

LENT DEVOTIONAL MARCH 27, 2014

SCRIPTURE

Mark 6:30-46

30 The apostles gathered around Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught. 31 He said to them, "Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves 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 deserted place by themselves. 33 Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they hurried there on foot from all the towns and arrived ahead of them. 34 As he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things. 35 When it grew late, his disciples came to him and said, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is now very late; 36 send them away so that they may go into the surrounding country and villages and buy something for themselves to eat." 37 But he answered them, "You give them something to eat." They said to him, "Are we to 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 have you? Go and see." When they had found out, they said, "Five, and two fish." 39 Then he ordered them to get all the people to sit down in groups on the green grass. 40 So they sat down in groups of hundreds and of fifties. 41 Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to his disciples to set before the people; and he divided the two fish among them all. 42 And all ate and were filled; 43 and they took up twelve baskets full of broken pieces and of the fish. 44 Those who had eaten the loaves numbered five thousand men.

45 Immediately he made his disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. 46 After saying farewell to them, he went up on the mountain to pray.

DEVOTIONAL

After our interlude with John the Baptist, we return to the disciples. More precisely, they return to us. Jesus had sent them out, and they now return to report what they experienced.

At this point, we find them tired and weary, and they turn (as Jesus does throughout Mark) to the sea for refuge. See **March 19** and **March 21**.

As soon as they return to the land, there is a crowd waiting. Despite the picture we often carry in our minds, the scene here is not particularly pleasant. The passage opens with an explanation that the disciples haven't even had the leisure to eat. The crowds have started to become dangerous; we've seen Jesus retreat from them several times already throughout the book. The people are far from home, wandering as if lost. At this point, the crowds also grow hungry. It's growing dark. The scene is of desolation, hunger, and darkness.

That's where Jesus wants the people to sit. He wants them to sit in groups in the midst of the desolation, hunger, and darkness. Then, he feeds them. Then, Jesus goes to the mountains to pray.

*Message provided by the **Miller Summer Youth Institute**.*

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Pittsburgh Theological Seminary
616 North Highland Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15206
Phone: 412-362-5610



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