

Home Study

Mark's Epiphany



MONDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2021

INTRODUCTION

Take a moment, and think about who's the most compassionate person you've ever known. How has that person demonstrated concern about the welfare of others? What has that person ever done for you? Has that person's compassion inspired you in any way?

People who are truly compassionate have deep-seated feelings of empathy and pathos toward others, particularly those who are in need. Jesus was such a person. In today's reading, Mark shows us how deeply Jesus cared for others. But he also shows us the Lord's limitless power to help those for whom he cares.

TODAY'S READING

Before you read today's story in Mark's Gospel, ask yourself this. "How long has it been since I've last eaten any food?" It might be better to read this story when you're super-hungry! But, go ahead, even if you've just eaten. Read Mark 6:30-44 now. As you're reading, make note of the specific points that catch your interest in this story, along with those things that surprise you.

To whom did Jesus show compassion, in this story?

Read verse 31 again. How did Jesus demonstrate care and concern for his disciples?

Jesus also shows compassion to the crowds. What does he do first for them? Read verse 34.

Mark shows us Jesus caring for the spiritual hunger of the crowds, by teaching them. Then he describes the compassionate miracle Jesus performs in order to address the physical hunger of the people.

Was the sequence of those two acts of caring just a coincidence? Or do you think that there's a lesson for us to learn about priorities? Which kind of hunger in us do you think is more important to Jesus – our spiritual hunger, or our physical hunger?

Do you often find ways to place a priority on your spiritual hunger, and your spiritual needs? How so? How might you consider re-arranging your priorities this week?

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How does Jesus Christ feed you, when you're spiritually hungry? What means does he utilize?

Read verses 32-34 once more. If you were one of the disciples, and Jesus invited you to come with him to get some rest, what might have been running through your mind when you saw all of those people waiting on the shore? How might you have felt?

Read verses 34-37. Again, if you were one of the disciples, how might you have reacted to Jesus' request?

What do you think Jesus was really asking the disciples to do? See the impossibility of the situation? Count up all of their own resources? Figure out a plan, no matter what the cost? Or trust that he had a plan?

Think back for a moment to yesterday's reading (Mark 6:14-29). How does Herod's dinner party contrast with the meal described in today's reading?

Read verses 42-43 again. Was it just coincidence that there were twelve baskets of left-overs, one for each disciple? Or was Jesus personalizing his message in this miracle for the twelve disciples?

Is there a lesson in this miracle story for the modern-day church? For our congregation, Hope Lutheran Church in Wake Forest, North Carolina?

What might this story teach us, the next time we're facing an impossibly-huge challenge, as a congregation?

PRAYER

Lord Jesus Christ, you are the great provider of all that I/we need! Thank you, dear Savior, for addressing my/our spiritual hunger by dying on the cross to pay for my/our sins. Continue to feed me/us daily by your Word and by your Spirit. Thank you for your compassion, mercy, and grace. Amen.