

BIBLE STUDY HELPS

TITLE: Satisfies

TEXT: Mark 6:30-44

TARGET: SESSION IN A SENTENCE

Jesus satisfies by providing for our needs.

LOOK UP: FOCUSING THE GROUP

Display (In Advance): “Are you satisfied?”

Guide:

- How many times a week do you receive a customer satisfaction survey? What types of customer satisfaction surveys do you receive? Do you tend to answer the surveys only when you have had a bad experience?
- What kind of influence might our world’s constant focus on being satisfied have on our walk with Christ?

We live in a culture where dissatisfaction is rampant and even encouraged because it provides opportunities for others to manipulate our lives. Not being satisfied with everyday life isn’t a new issue. Dissatisfaction nags at us because we live in a sin-broken world. Even as believers we wrestle with being satisfied in Jesus.

Mark 6:30-34 finds us looking into Mark’s account of a multitude of people who were hungry both spiritually and physically. They were pursuing Jesus because they desired Him to satisfy their needs. Leading up to this passage, Mark describes a lot of events that took place as He and the disciples moved about the region. From parables to miracles to Jesus raising someone from the dead, Jesus is continually revealing Himself as the Son of God.

Yet, through all of this, Jesus still faced rejection, even in places where He should have been embraced, like His hometown of Nazareth. His return to His hometown revealed the difficulties of satisfying people when they have hard hearts and closed minds.

As you examine this passage, consider how satisfied you are in Jesus. First, we discover the exhaustion that accompanies trying to satisfy everyone’s needs.

LOOK IN: UPACKING THE BIBLICAL TEXT

Trying to satisfy people is exhausting – Mark 6:30-32

³⁰ The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all that they had done and taught. ³¹ He said to them, “Come away by yourselves to a remote place and rest for a while.” For many people were coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.

³² So they went away in the boat by themselves to a remote place,

Mark has already told us that Jesus had chosen the twelve disciples in Mark 3:13-19. Here he refers to them as *apostles*. Jesus had commissioned the disciples to go out to do ministry on their own. Mark captures the amazing works of God they experienced earlier in chapter 6 as Jesus commissioned them to go out and meet the needs of others in His name:

⁷ He summoned the Twelve and began to send them out in pairs and gave them authority over unclean spirits. ⁸ He instructed them to take nothing for the road except a staff—no bread, no traveling bag, no money in their belts, ⁹ but to wear sandals and not put on an extra shirt. ¹⁰ He said to them, “Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you leave that place. ¹¹ If any place does not welcome you or listen to you, when you leave there, shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them.” ¹² So they went out and preached that people should repent. ¹³ They drove out many demons, anointed many sick people with oil and healed them. (Mark 6:7-13)

Now they have returned to share their amazing experiences with Jesus.

Discuss: Imagine you were listening in on the conversations between Jesus and those disciples. What could you imagine took place during these conversations?

It’s important to notice that, while they were reporting these things, the crowds continued to pursue them. There were so many people and so many needs that they couldn’t even eat. Jesus had experienced this (see Mark 1:35) and He knew what these disciples needed. They needed some rest! If they continued to try and satisfy the unending needs of the crowd, there would be nothing left for them to give emotionally, physically, or spiritually.

Discuss: What are some symptoms that might indicate someone needs to step away for a period of rest after taking care of people's needs? What actions could prevent you from being drained spiritually, mentally, physically, or emotionally?

Jesus knew they needed to rest, but even with them pulling away, the crowds kept coming. Let's see how Jesus responded.

Jesus does not ignore those who pursue Him – Mark 6:33-34

³³ but many saw them leaving and recognized them, and they ran on foot from all the towns and arrived ahead of them. ³⁴ When he went ashore, he saw a large crowd and had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. Then he began to teach them many things.

Discuss: What are some things today people might “run to” to experience satisfaction or contentment?

People today might run to drugs, alcohol, entertainment, sports events, money, or countless other things, thinking these might satisfy their emptiness. Yet, at the end of the day, none of these bring satisfaction. They are all temporary and fleeting.

The thing that was different for this crowd on this day was their desire for something different. They had seen or heard about this group of men, especially their teacher, Jesus, and they “ran on foot” to get to Him. But one must ask, “WHAT were they desiring for Jesus to satisfy?” Did they only desire to satisfy their immediate needs, or did they truly desire to follow Jesus?

Discuss: What reasons might people give for “running to” Jesus?

Whatever their motives for running to meet Jesus, it's obvious they needed something more than what they were presently experiencing, and they felt Jesus could satisfy that need. Notice how Jesus responded. He was moved with compassion “because they were like sheep without a shepherd.”

Identify: What actions today reveal that people are like sheep without a shepherd?

Notice how Jesus first began to satisfy their needs—by teaching them. Jesus didn't send them away or try to remedy their issues with a quick fix so the disciples could rest. His compassion moved Him to take time to teach them about God's kingdom.

Consider: Are you willing to let the needs of people interrupt your season of rest? Is your compassion for people and your passion for the gospel greater than your need for rest?

But Jesus didn't only teach them. Jesus focused on their physical needs as well. Yet, this was a lesson as well, especially for the disciples!

Trusting Jesus to satisfy needs is a lesson of faith – Mark 6:35-38

³⁵ When it grew late, his disciples approached him and said, “This place is deserted, and it is already late. ³⁶ Send them away so that they can go into the surrounding countryside and villages to buy themselves something to eat.” ³⁷ “You give them something to eat,” he responded. They said to him, “Should we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give them something to eat?” ³⁸ He asked them, “How many loaves do you have? Go and see.” When they found out they said, “Five, and two fish.”

Guide:

- What problems were the disciples concerned about regarding the physical hunger of the crowd?
- What steps would you have taken to solve this problem if you were one of the disciples?
- Why do you think Jesus commanded them to “give them something to eat?”
- Had you been one of the disciples, how might you have responded?

We can only surmise the lessons Jesus was teaching the disciples by telling them to “give them something to eat.” Perhaps it was to remind them of their previous work. Remember, they had just seen God work in powerful ways as they obeyed Jesus. They had gone out “and preached that people should repent. They drove out many demons, anointed many sick people with oil and healed them.” (Mark 6:12-13)

Perhaps this was a faith-strengthening moment for these disciples. Or perhaps Jesus was demonstrating that He was the ultimate Provider. It could have been all these things. There are multiple lessons these disciples and we can learn from this experience.

Notice next that the solution didn't look like much, but, with Jesus, all the resources were provided to accomplish what He had asked them to do.

A little will satisfy a lot when we trust and obey Jesus - Mark 6:39-44

³⁹ Then he instructed them to have all the people sit down in groups on the green grass. ⁴⁰ So they sat down in groups of hundreds and fifties. ⁴¹ He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, he blessed and broke the loaves. He kept giving them to his disciples to set before the people. He also divided the two fish among them all. ⁴² Everyone ate and was satisfied. ⁴³ They picked up twelve baskets full of pieces of bread and fish. ⁴⁴ Now those who had eaten the loaves were five thousand men.

Notice the action steps in this passage.

- Jesus instructed them to sit down in groups on the green grass. This sounds much like what a shepherd would do for His sheep. He would take them to a place where grass was plentiful and let them eat (see Psalm 23).
- The people obeyed with very specific actions.
- Jesus demonstrated His faith by praying and blessing the meager number of loaves and fishes. I'm sure everyone was wondering what would take place next!
- Jesus kept giving the bread and fish to the disciples, but the supply never stopped! Jesus is a never-ending source. He is the bread of life and food for our souls that never runs out!
- Everyone ate. But they just didn't eat; **THEY WERE SATISFIED!** No one complained because they didn't get enough or because someone else received more.
- Then there is the lesson for the disciples. They got to collect the leftovers—twelve baskets full of bread and fish! Twelve disciples; Twelve baskets!

LOOK OUT: LIVING OUT THE TARGET

Illustrate: George Muller served as a pastor in Bristol, England during the 1800's. He was also an evangelist and the director of the Ashley Down orphanage. As he grew in his faith, he learned that he could trust the Lord to provide any resources he needed as he ministered to others. His stories of faith and trusting Jesus for provisions for the orphanage are shared around the world to this day. One story tells of him trusting God when it seemed as if there wasn't going to be enough food to go around:

"The children are dressed and ready for school. But there is no food for them to eat," the housemother of the orphanage informed George Mueller. George asked her to take the 300 children into the dining room and have them sit at the tables. He thanked God for the food and waited. George knew God would provide food for the children as he always did. Within minutes, a baker knocked on the door. "Mr. Mueller," he said, "last night I could not sleep. Somehow I knew that you would need bread this morning. I got up and baked three batches for you. I will bring it in." Soon, there was another knock at the door. It was the milkman. His cart had broken down in front of the orphanage. The milk would spoil by the time the wheel was fixed. He asked George if he could use some free milk. George smiled as the milkman brought in ten large cans of milk. It was just enough for the 300 thirsty children." (Source:

<https://www.georgemuller.org/devotional/a-famous-story-about-mullers-faith>)

Challenge:

- When you read Mark's account of the feeding of the crowd or this story about the faith of George Muller, what thoughts do you have regarding how you should respond?
- Can you share a story of when God provided for you as you tried to meet the spiritual or physical needs of others?
- What practical things can we do to trust Jesus more when we have a problem that seems impossible to solve?
- Are you satisfied in Jesus? Or do you expect Him to satisfy your every need? What is the difference in these two questions?
- Do you expect Jesus to send you a customer satisfaction survey? Is it Jesus's goal to make sure you are satisfied with His "product"? How could our view of satisfaction skew our expectations of Jesus?