compressed into a second under the mighty hand of the Word made flesh. What normally takes place over a span of months, in the hidden recesses of the Sea of Galilee – fish hatching, maturing, then being caught by trolling fishermen – all took place instantaneously in the hand of the Creator, who had formed the sea and dry land, and filled them with life.[[1]](#footnote-1)

Isn’t that awesome? In a moment, in an instant. I wish my mind could conceive what this even looks like. Is it as He’s breaking bread, and dropping it, that it never runs out? It’s being created in that moment in His hand. That’s just awesome. It’s awesome to think. These people are going to sit down and they’re going to eat fish that never swam. They’re eating bread that wasn’t baked. It’s a miracle. But again, it’s a miracle that’s pointing us to a deeper truth about who Christ is, and what His mission is, and how we’re to respond. I think that’s where, for me, the story really takes this twist. We’re going to come back to the phrase that I think I said is the most important for getting the right meaning of the text. But it’s interesting, because you think where Mark leaves it off, everybody eats, and they’re full, and they’re satisfied, and there’s a really cool picture of how they take away the baskets, and the baskets are full – there are leftovers. There’s this miracle of abundance. And you would think that everyone leaves and it’s a happy story. Then, it goes on to walking on water, which we will look at next week.

But that’s not really how it ends. Because if you go to John’s account, and you read how Jesus actually has to go away, because it says that they want to take Him and make Him king. Jesus, knowing that, goes away into the mountains. They start asking these questions, “Is this guy the Prophet? Is He the prophet that Moses told us about?” Because Moses had made this prophecy years, and years, and years ago, in Deuteronomy, that God was going to send another prophet like him. He tells the people before he dies, “Hey, listen! God’s going to raise up another prophet like me. Listen to Him! God’s words are going to be in His mouth. You have to pay attention to Him.” So, they are on the lookout for this. “Is this the Prophet like Moses? Is this the King who is going to lead us out of the situation we’re in? Look at what He’s doing for us. He’s healing. He’s got power and authority in His teaching. He’s providing for us, abundantly.” So, they want to take Him and make Him king, and Jesus won’t let them. Then, the next day, the people find Jesus again. And Jesus says some hard things to them. We’re going to get there in a little while, but it ends with Jesus walking away from them. And the majority of the people – the majority of the people who eat the fish and eat the bread – they walk away from Jesus. Remember where they say, “That’s a hard teaching,” and they turn and walk away from Him. It’s not what you expect when you first read the story. You’re like, “This is a happy story! Jesus is feeding everybody. Who doesn’t like free food?”

So, what’s really going on, and why did they think, “Okay, this is the Prophet”? Why did they think, “This is the king”? Why were they unsatisfied with Jesus’ answer to their questions? I think the key is Jesus saying He has compassion on them because He sees them as sheep without a shepherd. And that should recall our minds to – in this image, in what we read during worship, “The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures.” It’s not a throwaway line when Mark points out – because all but one of the gospels points this out – the place was full of green grass. See what’s happening? Jesus’ foot steps on shore and He’s like, “They’re like sheep that need a shepherd.” Then, He has them sit down in the green grass. And what does He do? He provides for them. That’s why they begin to pick up on, “This is our King!” Why? Because He’s acting like a King. Because, for Israel, a good shepherd was a picture for how they were to understand kingship. It’s also not a coincidence that both Moses and David were shepherds before God called them to lead His people. It’s not a coincidence that God would have them spend years of their lives shepherding literal sheep before they shepherded His people. Moses was like a surrogate king, leading the people out of slavery, to the Promised Land. And David, as a king after God’s own heart, led the people into victory and into worship.

That’s a picture of kingship, and it recalls our minds to Ezekiel 34. You don’t have to turn there; it’ll be on the screen. But I want to read this to you. The context here is that the Lord is calling out all the bad leadership of Israel, all these leaders, kings, prophets, and a lot of the priests that haven’t been serving the Lord, and they haven’t been serving the people. So, God’s calling them out. He says, “You’re using your position and leadership for your own selfish gain, at the cost of my people. You’re oppressing them, you’re trampling them down.” He says, “You’re a bad shepherd. You’re abusing the sheep.” So, He’s calling them out, and then we’ll pick up in verse 11, where He says this. This is Yahweh speaking.

*¹¹ “For thus says the Lord God: Behold, I, I myself will search for my sheep and will seek them out. ¹² As a shepherd seeks out his flock when he is among his sheep that have been scattered, so will I seek out my sheep, and I will rescue them from all places where they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. ¹³ And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land. And I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the ravines, and in all the inhabited places of the country. ¹⁴ I will feed them with good pasture, and on the mountain heights of Israel shall be their grazing land. There they shall lie down in good grazing land, and on rich pasture they shall feed on the mountains of Israel. ¹⁵ I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I myself will make them lie down, declares the Lord God. ¹⁶ I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, and the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them in justice.”*

That’s a beautiful picture. God’s proclaiming, “Okay, y’all have failed.” I think this is where this story – again, it’s no coincidence, right? It’s sovereignly put together, in a book called The Bible, for us. It’s on purpose that Mark gives us the feeding of the 5000, right after the story of Herod. So that we can contrast and compare. This would-be king, in his position, should be serving the people. He should be leading the people to worship Yahweh. And what’s he doing? He’s drunk. Last week, I was trying to turn off my brain from picturing the story. I don’t want to know all that was happening. It’s perverted, it’s twisted, it’s evil. At his banquet, his provision ends in death. So, Yahweh is saying, “I’m going to do it myself. I’m going to come down there and I’m going to save my sheep. I’m going to heal the broken. I’m going to find the lost. I’m going to bring them to myself. I’m going to feed them in good places.”

Look again at Ezekiel 34, down in verse 23,

*And I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. 24 And I, the Lord, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them. I am Yahweh; I have spoken.*

It’s awesome. He’s saying, “I myself, I’ll be the Shepherd.” Then, He says, “I’ll set up one Shepherd.” Who did He say? Come on, Red Oak. David, right? We just read it. It was on the screen. David, right? What’s the deal, though? David’s been dead for 400 years. When Ezekiel writes down this prophecy from the Lord, David’s been dead 400 years. So, who’s he talking about? The Son of David, the Messiah, the One who was promised. Right? The One who would sit on the throne of His Father, David, with an eternal rule and reign. He’s saying, “I’m going to be their Shepherd. I‘m going to protect them. I’m going to take care of them. I’m going to feed them. And I’m going to do it through David.” You’ve got to think, if you were reading that prophecy, you’re going to think, “Is Yahweh the Shepherd? Or is David the Shepherd? Is it Yahweh or is it David’s son?” and then you see in Jesus, that Jesus is both. He is the Son of God. He’s Yahweh in the flesh. And He is the Son of David. He’s our Messiah.

So, when He steps onto that shore, and He sees His people, He knows His role. He knows who He is, and He wants them to know it. He sees in lost humanity, the broken, the sinful, the beaten down, the enslaved, who are starving to death, not for physical food, but in their soul – starving for their relationship with their Creator, that they were made for. They keep trying to satisfy that desire with other things, and it won’t do it. So, in His grace and His mercy, He spends all day teaching on the kingdom of God. Then, He says, “Let me show you. Let me show you the kingdom of God.” He performs this miracle, and they eat the bread, and they sit down on the green grass, and it’s this picture that the Good Shepherd has come. But that’s not the only picture, is it? What’s it also a picture of? Why does it also remind them not only of David, but of Moses? It’s like manna from Heaven. They think about Moses. Because the other picture is, not only did He have them sit down in green grass, He says, “Everybody sit down by 50s and 100s.” So, they sit in all these groups around Jesus, and in their minds, what they should have been thinking of is, “We’re in a desolate, lonely place, just like our forefathers were. And we’re surrounding Jesus, just like our forefathers were encamped around the Tabernacle. And just like our forefathers had nothing to eat, we have nothing to eat. And just like God gave them manna from Heaven, Jesus just provided food in the wilderness.” So, when they say, “Is this the Prophet?” they’re kind of clued in. He’s living out that He’s the Prophet like Moses, but He’s greater. When He meets their needs and He has compassion on them, they get it, “He should be our King. This is the One.” But they forget to do one thing. What was the prophecy through Moses? “I’ll raise up a Prophet like Moses, like you, and when I do, what should you do? Listen to Him. My words will be in His mouth. Listen to Him.” That’s where they fail.

Listen to what happens in John. Because, like I said earlier, they want to take Jesus and make Him king. He goes up on a mountain, and then they go back across, and the people track Him down. They just want to find Him. They finally track Him down and they ask, “How did you get here?” He doesn’t even really answer their question. But when they are back around Him, Jesus says this. This is John 6:26-27,

*26 Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking me, not because you saw signs,…”*

…not because of the miracle…

*“… but because you ate your fill of the loaves. 27 Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal. 28 Then they said to him, “What must we do, to be doing the works of God?” 29 Jesus answered them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.”*

John 6:35,

*35 Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.”*

Jesus calls them out. He says, “You’re not here because of the sign. You’re not here because of what the bread and the fish pointed to. You just want more bread and fish.” They want their temporary, physical needs met, and Jesus is saying, “Yes, I met those, but only so that you would understand that I really came, not to give bread but to be bread. You need me, full submission to me. I’m the bread that came down from Heaven, that if you partake of me you’ll never die. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness and they died. It was temporary. It was a picture.”

Listen to verses 47-51,

*47 “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life. 48 I am the bread of life. 49 Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. 50 This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. 51 I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.”*

This is where they get so offended. They want the food, they want Him to be their King that leads them to freedom from Rome. They want full bellies and they want all their physical needs met. And Jesus will not bend to who they think that He should be. That’s why He had walked away from them.

We don’t get to determine who Christ is for us. But what He’s offering is so much more. He’s saying, “I came that you could have eternal life; so that your soul could be satisfied; so that who you were made to be can find its fulfillment in relationship with God.

He says, “Eat my flesh,” and He will say again, later on in John, “You have to eat my flesh and drink my blood.” That was it. For the Jews, they were done. A lot of them, that’s where they turn back and they won’t follow Jesus anymore. It’s such a sad scene, and you think, “What is happening here? Don’t they get it? Don’t they know that He’s not talking about them literally eating His flesh and literally drinking His blood? What’s going on?” Because what Jesus is saying is, “Just like I took that boy’s lunch yesterday, and I broke the bread, and I broke the fish, and I distributed that so that your bellies would be satisfied,” what He’s getting at is, “My flesh, my body, has to be broken.” We know that Jesus goes to the cross so that His body would be broken, His blood would be shed, so that our souls can be satisfied, so that we can have not just eternal life, not just that we would get to go to Heaven when we die. That’s obviously huge, but right now, right here, we can be satisfied in a relationship with the Lord. To know, to begin to taste, the goodness of His joy, and His peace, and His love. To know that now, not just one day far off, but to know it now, and then in perfection, and then unmingled with my sinful desires and my fleshly shortcomings. We get to know it now.

It’s interesting, because He turns to the disciples. Remember this? He says to the others, the twelve, “Are you going to go away, too? Will you also leave?” Remember, Peter speaks up and says, “Where would we go?” He says,

*“Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, 69 and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God.”*

“Where would we go? There’s nowhere else to go.” It’s a beautiful picture of real discipleship, real belief, I should say. They get it – not perfectly. In a couple of chapters we’re going to see.

It’s pretty funny. Ed and I were talking before service, because we have the feeding of the 5000, and in a couple of weeks we’ll have the feeding of the 4000, and then right after that it’s a similar miracle. It’s magic food for everybody. Everybody gets a meal and everyone gets a to-go box. Then, within the same chapter or maybe the next, the disciples are in the boat with Jesus, and somebody is like, “Aw, man! I totally forgot to bring something to eat!” They’re like, “Jesus, what are we going to do?!” They’re freaking out and Jesus is like *\*phew\**, “For real? I fed 5000 men, 4000 men, with food from my hands, and you’re worried about the 12 of us getting across the sea without a snack?” But here, it’s cool, because they at least get it this much, “You’re a Prophet like Moses. We’ve got to pay attention to what He says. We’ve got to pay attention to what He says.” And what Jesus is saying is, “What’s more important than food in your belly?” The point of this story is not that Jesus cares about physical needs. Does He? Absolutely, but that’s not the main point. The point isn’t to find a lad to share with. That’s not the point of the story. The point of the story is that Jesus came to meet our deepest needs, and what that was going to mean is that His body would be broken on the cross, so that it could then be distributed to all. What He’s calling for is repentance, and personal faith and trust in Him, that looks like full submission. That’s what repentance and faith means, right? We surrender ourselves to Jesus, we receive the life that He gives.

Listen to this quote from John Piper. I thought this was interesting. He was teaching on the same passage. It’s back at the point where Jesus walks away in John’s account. Why did Jesus withdraw? Why did He walk away? He says,

Because the enthusiasm these people have is not for who He really is. This is so important for our day and for your life. People can have a great enthusiasm for Jesus, but the Jesus they’re excited about is not the real, biblical Jesus.

I’ll pause there. I want you to think on that for a second.

It may be a morally exemplary Jesus, or a socialist Jesus, or a capitalist Jesus, or an anti-Semitic Jesus, or a white-racist Jesus, or a revolutionary-liberationist Jesus, or a counter-cultural cool Jesus.

Or maybe a “He Gets Us” Jesus.

But not the whole Jesus who, in the end, gives his life a ransom for sinners (Mark 10:45). And if your enthusiasm for Jesus is for a Jesus that doesn’t exist, your enthusiasm is no honor to the real Jesus, and he will leave you and go into the mountain.

It’s the same thing. People don’t change. They were cool with Jesus as long as Jesus was willing to be the Jesus that they wanted Him to be. Jesus doesn’t bend, and He doesn’t bow, and He doesn’t change. He says, “I won’t come to you on your terms, but I’m calling you to come to me on mine.” It’s an awesome deal. “Come, be forgiven. Come have your sin taken away and my righteousness given to you.” Does it mean to submit, and to believe, and to repent? Yes. Does it mean that I don’t get to choose my identity, I don’t get to choose my lifestyle, I don’t get to say what my sexuality should be? Yes, but come and surrender all of that and receive life, now and forever.

I love that they take up the baskets, right? It’s a cool picture. I remember, as a kid I was always like, “What’s the significance of the baskets?” There were 12 baskets in one story, and 7 in another, and it must be about numbers. I don’t know, maybe. But what struck me in this study of it was that with the manna in the wilderness, God would send manna, they’d get to collect it every morning, but it was only good for that day, unless the next day was the Sabbath, and you could collect an extra day’s worth. But if you tried to keep it past the time that God had permitted, it would rot. It was no good. You just had enough for that day. And Jesus performs a similar miracle, but what do they take up? The leftovers, right? The abundance. I think how that was a picture of God’s provision. What we have in Christ is so much more, now and forever.

So, I would leave us with these two things, quick thoughts, and I’ll be done. I think, sometimes, we make the mistake of thinking, “I wish I could see that. As a believer, if I could see something like that, that would totally change the way I live.” Or maybe people who are searching, and seeking, and you think, “If I could see the fish out of thin air thing, I would believe.” And that’s not the case. It’s not seeing the miracle; it’s submitting to the Miracle Worker. Right? They saw it. These people not only saw the miracle, they ate the miracle, and they still walked away. Jesus tells Thomas, “Hey, it’s great that you believe in me now that you’ve touched the nail-scarred hands and my resurrected body, but ‘blessed are those who believe without seeing.’” The Bible teaches us that you could have set up a lawn chair right outside the tomb, and seen the stone rolled away, and watched Jesus walk out, and you could still get up and walk away in unbelief. Or, 2000 years later, you can hear that message proclaimed, and preached, and the God of Heaven who works miracles can grant you faith to believe, give you eyes to see, that Jesus did walk out of that tomb. I wasn’t there, but I see Him and I believe Him. You read this story and go, “You can’t make fish out of nothing!” That’s right. Congratulations. That’s the point. Jesus can, and I believe it. Why? Because I didn’t used to care that the things that I did were bad, but now I feel bad for them. He brought me to conviction and, in His grace, I believe. I trust this Jesus. I hear His words, and I trust Him, and I want to surrender to Him. That’s the miracle. That’s the miracle. Not seeing it, but having God, the Author of the miracle, the Author of all creation, speak life into your soul.

So, I encourage you, as always, if you’re not a believer, if you don’t know Christ, please don’t reject Him. Don’t put Him off. That you would come to Him. Whatever it is that you would hold onto, let that go. What Jesus has is truly so much better. Repent, and believe, and come to Christ. And, as believers, let’s not fall into the trap. Let’s not fall for the lies that we see everyone else in our culture enslaved to. We know that the things of this world, the lies of our flesh, will not satisfy us. We know it. Let it be grotesque to you. That scene in Herod’s temple – that’s what we’re trading off for when we deny ourselves from daily going to the Word of God, and hearing from Jesus, and being satisfied in Christ. If we’re not doing that, then we’re going to go to the other, and try to be satisfied with the temporary pleasures of this world. We see it for what it is. It’s empty, it doesn’t satisfy, it’s grotesque. But come to Christ, every day, believing, just like He fed them on that mountainside – Jesus is going to satisfy my soul abundantly.

Pray with me.

*Lord God, we thank you for your Word. I thank you for your people, your Church. God, thank you that you would love us and allow us to meet together like this. We can have confidence that in you we’re forgiven. God, thank you that we have stories like this to remind us of your power and your authority, and just like you said in your Word, that these things are written that we might believe. I pray for the folks in our community who don’t know you, don’t trust you. I pray that, in your kindness that you would perform a miracle that only you can perform, and that you would bring them to repentance, and that you would author and perfect their faith, Lord Jesus. I pray for us who know you, those of us who are your children, that we would be more mindful of where we get filled up, and how we try to satisfy our soul, and our emotions, and our desires; that we would come to you and you alone, and that would free us to serve other people with the truth of the Gospel. We love you, Lord.*

1. <https://www.christianstudylibrary.org/article/miracle-jesus-feeding-five-thousand>; February 21, 2024. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)