

Sermon Title: Give Them Something to Eat
Scripture Text: Mark 6:30-44

Speaker: Jim Harris
Date: 10-28-18

Today, once again, our venue for our visit to the Word of God is Mark Chapter 6. And we will bite off what seems like a bigger chunk than usual, looking at Verses 30 through 44, because they are, of course, one unit of thought.

In the life of Jesus Christ, as we come to this text, we are near the end of that period, I've told you about many times, that's referred to as the "Great Galilean Ministry." Jesus spent about a year and a half there, almost exclusively in the region of Galilee; He left only a couple of times during that period to go to Jerusalem for feasts, mainly Passovers. During that time, He has called His disciples. After some months, He has designated the Twelve of them as Apostles. A few weeks *before* the time of our text for today, He sent those Twelve out on a preaching mission in six teams of two, and He granted to them the same miraculous powers that He had, and the impact of their ministry was huge.

That wicked and narcissistic local monarch named Herod Antipas, one of the several sons of Herod the Great, was so frightened of the idea of the impact of the message of those six gospel teams, that he panicked. He actually believed—one of the more bizarre theories—he believed that John the Baptist had risen from the dead and was doing all these things specifically because he came back to torment *him*. He had a bit of an ego, to think that he was that important, and he had plenty of lousy theology to support his belief. You see, Herod Antipas had personally had John the Baptist arrested and imprisoned, because John the Baptist had the audacity to tell the truth: that Herod Antipas had stolen the wife of his brother Philip—and they had both dumped their spouses after an adulterous affair, and then they had married each other—and so, John had subtly said, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife" (Mk. 6:18, NASB, and throughout, unless otherwise noted); he called him on his incest and adultery, and so, Herod had had John arrested. And then, he wound up having him beheaded at the end of his sordid and wicked and immoral birthday party. Last time, we saw the flashback that Mark includes to paint the picture for us of just how wicked Herod Antipas was; and he is certainly an example of the evils of the extended family of Herod the Great.

It all paints the picture of the environment in which Jesus and the Apostles ministered. The leaders of the Jews were apostate; their supposedly longed-for Savior stood in front of them, and they said, "Everything He does, He does by the power of the devil himself." The Romans were not friendly to the Jews. They tolerated them, and they worked with twisted people like Herod the Great and Herod Antipas, just to keep the peace, and as long as the tax money kept coming in, they were okay with that, but they didn't like the Jews and they didn't like the Christians. So, this is a picture of the environment that they were ministering in.

Now, how fitting for us that, on the day that we are having our big Fall Potluck, we arrive at the description of the largest meal recorded in the Bible. Now, I want to assure you: there's absolutely no connection between those two things. You probably all brought stuff for the potluck; if we *really* believe this text, we'd have just brought one little boy's lunch and multiplied it, and taken home 12 extra baskets. Well, this meal, and Jesus's resurrection—I don't know if you know this—those are the only two miracles that are recorded by all four gospels. Everything else overlaps—many of them overlap—but, all four of them record that.

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Learn from this, of Jesus's compassion and His care and His power, and you will learn of His trustworthiness. So I've titled it "Give Them Something to Eat" because that's exactly what Jesus says to them in our text. And we can take these 15 verses and break them down this way: Verses 30 through 32—the message is, "You need a vacation"; 33 and 34—shepherds are always on call; 35 to 40—listen and obey; and then, 41 to 44—"My God shall supply."

Now, I don't think that there are three verses anywhere in your Bible, probably, more straightforward than our first three here. I've never heard anybody argue over these three verses. Here's what it says: Mark 6:30 to 32—"The apostles gathered together with Jesus; and they reported to Him all that they had done and taught." What is that about? Well, that's about their preaching tour. Wouldn't you love to have been around hear what they said? I can just hear the excitement, I can hear them talking over each other and Jesus smiling and hearing all of what's going on, and asking the different teams where they went and what they'd done—as if He didn't already know it, but He was giving them a chance to report. "And He said to them"—middle of this text—"Come away by yourselves to a secluded place and rest a while.' (For there were many people coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.) They went away in the boat to a secluded place by themselves."

So when they came back, it was the same as it had been before they'd left; it was the same as it had been, week in and week out, for months, now—there were people all over the place. And Jesus, in His perfect compassion, tells His guys that they're due for some rest. So they climbed into one of the boats to get to "a secluded place" somewhere along the shore of the Sea of Galilee; we're not told where. Now, Jesus did, indeed, care about His men. He did, indeed, want to get them some rest. As a matter of fact, for this final year of His life, He's going to spend more and more time alone with the disciples training them, rather than the big public stuff that He had been doing for so long. So He really did care for them, but He also knew what was about to happen. On their way to their vacation, there was going to be a big deal. And in this ongoing training of the disciples, He allows this whole setup for one of the most majestic of all of His miracles.

It occurred to me as I was thinking about this that, more people were immediately, personally, directly impacted by this miracle than any other miracle Jesus performed. Now, you could argue for His resurrection, that that's affected a lot of people, but I mean, personal, face-to-face interaction. 500 people saw Jesus after He rose from the dead, but about 15,000 experienced this miracle firsthand.

So, "You need a vacation"; they're on their way, and something happens. Well, that's because—Point Number 2—shepherds are always on call. Look at verses 33 and 34—"The people saw them going, and many recognized them and ran there together on foot from all the cities, and got there ahead of them." So, they're going across a part of the Sea of Galilee; it's not *all* that huge, and the people could trace along the shore where they were going, and actually got to the place before they were there. So it says, "When Jesus went ashore, He saw a large crowd, and He felt compassion for them because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and He began to teach them many things."

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Now, why were they like "sheep without a shepherd"? Well, it's because the ones who were *supposed* to be their shepherds—the scribes, the Pharisees, the Sadducees—they were all *false* shepherds! They were false teachers! They were leading people astray! They were making the spiritual condition of the Jews *worse* than if they said nothing (Matt. 23:15)! They needed a true shepherd—and, of course, Jesus is that Shepherd.

Now, if you take our text—Mark 6—you have to put alongside it Matthew 14, Luke 9, and John 6, to get the quadraphonic stereo version of this event. And as with all times that you have parallel passages in the Bible—different books that describe the same event—you need to harmonize them to get the full picture. They don't contradict, but they fit together. Now from that—from comparing them—there's an important nuance that Matthew emphasized that the others didn't. In describing this crowd that was following Jesus, Matthew uses a series of three verbs in the imperfect tense; not just, "This happened, that happened, that happened," but the emphasis is, "This *was* happening, and this *was* happening." He says this crowd *was* following Him, they *were* seeing the signs that He *was* performing, meaning that, these are ongoing events—this is not just *an* incident; this was the whole pattern.

Now, most of the people in this crowd—zealous as they were to get to where Jesus was—they really had no interest in a Savior from their sin; we'll see more about that when we get to the end today. They were wrapped up in the miracles. They knew the miracles always flowed from Jesus whenever He was in public. As I've described them many times: these were thrill-seekers. Now, there *were* some true believers scattered among them, but not the majority. As a matter of fact, remember, Jesus says at the end of the Sermon on the Mount: "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.'" (Matt. 7:22-23)—that's the *many*; that's the *majority*; that's *most people* who say they're Christians! "Many"—and there's a few, *a few* who come in genuine faith (see Matt. 7:14). These people loved what Jesus did, but they hated or ignored His words. He, to them, was just the greatest show on earth.

There are lots of people today like that. That "many" is getting to be a bigger and bigger percentage, I think. And there are lots of preachers today who will give them what they want (2 Tim. 4:3-4)—anything *but* the deep things of Scripture and solid understanding of sound doctrine, and being willing to say what's true and expose what is false. And now that we have television and radio and Internet and print media, it's just so much worse than it ever was in previous generations. According to what goes on today in a lot of places, and a lot of what you hear and read from so-called Christian sources, you would think that, following Jesus as His disciple today is mainly about getting along in the world, having a good marriage, raising nice kids, and being healthy and happy. That's what most people think of as Christianity. Holiness, sacrifice, true commitment to living as a believer despite the cost—even if they say, "Don't say that name anymore," like we read in Acts (4:18; 5:28)—that's not what most people think it means to be a Christian.

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So, here's the scene: Jesus told His guys, "Let's get away for a while." And He sought to be alone with them; that was going to be, as I said, His strategy for the final year of His ministry, when He's focused on training those guys and getting them ready for the Cross and the resurrection and all of that. And these people followed on foot, even when they crossed part of the corner of the Sea of Galilee. And out of compassion for them, Jesus "healed their sick" (Matt. 14:14) and taught them all day, after He got to this place on the shore.

Now, in John 6:3—if you're comparing, I don't know how fast you're page-flipping there—but, in John 6:3, it says, "Jesus went up on the mountain, and there He sat down with His disciples." Now, when we go to Israel next month—those of you that are there—you might just get to this place, and you might say, "Where's the *mountain*?" Well, that's because you're from Idaho; you know what a *mountain* is! People that live by the Sea of Galilee: when there's a bump that you can't see over—that's a mountain! He went up on a *hill* so He could talk to more people.

Now, that sets the scene for the miracle, and for several lessons that Jesus had in mind for the Apostles; and since this is recorded in Scripture, He has those lessons in mind for us as well. "You need a vacation"—ah, but shepherds are always on call, and they respond to the needs of the sheep. We get the great part: Listen and obey. What happens next is absolutely astounding. The Twelve were surely exhausted before this day even started. They thought they were going to get some rest, but what's going to happen here was all designed by Jesus to teach them something that they had no idea they were about to learn. Now, give them credit—they were looking out for the wellbeing of all the people who were there. Maybe a little maturity might have been starting to sink in after they had been out there doing the preaching for a while, but they actually felt a little compassion. Verses 35 and 36—it says, "When it was already quite late"—so, late in the afternoon—"His disciples came to Him and said, 'This place is desolate and it is already quite late; send them away so that they may go into the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat.' "

Now, here, you've got to do a little work to harmonize the four records of this. If you put them all together: From John, we learn that, when they said that, Jesus turned to Philip to get the lesson started. Now, bear in mind—Jesus was in full control of every situation; He knew exactly what He was going to do, but He's bringing these guys along. So, He turns to Philip—He wasn't a bit surprised by this—and He takes what looks like a big logistical problem and He turns it into an opportunity to demonstrate, yet again, who He is. Over in John Chapter 6, he summarizes it this way: "Therefore Jesus, lifting up His eyes and seeing that a large crowd was coming to Him"—they were all gathered there by the mountain (the hill)—He "said to Philip, 'Where are we to buy bread, so that these may eat?' This He was saying to test him, for He Himself knew what He was intending to do."

Now, we don't know why He singled out Philip. I don't think He took him aside and made this a private conversation, so probably, they were all in the same place; probably, they all heard about the situation. But we do know, Jesus asked the question as a test; He said this "to test him." The Greek word behind that word "test" can be translated two different ways in English, depending upon the context. The root idea of this word is a test, but in English, if it is a test that includes a solicitation for you to do something evil, we usually translate it "temptation"

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rather than "test" or rather than something else. And if it's a situation with a difficult problem to be resolved, we usually translate it by "trial." So, "test" is the common ground for that. If it's just a test of something difficult—a trial; solicitation to evil—we call a temptation. So, whenever you face any difficult situation, it's a test of your spiritual condition; it's a test of your will; it's a test of your commitment to your Lord Jesus Christ.

I talked to several people this week that are having some real tests, with all kinds of things that are just *hard*. And some of them can make you angry, could make you bitter. Well, those are all tests. Now, when you face a difficult situation, it *is* a test, and from God's perspective, His will in every test is for you to make the choice to vindicate your righteousness in Christ by making the best moral choice (see Jas. 2:21-22). You may not know exactly what to do, but you know how to go about dealing with people, how to speak kind words, how to speak truth in love to whoever needs it. And God wants you to be victorious over all your tests.

But in that same situation, from Satan's perspective—and the evil world system that he controls—every time you face a test, *his* desire is that you choose to sin by turning away from God's Word, by trying to handle that situation by your own thinking, by relying on your own fleshly, foolish whims along the way. It doesn't matter if the situation tempts you to do something blatantly immoral or not; *every* situation always gives you the choice of whether or not you will obey God and ignore him. So Jesus set up a big one for those guys on that day.

So, He asked Philip, "Where are we going to get food? Where are we going to buy food?" They'd already realized, it was not an easy thing to do. Mark 6:37 and 38—"But He answered them"—so, He'd asked Philip, and then He answers "them," so that's why He was talking to all of them—"He answered them, 'You give them something to eat!' " Now, here comes the discussion: "And they said to Him, 'Shall we go and spend two hundred denarii on bread and give them something to eat?' And He said to them, 'How many loaves do you have? Go look!' And when they found out, they said, 'Five, and two fish.' " Now, the loaves were little barley cakes, sort of like biscuits, and probably dried fish—like eating crackers and sardines, if you will.

Now, again, if you harmonize all four records, it fills in the details. Jesus says in His own way, "Hey, Philip!"—all the guys listening—"Guess who's coming to dinner?" And He got two different reactions. Philip's the one who brought up—answering Him—"Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, for everyone to receive a little" (Jn. 6:7). Now, that's the classic pessimistic, accountant's answer to this situation. A denarius was basically a normal laborer's daily wage. So, I mean, in our culture, if it each day you work, say you tend to make about 200 dollars, you can just see the wheels turning in his head—"200 dollars a day, all these people, maybe 40,000 dollars, and, looking at all the—that's less than three dollars a head...that's not even a Happy Meal! This won't work out!"

Well, then there's an answer that Andrew gave Him. Andrew didn't say, "Lord, I think You should just multiply these loaves and fishes." But Andrew said to Him, "There is a lad here"—remember, Jesus said, "Go look!" They found one young guy, one kid—"a lad here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are these for so many people?" Now, he wasn't

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figuring out how it *couldn't* work—and I don't mean to impugn Philip, either—but, he, at least, was maybe sniffing out the possibility of a miracle. To him, it wasn't necessarily impossible, it was just unfathomable: "How could this work?" So, they've got these five little biscuits and these two fish—one boy's lunch. Now, I've heard sermons about how wonderful this boy was to share his lunch, and this teaches us that we should be willing to give all to the Lord; and that makes a nice, smarmy sermon point—and it has *nothing* to do with this passage. It was his lunch, but, that's not what the point of passage is.

Now, these twelve guys had just returned from doing what Jesus sent them to do on their preaching tour. The good news, for them in this situation, is that, they—this time, likewise—listened to what He said, and they obeyed it. And remember, when He'd sent them out, He made a big deal: "Don't pack a lunch. Don't even take two tunics. Just go, and trust My Father to supply for you." So, they seemed to be sniffing this out a little bit, and in this situation, they did a good job with the test of their obedience. They didn't know what was going to happen—they certainly didn't know *how* it was going to happen—but they did obey. And Jesus doesn't rebuke anyone's lack of faith here, but since what He was about to do is absolutely unprecedented you can't expect them to know what it was going to be. So even though they didn't know what was going to happen, they *had* learned enough to know: "Do what Jesus says when He gives you an order, and it'll be good for you." Now, you can take a lesson from that. Whatever your test is, whatever your day brings tomorrow, whatever your week brings—you don't know the plan of God in advance, but you *do* know for sure how Jesus wants you to act, according to character, in every situation. So, you honor Him when you do things His way; you're going to see His blessing on that (1 Sam. 2:30b).

Verses 39 and 40—it says, "And He commanded them all"—so, not just the Twelve, everybody there—"He commanded them all to sit down by groups on the green grass." Notice, he throws in the detail "green grass." John tells us this happened around the time of the Passover, so it was spring; it was a nice time for a massive impromptu picnic. "They sat down in groups of hundreds and of fifties"—only Mark mentions the hundreds and fifties. We don't know why, but groups, I guess, for ease of serving; you know, like we don't have all of our chairs connected all together, we have groups of them here and there. It's Matthew who gives us the fullest explanation of the extent of this miracle. In Matthew 14:21, it says: "There were about five thousand men who ate, besides women and children." Matthew's the only one that adds "beside women and children," but in all four of the gospels, the word for "men" is the word for "adult males," so the total number of people there is 5,000 full-grown men, plus the women, plus the children; the total number could *easily* have been 10,000, 15,000, or more. Now, the TV evangelists who were there—they said it was 50,000. Fox News said it was 150,000. CNN said there were a few hundred people there. And NBC didn't mention it, except to say that it was an unsanitary situation that should be boycotted. This was a big, big deal.

Oh, and, how big a deal is it? "My God shall supply" is how I've described the final point, starting at Verse 41—"And He took the five loaves and the two fish"—easy to hold that little lunch in one hand—"and looking up toward heaven, He blessed the food and broke the loaves and He kept giving them to the disciples to set before them; and He divided up the two fish among them all." So, Jesus distributed this first to the disciples; then, they gave the food to the

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people—like I say, a normal, simple, easy-to-carry lunch like sardines and crackers. Now interestingly, none of the texts tell us *exactly*, physically, when the miracle took place. It's pretty clear, it doesn't sound like Jesus made one giant buffet all at once, and said, "Now, you all come by and get what you want." It sounds more like the food was multiplied as the people took it and passed it around. And maybe the disciples would take a load to this group of fifty over here, this group of a hundred over here, and then they'd pass it around, then they'd bring their basket back to Jesus, and they'd start walking up to Him and look down—"Whoa, wait, it's *full* again!"—and they'd go back. He kept multiplying it. This was really dramatic, and apparently, the multiplication was over and over, to emphasize the unending power of Jesus. He's the Creator (Jn. 1:1-3; Col. 1:16)! He was *calling* that bread and fish into existence *from nothing*! That violates a whole bunch of laws of thermodynamics—but that's okay, because He invented them, and they're under His control (Col. 1:17; Heb. 1:2-3a).

Look at the rest of it, starting at Verse 42—"They all ate and were satisfied"—I mean, this wasn't communion; they didn't get one little piece of bread and one little sip of juice...they ate until they were satisfied—"and they picked up twelve full baskets of the broken pieces, and also of the fish." And then Mark has his description: "There were five thousand [adult males] who ate the loaves." So everyone took all they wanted, and it was a more than enough. "The broken pieces" refers to the edible-sized portions that were distributed, and there were 12 baskets full of them. Moms—here's the Biblical case for leftovers. And it even says, in one of the gospels, that they did this so that it wouldn't be wasted.

Now, there was much more left over than they started with. So you start with one lunch, feed 15,000 hungry people, all from one boy's lunch; and then collect—let's just say, a full basket for each disciple. "Okay, guys, we're going to be going away for a while; you might as well just take a whole basket of food with you." That's a demonstration of how God supplies for those who will obey His Son. When the people in the church at Philippi gave sacrificially and generously to support the Apostle Paul when he had acute needs and while he was imprisoned in Rome the first time, in response to their commitment to their Lord, Paul wrote this—and a lot of people love to wrench this out of context; this is in response to people giving generously to the Lord—and he says this: Philippians 4:19 and 20—"And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. Now to our God and Father be the glory forever and ever. Amen." I mean, if you are giving yourself, saying, "Lord, I don't see how You're going to feed all these people, but, sure, I'll start passing this stuff out," and you can't get your hands empty because it just keeps multiplying. That's not going to probably happen to you, but, that's how God supplies—"according to His riches." He doesn't dole out a penny here and there—He gives, and He gives; He supplies according to His infinite resources.

Now, before we leave this incident, I want us to slip over to the Gospel of John for a moment. Needless to say, there was a big "Wow!" from this crowd of thrill-seekers, and John calls attention to it. John 6:14—"Therefore when the people saw the sign which He had performed, they said, 'This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world.' " So, I've called them thrill-seekers—they're there for the miracles. But some of them are starting to connect the dots. What do they mean, "the Prophet who is to come"? Well, that refers to Deuteronomy Chapter

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18, Verses 15 through 18. That's a Messianic prophecy of One who would come, who would be like Moses, but far more powerful. The Pharisees, who cross-examined John the Baptist—they referred to that same passage; in John 1:21, they asked John the Baptist, "Are you the Prophet [who is to come]?" And he said, "No"—he pointed them to Jesus.

But the problem remained, that even though these people started to speak in terms of this being the Messiah, the difficulty was that, the Messiah that *they* wanted was not the Lord and Savior—the Anointed One—who would take away their sins. They wanted a political liberator who would give them the goodies, who would do wonderful things for them, who would make their lives easier. But what they *wanted* and what they *needed*—those were two different things. They weren't looking for someone to set them free from their sins, and Jesus wasn't going to go along with a misguided plan. John 6:15—"Jesus, perceiving that they were intending to come and take Him by force to make Him king, withdrew again to the mountain by Himself alone." They wanted to come take Jesus to Jerusalem right then—just before the Passover, that would be a great time to do that—and they wanted to make Him their King. They figured He, if He could feed 15,000 people from almost nothing, then surely He could throw off the Roman yoke that they were under; He could fulfill their dreams; He could make their lives more comfortable for them (cf. Jn. 4:15).

Now, we don't know what Jesus said; we don't know how He may have said it; but *somehow*, He didn't get whisked off to Jerusalem. Well, of course, it wasn't time (see Jn. 7:30; 8:20). And He's holding together the whole universe (Heb. 1:3)—He can handle whether He's going to be kidnapped or not. Maybe He told them, "Listen, I'm going to bring a kingdom, but it's not right now." Maybe He explained something and got out of it that way. Or, maybe He just did a disappearing act. But I'll give you a teaser for next time—He wasn't done. Mark 6:45 and 46 says, "Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go ahead of Him to the other side to Bethsaida"—so they were probably on the western side of the Sea of Galilee; Bethsaida is to the northeast—"while He Himself was sending the crowd away. After bidding them farewell, He left for the mountain to pray." When Jesus wanted to disappear, He could just disappear, and you weren't going to kidnap Him until He wanted to be taken.

Now, that sets the stage for another amazing incident. If you want a hint: Next time we come to Mark—Lord willing, next Lord's Day—you're going to see an event that has to do with a boat in a storm at night, with Jesus not in the boat when the storm hits. Now, it's even okay if you want to go read ahead in any the gospels and find out which ones record that incident.

Now, when you look at this incident: The feeding of the—we always say "the 5,000"—the feeding of the huge crowd; when you look at it in the Gospel of John, you'll see that John weaves this together with an extensive discourse that Jesus gave on, seeking Him just because of the miracles, and about Him being so much more than that—that He is really "the bread of life." John 6 is the "bread" chapter of John. Feed them physical bread; talk about the "bread of life." And He said a lot about true spiritual commitment. Later in that chapter in John, John adds this comment: John 6:66—"As a result of this"—not feeding the 5,000; "As a result of this" teaching about real commitment—"many of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore." What does that mean? It means that they were pseudo-disciples.

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"Disciple" means "learner"—if you come and listen to the teacher, you're a learner; but a true believer is one who puts his full trust in the Lord (Phil. 3:3; 2 Tim. 1:12). So one of the most important lessons to take from this incident, and these passages that describe it, is the reminder that there *is* such thing as phony faith, and it is *very* common (Matt. 7:13). There are *many* who profess to believe in God, or even to believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God—they'll *say* that, but their faith is something *far less* than what it takes to be saved.

I think I've mentioned to somebody in some context—I don't think it was on a Sunday—the recent survey of the "State of Theology" done by Ligonier Ministries recently. The number of people who say that people are basically good: 52 percent *of evangelicals!* So the *majority* of people in America who call themselves "evangelicals" reject the number one most basic *essential* of the faith! You're "dead in your trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1)—you're *not* basically good (Rom. 3:10)! You're not *mostly* good! You're not 51 percent good! Your heart is "evil" (Matt. 7:11) and "desperately wicked" (Jer. 17:9, NKJV)—that's why you need a Savior! "Evangelical" comes from the Greek word for "good news," and the good news is irrelevant without the bad news (Lk. 5:31-32)!

Do you know how many "evangelicals" agree with the statement that "Jesus is the first and the highest of God the Father's creations"? Now, that is *exactly* Mormon theology; that is *exactly* Jehovah's Witnesses' theology. It is *exactly not* the Bible's theology! Do you know how many people who say that they are evangelical, and agree with that? *78 percent!* More than three out of four people who say, "Jesus is my Lord," *reject* what the Bible says about who Jesus—their supposed Lord—is! Listen, my friends: There is such thing as phony faith (see 1 Cor. 15:2; cf. Acts 8:13, 20-23; Titus 1:16)! Now, some people could be interested in the *trappings* of the faith. These people were curious about the things that Jesus did. Some people like to play around with an intellectual understanding of who He is, but something as radical as, "I trust You, and You alone, to save me, and I have nothing to offer"—that's a different story. There are people who try to coax God into a quid pro quo arrangement where you perform some kind of good deeds, and you expect God to give you what you want in return. That's not how it works (Rom. 11:35). This passages isn't here just for us to say, "Ooh! Ah! What a miracle!" It's here to teach us.

Examine *your* heart (see 2 Cor. 13:5). A lot of people today are what I call "religious consumers"—Go around checking out all the choices, squeeze the fruit and see if it suits you, and then pick and choose what you like. That's not what Jesus says. He says, "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest...for your souls" (Matt. 11:28-29). "Repent and believe" (Mk. 1:15); "the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 4:17).

Another lesson here is the reminder that, if you are a true believer—even to the point of being one of the *Apostles*—Jesus tested them; your faith is *constantly* going to be tested (Jas. 1:2-3; 1 Pet. 1:6-7). God allows opportunities for spiritual growth in your life every day! Each one of those things is an opportunity for you to see God do things that you might think is impossible.

My friend, are you casting the fate of your soul *completely* into the hands of Jesus Christ? *Nothing less than that* is the faith that saves (Jn. 8:24; 14:6).

Sermon Title: Give Them Something to Eat
Scripture Text: Mark 6:30-44

Speaker: Jim Harris
Date: 10-28-18

And then there's the overarching lesson here that, true faith—like what the Apostles did that day—is *obedient* faith (Matt. 7:21-23; Jas. 2:14-26; 1 Jn. 2:3-5). Now, you're probably not going to be feeding 15,000 people from your lunch box, but, in everyday situations, you can obey Jesus Christ by what you say, how you say it, how you represent Him, character that you demonstrate, every word that proceeds out of your mouth (Eph. 5:1-4; Phil. 2:15; Titus 2:10).

My friends, you can only have Jesus—and the wonderful salvation that He gives—on *His* terms (Matt. 10:27-28; Lk. 9:23; Jn. 12:25; 14:15; cf. 1 Cor. 16:22). And from what we read, in the gospels, of this event, and so many others, you see what those terms are. Jesus confronts people about the realities of their hearts and about being fully committed to Him. And then, the same incident, He says this—I read to you John 6:66; keep reading: "As a result of this"—the call to commitment: Will you, absolutely, make Jesus your Lord? Not "make"—you can't "make" Him Lord, that's some silly terminology...Will you *acknowledge* that He alone is "King of kings and Lord of lords"? (1 Tim. 6:15; Rev. 19:16; cf. Matt. 28:18; Acts 10:36; Phil. 2:11). Will you trust only Him (Phil. 3:7-9)? People hear that, and it says: "As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore. So Jesus said to the twelve, 'You do not want to go away also, do you?' Simon Peter answered Him"—and he nailed this one—"Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God." Is that you? Do you believe, do you *know*, that Jesus—and Jesus alone—is "the Holy One of God"? Either you believe that and you live your life in light of it, or—you remain in your sins (Jn. 8:24). And you can try really hard, and you can actually be somewhat successful at keeping yourself relatively comfortable, on your way to hell—which won't be comfortable (Mk. 9:43-48). Which is it?

A man by the name of John Sammis wrote some words you probably know—fits this perfectly. We won't sing them, but you know them: "But we never can prove the delights of His love until all on the altar we lay"—You want to know the love of God? Give it all—"For the favor He shows, and the joy He bestows, are for them who will trust and obey." Amen! (see Prov. 3:32; Jn. 14:21, 23; Rom. 15:13; 1 Pet. 1:8; 1 Jn. 3:24)

Let's pray:

Father, thank You for this portion of Your Word. Most of all, thank You for this Savior. Whatever needs to be done in any one of our hearts today, do it, we pray. Some need comfort. Some need encouragement. Some need a job. Some need relief from physical suffering. But we all need a Savior. Thank You that, in Christ, we can absolutely stand in Your grace. So have Your way with us for Your glory, we pray, in Jesus' name. Amen.