

2025-11-16

One Way God Works

Mark 6:30-44 / John 6:1-14

God can work any way He wants to. As sovereign God, He can do what He wants to do, when He wants to do it, the way He wants to do it, and for His own reasons. Take the man with the withered hand, for example (Mark 3:1-6). He went to the synagogue to worship God not expecting anything special to happen. He did not know Jesus was going to show up. The next thing he knows, Jesus called him to the front (3:3). This man may not even know who Jesus is and he probably does not know what Jesus is going to do. There is no indication that Jesus talked to him about his faith or if he wanted to be healed. **Jesus just looked around** in anger and sadness because no one in the synagogue wanted to help him. No one had compassion for this man. Jesus said, *“Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?”* (3:4). Hearing a statement like that, the man may be wondering what was going to happen to him. Then Jesus commanded him to stretch out his hand (3:5). He does, and he is healed. And the Pharisees were furious. They wanted to destroy Jesus because He helped someone. He had compassion. He healed on the Sabbath in a synagogue. Jesus can heal when He wants to, the way He wants to for His own reasons. Yet often times, when Jesus works, He wants to include people, like us, if we are willing to respond.

Mark 6:30 *“Then the apostles gathered to Jesus and told Him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught.”* These verses are connected to the event before the telling of what happened to John the Baptist. Jesus had sent out the twelve disciples, now called apostles because *“apostles”* means *“the sent-out ones.”* He sent these men out two by two. All twelve apostles are reporting back to Jesus how they preached repentance, cast out demons and healed the sick (6:12-13). What we do not know is the exact towns the apostles went to, how long this preaching period lasted and where Jesus was and what He did while they were gone. What we can learn from these verses is that the apostles were very excited by what happened and they were exhausted. Even though there were more needs to be met, they needed a break.

Verse 31 *“And He said to them, ‘Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while.’ For there were many coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.”* When we really get involved in ministering to others, it can be very time consuming and exhausting. We have got to remember to take some time to rest. Often times that means getting away, because it is difficult to rest where we minister. There is always someone in need requesting our help. Some of us have a hard time finding time to rest, me included. I like helping people. I try and squeeze in as much

as I can during the day. I am thankful for Sally who puts up with my long hours and generally has supper for me when I get home, that is, after I get the horses done. If she does not have dinner ready, that is my clue she wants to go out to eat. With the healing and teaching ministry Jesus had, there was always someone demanding His time. They did not even have time to eat. Now with the apostles involved in this same ministry, Jesus wanted these apostles to get in a boat and travel about 4 miles across the lake to a deserted place, where there was no one around so they can rest.

Verses 32-33 *“So they departed to a deserted place in the boat by themselves. But the multitudes saw them departing, and many knew Him and ran there on foot from all the cities. They arrived before them and came together to Him.”* This is not the first time Jesus and His disciples left Capernaum in a boat. The crowd had seen them leave before and they knew where they were going. In the gospel of Luke, we learn that they went to a deserted place outside of Bethsaida (9:10). It was about 8 miles on foot, yet some of those people who knew where Jesus and the disciples were going beat them there. It is possible that Jesus had the disciples take their time rowing the boat to the deserted place. Jesus probably knew that **the best place for the disciples to rest was on the boat**, as long as no storms came up. The gospel of John informs us that this event happened in the spring, just before Passover (6:4).

Verse 34 *“And Jesus, when He came out, saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them, because they were like sheep not having a shepherd. So He began to teach them many things.”* Remember, Jesus and the disciples were going to a deserted place to get away from the crowd and get some rest. When they arrived at this deserted place, it was not deserted. The crowd had come to Jesus. Most people would complain because they would not get the rest they were looking for. Not Jesus! He was moved with compassion. He saw these people as lost sheep. **They did not know what to do with their lives.** This crowd went after the next person who promised them free things. **They did not know how to manage their lives.** Instead of working, they were crowding around Jesus. Matthew and Luke both record that Jesus healed those who needed healing. Mark and Luke record that Jesus taught the people all day. Jesus wanted these people to learn to make right decisions and follow the truth. Now that this crowd had traveled up to 8 miles and listened to Jesus all afternoon, what should happen next? They are in a deserted place. It is supper time.

Verses 35-36 *“When the day was now far spent, His disciples came to Him and said, ‘This is a deserted place, and already the hour is late. Send them away, that they may go into the surrounding country and villages and buy themselves bread; for they have nothing to eat.’”* This account is the only account of a miracle, other than the resurrection, that is recorded **in all four gospels**. To me, this makes this miracle very

important that we understand what is going on. In Matthew, Mark, and Luke the disciples come to Jesus and ask Him to send the crowd away. Luke said all twelve disciples came to Jesus. They unanimously agreed this was the best thing to do. John records that Jesus asked Philip, “*Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?*” (6:5). Then John writes that Jesus said this to Philip **to test Him** (6:6). Did Jesus know what He was going to do? He sure did. All the disciples were being tested about their compassion for the crowd. How were they going to feed such a large crowd. The disciples did not want to feed them. They wanted everyone to leave and feed themselves. The disciples believed that the crowd had their own money to feed themselves. **This is not about feeding the poor.** These people could travel to the surrounding towns and buy their food. The problem the crowd had was there was not enough food at the moment to feed everyone in this deserted place. It was already late. It would be difficult for all these people, men, women **and children** to travel another mile or more to get food. The crowd was hungry and tired already.

Verse 37 “*But He answered and said to them, ‘You give them something to eat.’ And they said to Him, ‘Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give them something to eat?’*” Again, **Jesus is testing the disciples.** He told them to feed the crowd. Mark and John both record that it would cost over 200 denarii. One denarius was a day’s wage. What is a day’s wage today? Let’s say minimum wage is \$12.50 per hour. $\$12.50 \times 8 \text{ hours} = \100 . $\$100 \times 200 \text{ days} = \$20,000$. Jesus was telling the disciples to spend \$20,000 on bread to feed all these people. Did the disciples have that kind of money? I believe so. **Jesus would not ask them to do something they could not do.** Do you remember Mary who anointed Jesus’ feet with spikenard and wiped His feet with her hair? (John 12:1-8). Judas Iscariot complained about Mary’s action because that oil could have been sold for 300 denarii (\$30,000 today) and given to the poor (12:5). Giving to feed the poor was done by many people around Passover time, including the disciples (John 13:29). Jesus wanted the disciples to do an act of kindness to this crowd because they could.

The problem the disciples had was **they were unwilling to use the resources given to them to help other people.** They wanted to keep it for themselves. We are no different today. Most Christians have a very shallow idea of giving. Or they think that God only requires us to give 10%. You will not find that teaching in the New Testament. And when the Old Testament refers to giving 10%, that was only one area of giving (Numbers 18:21-24). The Israelites also gave burnt offerings, grain offerings, peace offerings, sin offerings, trespass offerings and freewill offerings. There is no way to calculate what percentage of their income they gave monthly, but it was a lot more than 10%. I believe Jesus is trying to teach these disciples a very important lesson. “***It is more blessed to give than to receive***” (Acts 20:35). Jesus is

not forcing them to believe this lesson. He wants them to willingly accept this truth. Jesus constantly taught about giving. His whole life was one big example of giving. **He gave His life to forgive our sins.** Generous giving is a characteristic of a mature follower of Christ. Jesus knows that *“the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil”* (1 Timothy 6:10). Money is a tool to accomplish God’s will. It is not something we are to cling to as the answer to all our problems. Jesus is the answer to our problems. No one can serve God and mammon, which is the god of riches (Matthew 6:24).

Verse 38 *“But He said to them, ‘How many loaves do you have? Go and see.’ And when they found out they said, ‘Five, and two fish.’”* John writes that this bread and fish came from a lad, a youth (6:9). Do you think that he was the only one in this crowd who had food? He was the only one in the crowd who was willing to share his food with others. What if he did not share, what would Jesus do? We will never know. **God prefers to get people involved in helping others.** Can God do it Himself? He is God. God likes human involvement. He wants us to participate. We must be willing. It will be exhausting. It will be costly. Yet, ***“It is more blessed to give than to receive.”*** The disciples missed out on their lesson and their blessing.

Verses 39-41 *“Then He commanded them to make them all sit down in groups on the green grass. So they sat down in ranks, in hundreds and fifties. And when He had taken the five loaves and the two fish, He looked up to heaven blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to His disciples to set before them; and the two fish He divided among them all.”* The bread and fish were given to Jesus because, without Jesus we can do nothing (John 15:5). God uses what we give to Him. He works in an orderly fashion so that everyone benefits. Everyone ate and everyone had enough.

Verse 42-44 *“So they all ate and were filled. And they took up twelve baskets full of fragments and of the fish. Now those who had eaten the loaves were about five thousand men.”* There were also many women and children too.

Questions to ask yourself: Are you a generous giver? Is God your God or is mammon your God? Are you sure? How can we be sure in our materialistic world?

Actions to take: Be a generous giver to God’s work. It is more blessed to give.

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