

Theme: Jesus is the Good Shepherd who provides physical and spiritual rest, nourishment, and care, even in the wilderness.

I. The Deeper Meaning of the Fish Symbol

- A. Fish symbol with ΙΧΘΥΣ
- B. Fishers of men; feeding 5,000 - but much more!
- C. ΙΧΘΥΣ - “fish”; acronym
- D. A lot of deeper meaning in today’s text!

II. The Shepherd Gives the Sheep Rest

- A. Jesus calls the disciples to the quiet place for rest

The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught. ³¹ Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, “Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.” ³² So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place. Mark 6:30–32

- 1. Apostles returned from their preaching/ministry tour
- 2. The crowds are flocking to them and they can’t even eat (as in Mark 3:20)
- 3. Jesus knows they need rest - physical and spiritual
- 4. He calls them to the ἔρημος - a quiet, lonely place
 - a. ἔρημος - wilderness; lonely place; quiet place
 - b. Used in 6:31, 32, and 35 - a key idea in this passage
 - c. Here the key idea is a quiet place for rest
- 5. They could easily be tempted to “strike while the iron is hot” and continue to press in while the crowds are coming - but Jesus knows this would be foolish in the long run.

- B. The need for spiritual and physical rest

- 1. Our Good Shepherd knows that we need physical and spiritual rest & refreshment or we will burn out.
- 2. We are not machines - physically or spiritually. We are created to need daily, weekly, and periodic times of withdrawal for physical and spiritual rest and refreshment.
- 3. When disciples do not follow the rhythm of Jesus to regularly withdraw for physical and spiritual rest and refreshment, they eventually burn out and fall into sin or despair.

III. The Shepherd Has Compassion For Sheep

- A. The crowds pursue - and Jesus has compassion

So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place. ³³ But many who saw them leaving recognized them and ran on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. ³⁴ When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things. Mark 6:32–34

- 1. Jesus tries to get away - but the crowds follow.
- 2. Rather than being annoyed, Jesus has compassion on the crowds.
- 3. The crowds are like sheep without a shepherd.

- B. Sheep without a Shepherd (two key OT examples)

- 1. Moses’ concern for Israel when he dies

Moses said to the Lord, ¹⁶ “May the Lord, the God of the spirits of all mankind, appoint a man over this community ¹⁷ to go out and come in before them, one who will lead them out and bring them in, so the LORD’s people will not be like sheep without a shepherd.” ¹⁸ So the Lord said to Moses, “Take Joshua son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay your hand on him. Numbers 27:15–18

- a. Israel in the wilderness was in danger of being sheep without a shepherd when Moses died.
- b. So God provided Joshua (the same name as Jesus!) to be shepherd over the people, care for them in the wilderness, and lead them into the promised land.
- c. Mark wants us to see the people of Israel in Jesus' day in light of this!

2. Israel in exile - sheep without a shepherd

The word of the Lord came to me: ² “Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy and say to them: ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Woe to the shepherds of Israel who only take care of themselves! Should not shepherds take care of the flock? ³ You eat the curds, clothe yourselves with the wool and slaughter the choice animals, but you do not take care of the flock. ⁴ You have not strengthened the weak or healed the sick or bound up the injured. You have not brought back the strays or searched for the lost. You have ruled them harshly and brutally. ⁵ So **they were scattered because there was no shepherd**, and when they were scattered they became food for all the wild animals. ⁶ My sheep wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill. They were scattered over the whole earth, and no one searched or looked for them. Ezekiel 34:1–6

- a. The shepherds of Israel - kings and priests - had failed miserably. Rather than feeding the flock, they ate them!
- b. The people went into the wasteland of exile and were scattered sheep without a shepherd - and this put them in grave danger.
- c. Mark wants us to see the people of Israel in Jesus' day in light of this! The priests and scribes have misled and used them! Herod throws debauched parties of feasting while the people wander in the wilderness with nothing to eat!

For this is what the Sovereign Lord says: I myself will search for my sheep and look after them. ¹² **As a shepherd looks after his scattered flock when he is with them, so will I look after my sheep.** I will rescue them from all the places where they were scattered on a day of clouds and darkness... ²³ **I will place over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he will tend them;** he will tend them and be their shepherd. ²⁴ I the Lord will be their God, and my servant David will be prince among them. I the Lord have spoken. Ezekiel 34:11–12, 23–24

- a. The Lord Himself would Shepherd the people!
 - b. The Lord would bring the people out of exile to Himself and He would care for them!
 - c. The Lord would raise up David - the Messiah - to care for the flock!
 - d. Mark wants us to see this happening right here!
3. The people of God have often been like sheep without a shepherd, but God promised that the Davidic Messiah would gather and Shepherd the scattered flock.
 4. God calls leaders to be shepherds to the flock - not just teachers or leaders, but those who tend, shepherd, and care for the flock.

IV. The Shepherd Feeds the Sheep

A. Jesus feeds the sheep the Word

When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. **So he began teaching them many things.** Mark 6:34

1. The Good Shepherd has compassion on the sheep - so He feeds them the Word.

2. We have seen this time and again in Mark - Jesus gives priority to teaching the Word.
3. The primary means God uses to give rest, shepherd and care for the sheep is the Word of God.

B. A seemingly intractable problem - food in the wilderness

By this time it was late in the day, so his disciples came to him. "This is a remote place," they said, "and it's already very late."³⁶ Send the people away so they can go to the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat."³⁷ But he answered, "You give them something to eat." They said to him, "That would take eight months of a man's wages! Are we to go and spend that much on bread and give it to them to eat?"³⁸ "How many loaves do you have?" he asked. "Go and see." When they found out, they said, "Five — and two fish." Mark 6:35–38

1. The disciples bring a problem - there is no food in the wilderness/remote place ἔρημος (vv35-36)
2. Jesus' astounding reply - you give them food! (v37a)
3. Their exasperated reply! (v37)
4. Jesus' question (v38) - this will take a miracle!

C. Jesus feeds the sheep with food in the wilderness

Then Jesus directed them to have all the people sit down in groups on the **green grass**.⁴⁰ So they sat down in groups of hundreds and fifties.⁴¹ Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to his disciples to set before the people. He also divided the two fish among them all.⁴² They all ate and were satisfied,⁴³ and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces of bread and fish.⁴⁴ The number of the men who had eaten was five thousand. Mark 6:39–44

1. The Shepherd feeds the flock in green pastures
 - a. The note of green grass is to remind us of Psalm 23
 - b. The Lord is making the people recline in green pastures - in the wilderness!
2. Jesus gives thanks as was common in Judaism
3. The miracle - over 5,000 physically fed bread & fish!
4. Jesus spread a Table in the wilderness (Ps. 78:19)!
5. The people were **satisfied** - they had been fed, and there were even leftovers!

V. Applying the Word

A. Are you wandering like a sheep without a Shepherd?

1. This is an apt description of our age!
2. We constantly rush to and fro seeking fulfillment - and are never satisfied!
3. We try to find it in money and possessions, unfettered choice, hedonism, asceticism, work, entertainment, etc. - all to no avail!
4. Jesus looks on you with compassion!
5. He is calling you to cease wandering and to come home!
6. He alone can feed and care for you!

B. A Table In the Wilderness

1. Our Shepherd wants to feed us and give us rest
2. He has done this throughout worship today - especially through His Word

3. The miraculous meal and the Lord's Supper
Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to his disciples to set before the people. Mark 6:41

While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take it; this is my body." Mark 14:22

- a. The 4 verbs - took, gave thanks, broke, gave
 - b. This miraculous feeding is a preview of the Lord's Table, where the Good Shepherd feeds His people
4. Come and receive rest, nourishment, and refreshment from your Shepherd
5. Psalm 23 reading

The Good Shepherd

Mark 6:30-44

July 2, 2023

Communion

Hebrews 13:20-21

Teaching keywords: Christology; miraculous gifts and signs; covenant; God's character; faith

May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep,²¹ equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. Hebrews 13:20-21

The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught.³¹ Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not

even have a chance to eat, he said to them, "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest."³² So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place.³³ But many who saw them leaving recognized them and ran on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them.³⁴ When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things.³⁵ By this time it was late in the day, so his disciples came to him. "This is a remote place," they said, "and it's already very late."³⁶ Send the people away so they can go to the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat."³⁷ But he answered, "You give them something to eat." They said to him, "That would take eight months of a man's wages! Are we to go and spend that much on bread and give it to them to eat?"³⁸ "How many loaves do you have?" he asked. "Go and see." When they found out, they said, "Five — and two fish."³⁹ Then Jesus directed them to have all the people sit down in groups on the green grass.⁴⁰ So they sat down in groups of hundreds and fifties.⁴¹ Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to his disciples to set before the people. He also divided the two fish among them all.⁴² They all ate and were satisfied,⁴³ and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces of bread and fish.⁴⁴ The number of the men who had eaten was five thousand. Mark 6:30-44