

“Living the Christ Life”

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*But He answered them, "**You give them something to eat!**" And they said to Him, "Shall we go and spend two hundred denarii on bread and give them something to eat?" (Mark 6:37)*

Mark appears to emphasize the fragile and frazzled existence of Christ and His disciples. No matter where they turned, the masses waited with their needs. This thought has two immediate applications. **First**, in vocational ministry “life” can be very consuming. People have needs and if anyone attempts to meet those needs in their own strength, they will fail physically, emotionally, and spiritually. The pace alone when engaging in vocational ministry will consume the individual. It has been said, “Ministry makes a terrible mistress” and “the ministry will take all you have, never set boundaries and never thank you for what you’ve given.” **Second**, simply living is consuming. No matter who you are or what your station is in life, it is demanding and draining. The question is, “How do we exist with physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being without disengaging?” “How do we rest in Him no matter what the storm offers? Let us consider the thought as it is found in Mark 6:37.

“This miracle is mentioned by all the four evangelists. It is one of the most astonishing that Christ has wrought. It is a miracle which could not be counterfeited, and a full proof of the divinity of Christ.” (*Adam Clarke’s New Testament Commentary* on Mark 6:44).

In the feeding of the multitude, our Lord again “tests” His disciples to see if they are getting it. He had already given them authority to preach, to deliver, and to heal. He has sent them out as ambassadors of His kingdom, thus His statement was genuine in verse 37. Notice with me the additional narrative John gives to this story in John 6:6, “**This He was saying to test him**, for He Himself knew what He was intending to do.”

Mark uses the word “test” 1) of our Lord’s **test** in the wilderness (Mark 1:13; 10:2; 12:15) and 2) of the Pharisees and Sadducees seeking to **test** Jesus (Mark 8:11). Jesus is now **testing** His disciples. The entire story is rooted in verse 37. Place verse 37 in the context of vv. 7-13, 30-32. “Jesus uses the emphatic personal pronoun to make the message plain: ‘**You give them something to eat**’” ([emphasis added] Walter W. Wessell, “Mark,” *EBC*, [Zondervan, 1984], 8:673).

Jesus was fully expecting His disciples to be able to feed the multitude. He knew what they had at their disposal. He had already given them His authority to act in His behalf. Just as He was able, so also were they. They, however, were not fully aware of what this looked like. So instead they struggled.

This will be one of those “eye opening” moments. Remember the placement of this passage. They just returned from doing many powerful things and they have just

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shared with Him what they had just seen and done and now He seeks to cement this idea with more force.

The intent of our Lord is not for them to declare their independence from Him, but to see that they are to live in His power. This is the Christ-life of the New Covenant. This is the idea in 1 John 4:17.

“By this, love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; **because as He is, so also are we in this world**” (1 John 4:17).

It is the idea in John 14:12.

“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and **greater works than these he will do**; because I go to the Father” (John 14:12).

“Not necessarily greater miracles and not greater spiritual works in quality, but greater in quantity.” (A.T. Robertson’s *Word Pictures in the New Testament*)

It is the same idea in Galatians 2:20.

“I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but **Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God**, who loved me and gave Himself up for me” (Gal. 2:20).

They could have fed the multitude just as He will do because He is working through them. It is not their glory that such miracles are done but for His.

Often we look back and believing God acted differently than He does now. We say such things thinking that God was really working then, but now there is a deficiency in His power and in His church. I am not willing to concede that what we have today is less than what His early apostles or disciples had. We have the same Christ, and it is His power and His life that is to flow through us in the expansion of His kingdom. We are involved in kingdom work no matter what level we might be functioning.

Regardless as to whether we are involved in vocational ministry or engaged in life through work, marriage, parenting, serving, it is the life of Christ that works through us. All of our existence is from Him, through Him, and for Him. It is His power that produces our good works, our obedience, our fruit, and it is because of this that He is to receive all the glory. It is my prayer that we would live resting in His finished work and ongoing advocacy as individuals and as a community of faith. May God cause us to see that He is not only necessary, but enough.