

A Shepherd for the Multitude

by Roger Ellsworth

Roger Ellsworth emphasizes Jesus as the caring, feeding, and sufficient shepherd through the miracle of the feeding of the 5,000.

Duration: 29:07

Scripture: Matthew 9:36, Matthew 11:28-30, Matthew 14:13-33, Mark 6:34, Luke 9:10-17, John 6:1-15

Topics: "Shepherd"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker introduces the passage of Mark chapter 6, which focuses on the feeding of the 5,000. The speaker highlights that each Gospel presents this miracle from a different perspective, and in Mark's Gospel, it emphasizes Jesus' shepherdly heart and concern for the people. The speaker encourages the audience, regardless of their current circumstances, to find comfort and encouragement in the message of this passage. The speaker also points out that the feeding of the 5,000 is the only miracle recorded in all four Gospels, indicating its significance.

Transcript

Mark chapter 6. We have several who are visiting with us today, and I want to simply say that we have, here at Parkview, been working our way through the life of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. And this has taken up several weeks now, and we come to a very remarkable passage of Scripture today. But having said that we've been working our way through the life of Christ, I now want to tell you that we're going to lay this series aside for a while, and we'll be occupied with other things.

But I do trust in the good grace of the Lord to be able to return to the accounts that we have in the Gospels of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Today, this is what I've already termed it, a remarkable passage of Scripture. One can be a Christian for several years, and some things just kind of escape him, just kind of elude him.

And there was a piece of information about the Lord Jesus that had escaped me for years. And I was glad when I learned this. You know that our Lord Jesus Christ did many, many miracles.

And in fact, we have many recorded in the four Gospels. But even the accounts that we have do not begin to exhaust the miracles that Jesus did. Jesus did many more miracles than we have recorded.

He raised the... He caused the lame to walk. He caused the deaf to hear. He caused the blind to see.

He cast out demons. And even as we saw last Sunday, He stilled storms. And He raised three people from the dead.

But there's only one miracle that Jesus did that is recorded in all four Gospels. And this is that tidbit of information that had escaped me, that had eluded me. Only one of the miracles that Jesus did that is recorded in all four of the Gospels.

And that is the miracle that we have recounted for us here in these verses that I read a moment ago. That is the feeding of the 5,000. And so I found myself saying there must have been something terribly important about the feeding of the 5,000.

Something that just riveted it in the minds of the writers that each one should include an account of it. Well, we find an account of the feeding of the 5,000 in each of the four Gospels, and we find that each Gospel gives this feeding of the 5,000 his own particular slant. And that's the case here in Mark's Gospel.

Mark treats this feeding of the 5,000 as an example of the shepherdly heart of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Look there at your 34th verse. When Jesus came out, He saw a great multitude, and He was moved with compassion for them because they were like sheep, not having a shepherd.

So He began to teach them many things. And I suggest to you, ladies and gentlemen, that that is the lens through which Mark looks at this feeding of the 5,000. The shepherdly heart, the shepherdly concern of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Now, I don't know exactly in what condition you came into this service today. It could be that you are finding yourself pounded pretty heavily by life. It could be that you're feeling rather beaten up.

Well, I'm glad that I've got a message for you today that will speak to your heart wherever you are in your life. Whatever your circumstances are, I think that you can find comfort. I think you can find encouragement in what I'm about to tell you.

I want to be able to, I want to say to you today that the Lord Jesus Christ is just as much a shepherd today for people as He was on this long-ago occasion. That's good to know, isn't it? And in fact, I want to go so far as to say that the Lord Jesus here in this passage emerges as a caring shepherd, a feeding shepherd, and a sufficient shepherd. Now, that ought to bring blessing to your hearts today.

The Lord Jesus is a caring shepherd. He's a feeding shepherd, and He is a sufficient shepherd. And no matter what your circumstances, I want to tell you that the Lord Jesus cares about you.

And I want to be able to tell you today that not only does He care about you, but He feeds you. He's your feeding shepherd. And I also want to add that He is your sufficient shepherd.

So we have a good menu set here before us today, and we need to plunge right in. Now, think with me about this first thing. Jesus is a caring shepherd.

It's interesting to me what Mark describes here in this passage of Scripture. He tells us how that the disciples of Jesus were exhausted from their ministry. And if you look there early in the passage, you'll find Jesus saying in verse 31, come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while.

The Lord Jesus' caring heart emerges right there because He notices the exhaustion, the weariness of His disciples. And He calls them to come apart from ministry for a while and to be refreshed so that they could

continue in ministry. Well, my friends, the multitudes never could let Jesus go aside for any length of time at all.

And what we find here in this passage is that the multitudes learned that Jesus and His disciples were going to go out in the wilderness. And it didn't concern these multitudes that Jesus and His disciples desired a time of refreshment, a time of relaxation. The Bible says that there was a leak somewhere, and the multitudes found out that Jesus and His disciples were going to a particular place.

And so they got to where Jesus and His disciples were going even before Jesus and the disciples arrived. And there it is for you in that 34th verse again. We read that when Jesus came out, He saw a great multitude.

Now here you have insight, my friends, into the caring heart of the Lord Jesus Christ. We could read that the Lord Jesus Christ was upset, that He became disturbed, that it bothered Him that these people had intruded on this time that He had set aside for Himself and for His disciples. Well, I wonder how you do whenever your plans are interrupted and when people intrude on your plans.

That's what happened here. And the Lord Jesus, I say, could have been disturbed by this. He could have been irked by this.

But look again at your 34th verse, and you see that He was moved with compassion. The Lord was never able to look upon people without being moved by their needs, and that's what we find here. And the Lord Jesus did not just simply look upon these people, but we read that as He looked upon them, He noticed something in particular about them.

He noticed that they were like sheep not having a shepherd. And so here the Lord Jesus begins to teach these people. And here we have put on display the wonderful compassion, the caring heart of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Even whenever He is inconvenienced, He still cares. Now I think that we have something that we can take home with us today. I think we have something that can comfort us.

I tell you, it doesn't matter what your circumstances are. The Lord Jesus Christ has this caring heart, and what is going on with you is important to Him. I rather like the translation that we find in the Weymouth Bible, issued many years ago, 1 Peter chapter 5, where we're told to cast our cares upon Him because He cares for you.

The Weymouth translation says, cast your cares upon the Lord Jesus because it matters to Him about you. It matters to Him about you. Now isn't that a refreshing thing to know? And you may be sitting here today in silent desperation.

You may be sitting here saying, well I have all of these problems, I have all of these pressures, I have these concerns, I don't know how I'm going to face these things, I don't know what I'm going to do, and the question that may be pressing upon your mind and your heart is this, does God know? And you may follow that up with another question, does God care? Well we've been over this ground before here at Parkview, and I just assure you on the basis of what we read in this passage, and I could assure you on the basis of several other passages of Scripture as well, that yes, the Lord God does about you. It matters to Him about you. Why you can go over there to the Sermon on the Mount found in Matthew chapters 5 through 7, and you find the Lord Jesus talking about how He has the very hairs of our heads numbered.

I've often said that I get a lot of mileage out of that passage of Scripture. I know that the Lord is taking note of me because the number is always changing, and I'm so glad to know that there's nothing that is going on with me that escapes the notice of our Lord Jesus Christ. In that same Sermon on the Mount, the Lord Jesus talks about how that God marks the sparrows fall.

Now there's nothing more common, more ordinary, nothing that has less value than a sparrow, but here the Lord God is in His compassion and His concern, taking note of even the sparrows fall. A sparrow can't hit the ground and escape God's notice, and so there's nothing going on with you today, dear brother in Christ, dear sister in Christ, that has escaped the notice of God. It matters to God about you.

You have in the Lord Jesus Christ a caring shepherd. You have one who has this shepherdly heart that is moved with compassion toward your needs, and so I today just urge you to take refuge in this marvelous truth, knowing that the Lord Jesus is a caring shepherd. But we also find in this passage that the Lord Jesus Christ is a feeding shepherd, and as we read this account, we find that the Lord Jesus fed these people on this occasion in two ways.

First of all, He fed them spiritually. Go back to your 34th verse once again, and I mentioned this a while ago. The Lord Jesus, we're told, was moved with compassion toward them, and He began to teach them many things.

So now these people have encroached upon time that the Lord Jesus Christ had set aside for His refreshment and the refreshment of His disciples, and the Lord Jesus is not able to dismiss the multitude. He's not able to ignore their needs. He rather begins to minister to them, and He begins to teach them, and this, I say, gives evidence of His ability to feed, because He teaches these people many things.

And then after giving them spiritual teaching, He gives them physical food, because we read that they had been there for many hours. They're out in this remote place, and they were very hungry. There was nothing there to eat, and the disciples bring this to the attention of Jesus, that the people have been there for hours, and now they're growing faint because there was nothing to eat.

And the disciples not only reported this to Jesus, but they also took it upon themselves to advise Jesus, and you look there in verse 36, and you find them saying to Him, send them away, that they may go into the surrounding country and villages, and buy themselves bread, for they have nothing to eat. And so the disciples take it upon themselves to say to Jesus, send the multitudes away, and the Lord Jesus responds there in verse 38, how many loaves do you have? Go and see. And they found out, and they said, we've got five loaves and two fish.

And the Lord Jesus, before that, said to them in verse 37, you give them something to eat. You give them something to eat. I want to simply underscore for you today that our Lord God is not only a caring shepherd, but He's a feeding shepherd.

I've said that He fed these people spiritually, and I want to tell you now that even in feeding them physically, which He did in this passage of Scripture, and my how He fed them in the most wonderful way imaginable, but even in feeding them physically, He was picturing His ability to feed them spiritually. And this is the truth on which we need to fasten today, ladies and gentlemen, and that is that our Lord is still a feeding shepherd. Now there's something very sad going on in so very many of our churches today, and I hope that we here at Parkview will learn from this passage of Scripture.

I hope that we will take this home to heart. I hope that we will never let it go, and that is the responsibility, the awesome task, and the tremendous privilege that this church family has of providing spiritual food for people. It's interesting to me that the Lord Jesus gave the disciples, whenever He took the fish and the loaves, it says there in verse 41, that He gave to His disciples to set before the multitude.

And there you have a picture of the ministry of the church of Jesus Christ. Here it is in such wonderful form. We receive something from the Lord Jesus Christ, and it is our responsibility as a church then to give that to others.

We receive from the Lord Jesus, and then we are to give that to others. But there's a lot of confusion today about the task of the church. I don't know that there's ever been a time of greater confusion about the task of the church of Jesus Christ today.

As I look at churches, it seems as if we are just casting around, trying to figure out what our purpose is, what our reason for existence is. I tell you, we do not have to be in doubt, we do not have to wonder about the purpose of Parkview Church. Our purpose is to receive a message from the Lord Jesus Christ and to set that before people.

And we have, in fact, already received the message, and it's right here in the Word of God. But so many today in our pulpits seem to be saying to the Lord God the very same thing that these disciples said on this occasion. So many seem to be saying, send the multitudes away today.

You go to some churches, and you could easily get the impression that we don't have a message from God for these people. It's almost as if we're saying in our churches, well, better send these people away to some form of entertainment. We don't have a message for them from God, so in order to get them to come, we've got to entertain them.

It's almost as if some of our churches today are saying, we don't have a message from God, so we need to send these people away to pop psychology, and that's what's going out of a lot of pulpits today. But meanwhile, the Word of God tells us that we have received a distinct and definite message from the Lord, and it is our job not to send people away to other things, but it is our job to give them that which the Lord has given us. Give them the message that comes from the Lord God Himself.

And oh, I tell you, this is our message, the Bible, the Word of God, and this Bible, ladies and gentlemen, has a very distinct and definite message. This, as we've been noticing on our Sunday evenings together this summer, this book has a theme. It has a subject.

The theme is the Lord Jesus. It doesn't matter where you turn in the Bible. He is the subject.

He is to be found in every book. He is to be found in every chapter. He is to be found in every page of the holy scriptures, and this is what we are to do today.

We are to set the Lord Jesus Christ before people. We're not to be saying, send the people away to this over here or that over there. We are to deliver to them the Word of God, and the of the Word of God is nothing less than the saving work of God in Christ Jesus, and it is our job, Parkview, to be setting the saving message of God in Christ Jesus before people.

Now, I don't care what other, what surveys indicate today that people think the church ought to be doing. I'm telling you that we have our marching orders already for laid out for us in scripture. This is our job, to

be setting Christ before people today.

We're not to be sending the multitudes away. Our Lord Jesus is still feeding people today, and he feeds people with the truth about himself, which we find in the Word of God. I've been talking about how that each of the four gospels contains an account of the feeding of the 5,000.

Well, John contains an account of this in the sixth chapter of his gospel, and John includes a long description after talking about Jesus feeding the 5,000. John includes a long description of what happened the very next day, and what happened the very next day is that Jesus delivered this extended discourse on the bread of life, and he said, you came seeking me because you ate the loaves in the wilderness, and you were filled, and he said, I understand you have come looking for more of the bread that I fed you with yesterday, and then he began to talk about how that he is the true bread, the bread from heaven, and indeed he is, ladies and gentlemen, he is the bread from heaven, and this is our message, the Lord Jesus Christ, the bread from heaven, and that brings me to the final thing that I want to tell you about our Lord Jesus. He's not only our caring shepherd and our feeding shepherd, but he is our sufficient shepherd, and oh, I would to God that our people today could just get the deep-seated conviction that when we put the Lord Jesus Christ before people, that we are putting before them that which will bring satisfaction to their souls.

We read here in this account in Mark chapter 6, verse 42, they all ate and were filled, and I tell you that Jesus fed them physically in order to portray for them that he is the true bread from heaven, as the gospel of John says, and if you eat the true bread from heaven, Jesus Christ, you will be filled, you'll be satisfied, because he is the sufficient shepherd. Now, you know what is set out for us in this passage of Scripture. These disciples come to Jesus, and they say the multitude, they have been here for hours, they're hungry, there's nothing here to eat, send them away, and Jesus said, don't send them away, you give them something to eat, and they said, well, we've only got here this handful of bread, we've got these few loaves, we've got these fish, and how can we possibly feed this multitude with so very little, and of course, you know what happened.

The Lord Jesus took that little amount, and he blessed it, and he began to distribute it to the disciples, and the disciples in turn distributed it to the multitude, and so we read in that 42nd verse, they were all filled, and we read in verse 43 that they took up 12 baskets full of fragments and the fish. Someone observed that there was not only enough to feed the multitude, but there was enough left over for the 12 disciples as well, and perhaps that's what we're to understand from this passage of Scripture, but the point is, and it's so wonderfully made by James Montgomery Boyce in his commentary on the Gospel of John, he points out that the insufficient from the insignificant became both sufficient and significant when placed in the hands of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now here you have something that's insufficient.

You've got these loaves and the fish. They're obviously not enough to feed this huge crowd of people, and this insufficient amount comes here from this little boy, as the other Gospels tell us, and here's just an insignificant little fellow, and he gives to Jesus this insufficient amount of food, and so now you've got the insufficient coming from the insignificant, but whenever you place the insufficient from the insignificant in the hands of the Lord Jesus Christ, it becomes both sufficient and significant. It fed the multitude that day to the point that they were all filled, and it pointed them.

Here was the significance of it. It pointed them to this mighty truth that the Lord Jesus is the sufficient shepherd. He was sufficient on that occasion, and he is sufficient for you.

He took that which was little and insignificant, and he made it into something that was substantial and sufficient and significant. Why, God's been doing this all down through the running centuries, hasn't he? I think there's tremendous encouragement and consolation for the Parkview family in just going over this ground about God using little insignificant things to accomplish great ends. I tell you that this is a prominent theme throughout Scripture.

Why, you go back there into the book of Judges. How much significance does the jawbone of a donkey have, anyway? You would say, well, there's not much significance there, but God enabled Samson to use the jawbone of a donkey to kill a thousand Philistines, and so that was which was insufficient in and of itself became sufficient when God used Samson in a powerful way. And a few Sunday nights ago, we were looking at that great old story of 1 Samuel chapter 17 where David goes out against the giant Goliath.

Here is this colossus of a man, and he is armed to the hilt, and David goes out to meet him, and what does David have with him? He's got a sling, and he's got some stones, and just looking at that through human eyes, you would say, well, that sling and those stones were not sufficient for David to defeat the giant Goliath, but oh, the insufficient in the hands of the insignificant when placed in the hands of Jesus become both sufficient and significant, and we know what happened. David defeated Goliath, killed him, and the Israelites were freed from slavery to the Philistines, and on and on we could go. Now you press the fast-forward button, and you come down here to a Jewish maiden.

Her name is Mary. How common and ordinary this is, just a Jewish maiden in the vast Roman Empire. There doesn't seem to be anything there, but the Lord God tapped that young woman on the shoulder as it were and said, I have a special privilege for you, and that young Jewish maiden conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit of God and the Lord Jesus Christ, of course, was born to her, and where was Jesus born? He was born not among the elite in the great cities of the earth.

He was born there in tiny little Bethlehem. How significant do you think Bethlehem was in those days? Where did it rank on the scale of importance? Well, it didn't have any ranking at all, but God took tiny little Bethlehem, and he made that significant because that was the place where the Lord Jesus Christ was born, and then you press the fast-forward button again, and now you go outside the city of Jerusalem, and there outside that city of Jerusalem is a Roman cross, and there hanging on that Roman cross is a Jewish carpenter turned rabbi, and you might be saying, well, how significant could that be? I'm telling you, my friends, that crucifixions were not all that unusual in those days. That was the preferred method of execution by the Romans, and the Romans were in control and it was nothing in those days to be journeying along the road and to look over here to the right and see men hanging on crosses and to journey a little farther and look over here to the left and see men hanging on crosses, and so now you come to this particular crucifixion outside the city of Jerusalem, and here's this Jewish carpenter turned rabbi hanging on a cross, and you might be inclined to say, well, not much significant about that.

All kinds of men were being crucified at that time, but I'm telling you, my friends, that there was great significance in that because that cross was the means by which God provided eternal salvation for those who will believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and Paul talks about this in 1 Corinthians 1. Paul says that the Greeks considered this to be a laughingstock, and the Jews considered it to be a stumbling block, but that cross, that cross was the means of God providing eternal salvation. Paul glories in that cross, and he says that cross is the power and wisdom of God.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/27/SID27536.mp3>
Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/roger-ellsworth/a-shepherd-for-the-multitude/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net