



Life Group Study Notes

"Keys to the Blessed Life"

Ps. James Lowe - October 16, 2016

Warm Up (10-15 minutes)

Choose a question below to answer, or ask another. No right or wrong answers.

- How do you recharge when you are tired and drained?
- What kind of need or cause are you more likely to be motivated to give to?
- What personal story comes to mind when you think about God's supernatural provision?

Word (10-15 minutes)

Sermons can be heard online at www.bethelworld.org

Mark 6:30-44 ESV

The apostles returned to Jesus and told him all that they had done and taught. And he said to them, "Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while." For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. And they went away in the boat to a desolate place by themselves.

- Jesus experienced exhaustion and fatigue as a normal human. Because of the unending service he gave to the crowds, he and his disciples were desperately in need of rest and renewal. We too will experience times like this when we need to get away from the demands of life. The last thing we want in times like this is to have fresh, unexpected demands placed on us. Rest is a gift from God.

Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they ran there on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. And he began to teach them many things.

- When the people flocked to Jesus, he did not rebuff them and send them away. He was compassionate toward them. He saw them from heaven's perspective: they were vulnerable and without spiritual leadership and protection. Thus, in spite of his fatigue and need for rest, he gave of himself to help them. Even though we may physically need rest, there will be times when God would want us to deny ourselves and give of ourselves to serve and meet the needs of others.

And when it grew late, his disciples came to him and said, "This is a desolate place, and the hour is now late. Send them away to go into the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat." But he answered them, "You give them something to eat."

- The disciples assessed the situation. It wasn't good. We need to also have the courage to be honest with ourselves and assess our circumstances and the circumstances of those for whom we are responsible. Ignoring reality because it is bad, depressing, or even hopeless doesn't help. Nothing will change. In fact, things will often only get worse. If there is to be a deliverance or turn around, we must first take stock of the situation.

- The disciples then made the wise choice to go to Jesus with their problem. Their only mistake was due to a lack of faith. They had already decided how Jesus should solve the problem: he should just send the people away. We need to imitate the disciples in going to Jesus with our problems. But we need to learn from their mistake and not presume to know what the best solution is. Jesus always knows what to do in a crisis. His wisdom and power and goodness are greater than ours.

And they said to him, "Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give it to them to eat?" And he said to them, "How many loaves do you have? Go and see." And when they had found out, they said, "Five, and two fish."

- Jesus made clear that he wanted his disciples to meet the needs of the people even though the disciples were also worn out. The disciples were completely surprised and were incredulous. They thought his command was beyond reasonable. Their resources were completely inadequate to meet the pressing needs at hand. Sometimes we respond in the same way as the disciples. Instead, we should inquire of Jesus as to how he wants us to overcome our limitations and still complete his mission to serve others.

Then he commanded them all to sit down in groups on the green grass. So they sat down in groups, by hundreds and by fifties. And taking the five loaves and the two fish he looked up to heaven and said a blessing and broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples to set before the people. And he divided the two fish among them all. And they all ate and were satisfied.

- Jesus knew all along what he was going to do (as another Gospel reveals). His solution began with the disciples giving their limited resources to him. He then blessed what they had given him. He then returned the same resources to the disciples and commanded them to go and meet the needs of the people. Interestingly, the food wasn't multiplied in his hands, but in the hands of the disciples as they gave it away. If we want to see God's miraculous provision, we must place ourselves and our resources in his hands. We must give to the Lord. In his hands we will be blessed. Our resources will be blessed. Then as we are generous with our limited resources God will ensure we have enough to meet the needs of others and fulfill our mission.

And they took up twelve baskets full of broken pieces and of the fish. And those who ate the loaves were five thousand men.

- Not only did Jesus help the disciples meet the needs of others, he provided for their own needs as well. And this was done as they gave themselves to serve the people. God will take care of our needs as we entrust ourselves and our resources to him and then give ourselves in service to others in his mission.

Final Thought: John's Gospel teaches us that many of the people who experienced this miracle later sought Jesus because they wanted him to continue to meet their needs. However, they didn't seek him to acknowledge and follow and obey him as Lord. They didn't care so much about having a relationship with him as they did care about how they could get him to take care of their needs and fulfill their desires. We need to make sure we don't make this egregious mistake. His blessings should lead us to love him.

Discussion (10-15 minutes)

Choose an item below to discuss, or introduce another related point for discussion.

- Do you need to make a fresh assessment about anything in your life? If so, what?
- Do you need some kind of miraculous provision for yourself or others? If so, what?
- What do you need to give to Jesus to release his blessing?

Prayer (10-15 minutes)

Pray for any of the following, as well as any other requests you may have.

- Ask God to move your heart to be more concerned about the needs of other people.
- Ask God to guide you in how he wants you to fulfill his mission and serve others.
- Ask God to provide for others through your service and to provide for your needs too.