

DISCIPLESHIP GROUPS

Our Mission: Reaching out to leaders who can change the world.

14-18 Nov 2011

LESSON 7 - GOD'S SERVANT MEETING NEEDS

INTRODUCTION:

What problem have you recently faced and felt totally inadequate to fix?

OBSERVATION/INTERPRETATION:

Note: Jesus had called and appointed the twelve as apostles. We see an increasing amount of time He devotes in giving special instruction and training to these men. They were sent out in pairs and commissioned. Now, returning back to the Teacher, we find them in need of rest from the pace of the ministry. Mark clearly recorded these events as a miracle, highlighting Jesus' divinity.

Read Mark 6:30-32

1. What picture do we see here of the relationship between Jesus and His disciples?
2. What were the probable intentions for the gathering together of Jesus with His disciples?

Read Mark 6:33-38

Note: 20,000 people would occupy about 7-8 acres when reclining. It would take 2 hours to serve that many people. 200 denarii was about 8 months of wages for a common laborer. The barley bread was flat bread that was much smaller than today's loaf. The poor ate barley because it was much cheaper than wheat and was often raised to feed livestock rather than people. The fish were dried and salted.

3. Wanting personal "alone" time in privacy with His disciples, how does Jesus respond to the needs of the following multitudes? Psalm 105:40; 132:15; Num 27:16-17
4. What differences do we see in Jesus' response to others needs and His disciples' response?
5. How do you think this experience affected the young boy that shared his meal?

Read Mark 6:39-44

6. How did Jesus intentionally involve His men in the process of meeting others needs? What spiritual lessons were they learning?
7. Why did He have them gather the remains of the meal? Vv 42-43; 2 Kings 4:42-44; Jn 6:14
8. The disciples accurately assessed the problem. What opportunities for ministry (and faith) do you see today?

APPLICATION

- How has Jesus met existing needs in your life lately?
- How can we become more aware of the spiritual needs of those around us?

Jesus was primarily instructing the Twelve concerning the nature of the ministry for which they were being prepared. They would face multitudes that were shepherdless sheep and starved spiritually. It would be their responsibility to "give them something to eat" (v.37). The followers of Christ do not have the ability of themselves to meet the spiritual need of people, but when they make available what they have to the Lord, the Lord can take it and multiply it and use them to minister to the multitudes. The ministry belongs to the Lord, but it is carried on through His disciples as His agents. It is not what disciples have that makes them good shepherds. Rather, it is what they give of themselves to the Lord that He can use to meet people's needs. To discharge the ministry entrusted to them, disciples must depend on Him and make themselves available to Him. Only in this way can they be shepherds to the hungry sheep.

J. Dwight Pentecost, "The Words and Works of Jesus Christ" (1981)