

## Daily Devotional, March 27, 2020 Mark 6:33-44 Feed My Sheep

In the story of The Feeding of the 5,000, Jesus saw a need because Jesus had compassion for the people. Jesus gazed out with the vision of God and saw a field of sheep without a shepherd. Today, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, there are many people wandering about (within the confines of their homes, mostly) and facing a most uncertain future.

With parents forced into the domain of homeschooling, many people working from home, unemployment escalating daily, this is a window of opportunity for the body of Christ to rise up and be shepherds to those searching and wandering sheep in our communities.

Where do we begin? We begin with having *compassion* for those around us. “Jesus saw them and He had compassion.” As you look out at your neighbors, your local businesses, the folks in your community, do you have compassion for them?

What we learn from Jesus in this story in Mark is that having compassion and meeting the needs of others didn’t rise out of abundance, but in simply what was available. When God is present, two fish and five loaves is all you need. That and a little bit of love. “Serve one another humbly in love.” (Galatians 5:13)

Serving is not a very attractive concept. Few would sign up for a life of it. And yet that is what God calls us to. God knows how service to others will bless us as well as our community.

Service helps us to set aside our self-centeredness and to see how connected we really are, even how indebted we are to others. When we begin looking after the needs of others, our sense of entitlement evaporates. Though we might wish to think so, none of us are self-made people, it took the sacrifice and interest of many others from the time we were born—not to mention the investment God has made in us.

Serving others not only confirms the bonds between us; it reflects the love of God. When we receive service from others, and when we serve others, we experience God’s grace. This points all of us to Christ. Jesus modeled grace that goes far beyond our understanding. He emptied himself for us, giving all that He had, though we deserved nothing. His example calls us to “submit to one another out of reverence for Christ” (Ephesians 5:21). In our “me-first” culture, God calls us to put others first. What a challenge!

Are we looking out for others the way we look out for ourselves? Can we put their needs ahead of our own? That is asking a lot of us in the midst of this great crisis we are all enduring. And yet, there may be others near you who are in dire need. How can you serve in your community? Checking in with a neighbor or friend who may not be able to get out might be the greatest act of kindness you can perform right now. Turn your attention outward. Without taking a major risk to yourself or those in your household, ask yourself who around you might need some care—and then reach out. Be a Good Shepherd to God’s wandering and frightened sheep. God is calling.

**Prayer:** God, give us compassion for those around us and eyes to see the work you are already doing. Teach us how to serve one another. Help us to put the needs of others first, as you continue to do for us. Show us ways to use our gifts to bless others. In Jesus’ name. Amen.