

Satisfies
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Mark 6:30-44

Opening: Discontented people can be dangerous people. Why is that? How do modern marketing and social media factor into dissatisfaction?

When someone is not satisfied with their life they can make unwise decisions and take unwise actions. Discontentment in marriage, family, job, and spiritual life is an open door for the temptation to do something reckless and harmful.

If discontentment can be dangerous, imagine the danger of desperation. Really bad choices can be made when someone is faced with a problem that seems humanly impossible. In today's text Jesus miraculously satisfied an enormous physical need and in the process taught His twelve apostles (and us) a lesson about where to turn when we face what seem to be impossible circumstances.

The point: Whether we are desperate or discontented, Jesus is the only true source of satisfaction for ALL our needs. When we see Him that way we can shift from troubled to trusting, from bewildered to believing, from starved to satisfied.

Today's text is both familiar and significant. Other than the resurrection, this incident is the only miracle recorded in all four gospels. Here is a little context before the text. Jesus' newly chosen Apostles had been out doing ministry as He had directed and they came back to give Him an update. He could see they were exhausted from ministry so He prescribed a retreat from the crowds so they could rest and recharge. He knew before they rested there would be a huge need to be met and some important lessons for His followers.

Mark 6:31–44 (ESV) — 31 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. **32** And they went away in the boat to a desolate place by themselves. **33** Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they ran there on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. **34** 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. **35** And when it grew late, his disciples came to him and said, “This is a desolate place, and the hour is now late. **36** Send them away to go into the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat.” **37** 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?” **38** 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.” **39** Then he commanded them all to sit down in groups on the green grass. **40** So they sat down in groups, by

hundreds and by fifties. **41** 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. **42** And they all ate and were satisfied. **43** And they took up twelve baskets full of broken pieces and of the fish. **44** And those who ate the loaves were five thousand men.

- In verse 31 Jesus taught His followers the importance of rest.
- Jesus modeled prioritizing solitude and rest for us. He went away to grieve the beheading of His cousin John the Baptist (Mt. 14:1-13). Before He chose the twelve He prayed all night alone. (Lk. 6:12-13). We know about the night in the garden before His arrest (Lk. 22:39-44), and Luke 5:16 tells us time alone in prayer with the Father was routine for Jesus.
- Lesson #1: Jesus taught the importance of periodic rest for His followers.
- Try as they might to escape from ministry by boat, the enterprising and needy crowd ran around the lake to greet them when they docked.
- Jesus saw the crowd with compassion: *“Like sheep without a shepherd.”*
- Though they had physical needs He would later meet, Jesus began by meeting their spiritual needs: *“He began teaching them many things.”*
- Meeting needs is important but the goal of ministry is sharing the gospel.
- The Apostles saw a huge challenge: *“Jesus, it’s late, we’re out here in the sticks, these people need to eat. Dismiss them and say, “See ya!”*
- Verse 37: How did Jesus reply? How did the twelve reply? Any idea how much a “denarius” was worth in wages?
- Normally, when someone says, *“Don’t confuse me with the facts”* you should run. Not so with Jesus! Facts are just what we observe with our finite minds, He controls everything far beyond what we can see or sense.
- Mark’s gospel tells us the apostles had seen Jesus calm a storm with a word (Ch.4), cast out demons (Ch.5), and Peter, James, and John witnessed Jesus raising someone from the dead (Ch.5). What does the apostles’ logical argument say about them? How does it apply to us?
- When Jesus said, *“You feed them...”* what kind of situation was He setting up? Why didn’t He just snap His fingers and it’s fish sticks for everyone? How does this apply to us today?
- When I was a kid there was a little chorus we would sing:
*‘Be of good courage,’ God spake unto Joshua,
 When o’er the river God pointed the way;
 Jordan uncrossable! Things seemed impossible,
 Waters divide[d] as they march[ed] and obey[ed].*

*Got any rivers you think are uncrossable?
 Got any mountains you can’t tunnel through?
 God specializes in things thought impossible—
 He does the things others cannot do.ⁱⁱ*

- I love that line: *“God specializes in things THOUGHT impossible!”*

- Jesus didn't smack His forehead and say, "*You mean these people expected preaching, healing AND dinner on the grounds?*"
- What SEEMS impossible for us is no surprise and no problem for God.
- The apostles had seen Jesus do amazing, supernatural things and yet their horizontal view of the facts caused them to forget the vertical view of His power! Before we wag our fingers in their faces and say "Oh, ye of little faith," don't we do the same thing? We say we trust Him for eternal life in Heaven so why don't we trust Him with what SEEMS impossible?
- I'm reminded of what Jeremy quoted Jim Law as saying, "*Well, it's come down to this, we'll just have to trust the Lord.*" What a great line!
- Verse 38: What was Jesus doing with His question, "How much food do you have – go find out? What's the lesson?"
- If we will bring our humble resources and effort to God He will multiply them! Chuck Swindoll comments, "*We all face impossible challenges. [The Lord's] answer? You take care of the addition; I'll be in charge of the multiplication. And the mission I've called you to fulfill will be abundantly accomplished. You have My Word on it.*"ⁱⁱⁱ
- Jesus didn't just give them appetizers or "small plates."
- Verse 42 says, "And they all ate and were satisfied." There's that word, "satisfied", the complete opposite of discontented.
- They were post-Thanksgiving dinner STUFFED.
- Verse 43 says afterward, they gathered twelve baskets of leftover bread and fish. That's also like Thanksgiving dinner – LEFTOVERS!
- When Jesus supplies and satisfies He does it abundantly because Jesus never does anything "halfway." He also doesn't just meet physical needs.
- In John chapter six we see what happened the next day.
- After Jesus walked on the water to make sure the apostles got it, the crowd found them again. "*Rabbi, when did you get here?*" Translation, "*What time is the free dinner?*" Jesus told them about REAL satisfaction:

John 6:26–27 (ESV) — 26 Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. **27** Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you..." Verse **33** For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." Verse **35** "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.

- Followers of Christ are called to meet physical needs but the church is to be more than a relief organization. Our job is to point people to the eternal satisfaction that only comes from trusting Christ as Savior and Lord.
- Let's summarize what we've seen in this text:
 - Discontented with life? Turn to Jesus the true source of satisfaction.

- In a desperate situation? Take your impossibilities to Jesus the only One with the power to specialize in things THOUGHT impossible.
- Bring your humble resources and effort to Him and let Him multiply them as only He can do.
- Other thoughts?

So, What's the Takeaway?

- Discontented people tend to turn to many places for satisfaction in life.
- *"If only I had the perfect spouse and family, a new house, a new job, etc."*
- In **Ecclesiastes 2:10–11 (NLT)** — Solomon, the smartest and richest man in the world said, **10** Anything I wanted, I would take. I denied myself no pleasure. I even found great pleasure in hard work, a reward for all my labors. **11** But as I looked at everything I had worked so hard to accomplish, it was all so meaningless—like chasing the wind. There was nothing really worthwhile anywhere.
- What about those times when we're beyond discontented, when we are in a desperate, seemingly impossible situation? Where do we turn?
- We need to do what Jesus taught the apostles to do.
- If we will be diligent (do what you can do) and dependent (on Him to do what only He can do) we will go from troubled to trusting, from bewildered to believing, from starved to satisfied.
- Whether we are desperate or discontented, Jesus is the only true source of satisfaction for ALL our needs. That begins when we turn our lives over to Him as Savior and Lord. If we've done that, He is waiting to give us complete satisfaction and contentment and supernatural solutions.
- Got any rivers you think are uncrossable? Remember, God specializes in the IMPOSSIBLE. He does the things others cannot do!

ⁱ One denarius was basically equivalent to a day's wage, so two hundred denarii would be several month's pay for an average worker. Probably still not enough

ⁱⁱ Got Any Rivers? Oscar C. Eliason © 1945 by Singspiration Music (ASCAP).

ⁱⁱⁱ Swindoll, Charles R.. *Insights on Mark (Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary Book 2)* (p. 171). Tyndale House Publishers. Kindle Edition.