

Mark 6:30-44 – No Excuses, Only Trust

The truth is that the disciples found the crowds that followed Jesus a bother and a burden – somewhat like the little children who kept showing up where Jesus was. They thought like we think – you take care of yourself. First of all, the crowd had intruded upon the quiet time Jesus and the disciples had sought. Their hunger was their problem. They said to Jesus, **“Just send them away.”** The disciples looked at the crowd the way we look at the world’s problems – we have neither the desire nor the resources to make much of a difference.

But not Jesus. No, Jesus refused to ignore the people and their needs. He looked on them with compassion. He ached in His belly for their hunger and pain. He saw them as sheep without a shepherd, easy prey, and easy victims of those who would wound and hurt them more. And it was a teaching moment.

“You give them something to eat,” Jesus urged His disciples. They were quick with excuses and reasons why not. We would be right there with them. Five loaves and two small fish are nothing to such a vast crowd. We have no place to purchase food and no money if we did. God refuses excuses, but He welcomes our nothings and turns them into the something that accomplishes His purpose. That was the teaching moment.

Look at history. Israel was nothing but a rag-tag band of slaves until God intervened, and they became a mighty nation of promise not even Pharaoh could kill. A solitary Lamb of God carries the sin of an entire guilty world and makes forgiveness for all the guilty who will stand under the banner of His blood. Five loaves and two fish are multiplied with leftovers enough to prove the mercy, grace, and generosity of God.

We never see clearly how God will accomplish His purpose or keep His promise. But we see clearly our fears, limits, and all our reasons and excuses why we can do nothing about it and why God needs to send the problems away. The poor are too many! What can we do? Are the sinners too evil? What can we do? The need is too great! What can we do? The cost is too high! What can we do? But that is the point. God is not interested in excuses. Give Him our resources and He will do it.

With man it is impossible. But not with God. All of history is the mark of God doing what people found impossible. From Israel to Judah’s blessed son Jesus, from sinners in love with evil to the righteousness that declares us all just, from people with little in the face of a world in need of much, God is at work taking our nothings and making them something.

Look around you. There was a time when people said we could not possibly see a church in Holiday Island and God took all our nothings and made it this grand something. Look around you. And God took all our nothings and made it something. Look around you. Before you are quick to insist we cannot do this, do not underestimate God or His grace. Man cannot, but God can and God does!

Apart from Him we are nothing but in Christ we can do all things through Him who strengthens us. God does not want our whining or our excuses or our regrets. What He asks of us is faith, trust in His mercy, confidence in His promises. And that begins with the resources He has provided for this body and this life. And it surely includes our bidding for His kingdom, our tithes and offerings that support His work, and our stewardship of time and talents to be and do His will.

Look around you and now look in the mirror. You were a sinner condemned by your sins. And God forgave you in Christ. You were a broken person. And God has made you whole in Christ. You were the living dead waiting to die and God gave you life in Christ beyond the grave. You were hungry and He gave You Christ’s body and blood to feed you eternal life. You had a past and present and He gave you a future in Christ. All around you is the record and testament to God’s mercy. Yet still we fear God’s grace is enough.

Did you notice that Jesus did not ask the disciples for their bread or fish? He took them after the disciples had insisted they were not enough. But the Lord returned to them enough to satisfy their hunger and baskets of leftovers to carry home. You look at your incomes or your talents or your abilities and you insist you do not have enough for yourself much less for the Lord and His kingdom. But I am telling you, God will take them and multiply them so that His work will prosper and you will be satisfied and receive the leftovers of His grace to teach you that God is trustworthy, He is faithful, and He will do it.

God does not ask for your excuses. God asks for your trust. What you have is enough for God to use to provide for your needs and to do His bidding. All God asks from you is trust. At times, the truth is, we would rather pay God off to avoid

trusting in Him. But all of our resources have meaning and power only in the hands of God. Trust the Lord. You will not be disappointed.