

Weybridge Methodist Church Sunday 3rd August 2014

Sermon – Mark Lawson

My text today is found in the passage we have just heard. It is part of verse 16 The NIV states it like this “You give them something to eat”

His words hung on the air, echoing my very heartbeat. Echoing everyone’s heartbeat. Thousands of heartbeats beating with the rhythm of life. New life – Life that we’d never experienced before.

A sea of people gathered round Him. One man. One man amongst thousands. But not just any man. He didn’t look like a Pharisee. There was no splendour in His appearance. Yet there was something. Something in His eyes. Something in His voice. Something that drew you to Him.

There were thousands of us, a sea of people sitting around an isle of calm.

Even though Jesus was some way off, I could hear His words dancing on the air. Soft, yet filled with...filled with...Life. Everyone was captivated. Not a murmur apart from His voice.

Time passed. Quickly or slowly, no one really knew. No one really cared. Then He stopped speaking and the spell was broken.

People started to murmur. The murmuring turned to grumbling as people’s stomachs started rumbling. I looked down at my meagre portion. I’d forgotten all about it. Suddenly, I felt guilty.

I had food, but no one else did. How could I possibly eat while everyone around me was hungry. Maybe I could share it around, but the five small loaves and two fishes were barely enough for one, let alone two, and let’s be honest, there were thousands of us!

Then I heard a voice. The voice of one of His followers. Without thinking I stood up. I stood up with my arms stretched out, holding my small lunch. “Over here!” He looked over and beckoned me forward. “Here,” I said, “I have these.” I started to feel very foolish.

The man smiled. “Come!” he said. “Let’s go see the Master.” So we walked through the sea of people. Then I was standing beside Him.

He looked up and smiled, His eyes bright like burnished bronze. “You can have these,” I said, feeling even more helpless. He smiled again and the helplessness vanished. He took my lunch and prayed. Prayed to His Father in Heaven.

Then He broke the bread and the fish and started giving it to His followers to give to the people. Then something happened. Something miraculous. The fish kept coming and coming. The bread kept coming and coming. Bread and fish were everywhere. The sea of grumbling was calmed as hungry stomachs were satisfied. As I said, there were thousands of us.

He said He was the ‘Bread of Life’. I felt so small. I only had five small loaves and two fish. But I knew. I knew more than I had ever known anything else before in my life. He was telling the Truth.

Something perhaps of the feeling of the boy as he encountered Jesus. This is such a well known story, and rightly so. It is very important story recording this miracle. It is so important that all the gospel writers included it and it is the only miracle talked about by all of them. The boy is only mentioned in John’s version but that doesn’t mean it isn’t true, it is just that it was a specific thing he remembered!

The crowd where entranced and captivated by Jesus. We are told that he Had compassion on them (before the food issue) he healed those that need it and also spoke about the kingdom of God. We don’t have any more details than that. I am not sure what he said was important for us to know. What I believe we should focus on is that the people, the crowd followed Jesus to the place he had withdrawn to.

It had been a difficult period for Jesus, rejected at Nazareth and then finding out that John the Baptist had just been beheaded. There would have been a close bond between them even if they rarely met; well not many encounters are recorded anyway!

Jesus wanted to be alone to reflect, talk to his father in heaven and to gather himself for what was coming next. I find it interesting that it must have been leaked where he was going as they got there before him. I would have been annoyed and frustrated, but not Jesus he had compassion. The people came in numbers. Some perhaps to hear what he had to say, some to see healing, some to receive healing.

We need to want to come to Jesus, to be thirsty for truth and wisdom and for Power of the HS. Isaiah's encouragement is an all inclusive one "Come All you who are thirsty" It is for anyone who thirsts after God. Jews, Greeks and Gentiles alike.

As we approach him and we get closer to his perfection we can see our failings or unclean desires and disobedience. We may be embarrassed by this but also as we get closer, as did the boy, you see Jesus and see the compassion in his eyes, yes compassion not judgement. This is for all of us who want to know the truth about life death and the hereafter, what it takes to have wisdom to enable us to live as God wants us to live, where we can seek to have the HS within us to overflowing. Overflowing so that the power Jesus had so we can also see New life, healing and discipleship flow from God through us to the world.

What are you thirsty for this morning?? I urge you to make it Jesus!! Once we thirst for God and draw closer to him he will satisfy our needs.

We all have sinned / done wrong we are able to go to God the Father via Jesus again and again. If you lost that loving feeling, the feeling of joy of forgiveness feeling down trodden and lost come to Jesus again, right now (and at every opportunity) to receive God forgiveness through the death and resurrection of Jesus, who has paid the debt of us all. when we thirst, long for, seek him, need him and call after him.

This makes sense of our Isaiah reading earlier. Come buy and eat come buy wine and milk without money! The things of life are free to us, as Jesus has already bought everything you need. We need to want it and live in the good of it.

If you have never asked Jesus to forgive you for all your wrong doings I urge you, even if you have attended this or another church for many years , if you have never sought forgiveness I urge you not to hold off any longer. The relief and joy you will feel is indescribable!

The crowd would have marvelled over the miracle, we know it was near Passover and to all on that where there would understand and get the connection to the manna that fed their ancestors when in the wilderness. This is recounted at every Passover. Here is another symbol of what God is doing. Just as God granted freedom for the Jews, Jesus is showing that there is a greater freedom. Later he explains that he is the Bread of Life. People would be full of wonder when he said that. DO we also catch the depth of what Jesus said?

The crowd couldn't buy their food, they didn't have a choice, there was no menu, however what he wanted them to have he freely gave.

What is Jesus trying to give you this morning?

Is he calling you to read his word more, to study and explore the truths contained? Is he calling you to spend more time with him in your daily life, beyond devotional time, church time and prayers late at night??

Is he calling you to a truly closer walk with him, to receive the discipline that disciples need to follow so that you can grow more like Jesus? Does he want you to give the HS that is within you a freer rein so that you can exercise the gifts of spirit as well grow the fruit of being filled and living with the HS?

Is he prodding you to even ask him to give you a thirst for him?

What are you thirsty for this morning?

What is God desiring of you this morning?

BTW we often pray and ask for more of God in our lives, don't we? Well I believe God is saying to us that he wants more of your life to be directed to him and for him. A plan for your spiritual growth!

In Jesus we see the practical side of the miracle He shared the food with the disciples, who in turn fed the thousands.

Guess what! Jesus wants us to be his hands today in this world – I know we know this but do we live it? Jesus was full of compassion, even when times were hard, disowned in Nazareth and John's murder. But he still embraced the opportunity to show love and compassion, to meet their spiritual needs, their health needs and food needs.

As we move to meet the needs in this area we bring what we have, it may not seem a lot or impressive or relevant to the size of the problem or issues you encounter. But our weakness, when placed in Jesus' hands are just what is needed and he will bring the increase!

So seek out people to help, to support, to help feed them earthly food, etc Reach out to those needing healing and step out in faith and pray for them, over them as Jesus tells us to many times.

He want us to share what we have, indeed we can only share what we have!

If you have joy in Christ – share it
If you have provisions – share them
If you the HS within – share the good news
If you have time – give some to others
If you know Jesus – introduce people to him

If you say no to any of the above, I ask you to seek God and ask him to give you those things you need. This isn't an exhausted list

We can and should share the great news that we have been born of Spirit and truth that you have been reconciled to the creator and sustainer of the universe. He knows you; he cares for you and wants you to get closer to him.

So how are you going to respond today?
Are you thirsty for God? Do you want to be?
Are you seeking a closer walk with him?
Are you serving him by sharing what you have?

If so, God will provide and you will respond to the call to action now and also the call in the last days. Rev 22. Come whoever is thirsty let them come and whoever wishes let them take the free gift of the water of life.

Matthew 14: 15 & 16 says ¹⁵ As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a remote place, and it's already getting late. Send the crowds away, so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food."

¹⁶ Jesus replied, "They do not need to go away. **You give them something to eat.**"

Brothers and sisters Jesus says to you today You give to them that which they need and you will also receive that which you need. Let us serve so many will be affected by our actions and seek Jesus for themselves. Amen