

Counting On Compassion

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

A story with many numbers

God counts differently than we do

2 Peter 3:8 (ESV)

But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

What does God count?

God counts the workers and the work

Mark 6:7 (ESV)

And he called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits.

Mark 6:30 (ESV)

The apostles returned to Jesus and told him all that they had done and taught.

Matthew 25:14-15 (ESV)

“For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property. To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away.

What you do and do not do matters to God

God counts the wanters and their want

Disciples: “Send them away to *buy* something to eat”

Jesus: “You *give* them something to eat”

Jesus knows both our needs and how to provide for our needs better than we do

Matthew 6:31-32 (ESV)

Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all.

The thing that hungry people need more than bread is purpose

John 4:31-34 (ESV)

Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, saying, “Rabbi, eat.” But he said to them, “I have food to eat that you do not know about.” So the disciples said to one another, “Has anyone brought him something to eat?” Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work.

God counts the worth and the wealth

Disciples: “Shall we go *buy* 200 denarii worth of bread?”

Jesus: "How many loaves do you have? Go and see."

In Christ we have way more than we think we have

What if my lack reveals God's abundance?

2 Corinthians 8:1-5 (ESV)

We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia, for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own accord, begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints – and this, not as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then by the will of God to us.

Philippians 4:19-20 (ESV)

And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.

Jesus does not count according to the limits of our longings, but according to the lengths of His love.

Isaiah 63:7 (ESV)

I will recount the steadfast love of the LORD, the praises of the LORD, according to all that the LORD has granted us, and the great goodness to the house of Israel that he has granted them according to his compassion, according to the abundance of his steadfast love.

John 3:34 (ESV)

For he whom God has sent utters the words of God, for he gives the Spirit without measure.

We can always count on His compassion

Mark 6:34 (ESV)

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.

Jesus promises to give His sheep far more than they could ever imagine

Psalm 23:1-6 (ESV)

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever.