

## SESSION 4

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# Satisfies

JESUS SATISFIES BY PROVIDING FOR OUR NEEDS.

MARK 6:30-44

Discontented people are dangerous people. Those who are unsatisfied in their hearts are prone to actions that might possibly harm themselves or others. Even a cursory glance at the general public reveals a dangerous discontentment. Sometimes the slightest life disruption—or threat of such—results in unwise and unstable reactions. A lack of satisfaction in one's marriage, family, job, and spiritual life creates vulnerability to temptation. A wise person will stop and consider the level of satisfaction within his or her heart.

## UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

After healing a woman who suffered from bleeding and raising the daughter of Jairus from the dead (Mark 5:21-43), Jesus and His disciples traveled to his hometown of Nazareth. The townspeople rejected Him and His mission, hindering the work He could have performed there.

From the beginning of His ministry, Jesus told the first disciples that they would be involved in a work focused on people (1:16-18). Later, He included them in a call of twelve apostles to be with Him and share in His ministry (3:13-15). Eventually, Jesus commissioned these men to go out and do the same ministry He had done. His instructions to them about possessions and lodging assumed a level of simple trust and contentment.

The preaching of the disciples caused word to spread about Jesus, and King Herod heard about Him. Herod's conscience was uneasy because of his execution of John the Baptist. Undisciplined desire, fanned into flame by a young girl's dancing, ensnared him in a moral quandary in which he chose to save face rather than refuse a request for John the Baptist's execution (6:14-29).

After the miraculous feeding of 5,000 people (6:30-44), Jesus sent His disciples via boat to Bethsaida and dismissed the crowd, perhaps with parting words of encouragement. While en route, they encountered a great storm. Jesus miraculously came to them and joined them in the boat, offering assurance. Their amazement toward His miracle of calming the storm revealed both their smallness of faith and hardness of heart (6:45-52).

Although the boat wound up at a different location than originally intended, there was still a great opportunity there for ministry. Jesus healed in a similar manner there as He did previously with the woman who had internal bleeding (5:25-34). The crowd that followed Jesus believed that He could meet their needs, and He didn't let them down (6:53-56).

## Mark 6:30-44

**30** The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all that they had done and taught. **31** He said to them, “Come away by yourselves to a remote place and rest for a while.” For many people were coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat. **32** So they **went away in the boat** **A** by themselves to a remote place, **33** but many saw them leaving and recognized them, and they **ran on foot** **B** from all the towns and arrived ahead of them. **34** When he went ashore, he saw a large crowd and had **compassion** **C** on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. Then he began to teach them many things. **35** When it grew late, his disciples approached him and said, “This place is deserted, and it is already late. **36** Send them away so that they can go into the surrounding countryside and villages to buy themselves something to eat.” **37** “You give them something to eat,” he responded. They said to him, “Should we go and buy **two hundred denarii** **D** worth of bread and give them something to eat?” **38** He asked them, “How many loaves do you have? Go and see.” When they found out they said, “**Five, and two fish.**” **E** **39** Then he instructed 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.** **F** **41** He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, he blessed and broke the loaves. He kept giving them to his disciples to set before the people. He also divided the two fish among them all. **42** Everyone ate and **was satisfied.** **G** **43** They picked up **twelve baskets** **H** full of pieces of bread and fish. **44** Now those who had eaten the loaves were five thousand men.

## Key Words

**A.** In his Gospel, John explained that they sailed to the other side of the Sea of Galilee (John 6:1). Luke also mentioned Bethsaida (Luke 9:10).

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**B.** A distance of four or five miles. By running, they were able to meet the boat when it landed.

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**C.** Jesus was not inconvenienced or angry. His heart was moved with pity and love.

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**D.** A denarius was a day’s wage in first-century Israel. So, this would have been close to a year’s worth of pay.

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**E.** The loaves were small, flat barley biscuits. The fish were dried, similar to a sardine. John’s Gospel states that a boy gave the food to Andrew (John 6:8-9).

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**F.** Jesus directed the crowd to group in an orderly way. Some commentators see this as a reminder of Moses organizing the people’s camp in the wilderness (Ex. 18:21,25).

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**G.** Every person was full. Jesus made sure no one left with their needs unmet.

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**H.** These were large, heavy containers. The number is significant, as it matched both the number of apostles and the tribes of Israel.

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# EXPLORE THE TEXT

## 1. Rest

(Mark 6:30-32)

Believers should make sure they and others find rest.

- **How can a lack of rest impact one's ability to serve well?**

## 2. Response

(Mark 6:33-34)

Believers need to feed their souls with the truth of God's Word.

- **What draws a person to the teachings of Jesus?**
- **What can believers do to show genuine compassion today?**

## 3. Resources

(Mark 6:35-38)

Believers can look to God to provide when facing a challenge.

- **Why are we prone to focus on problems instead of considering what God can do?**

## 4. Relief

(Mark 6:39-44)

Believers should find satisfaction when Jesus uses them.

- **What do you have to offer Jesus right now?**
- **How do we find genuine satisfaction with all the things that Jesus provides?**

## Apply the Text

Discuss with your group how serving in ministry roles can sometimes leave us in a depleted condition.

- **What can the group do for each other to encourage each one to find adequate rest in service to Jesus and to the church?**

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### KEY DOCTRINE:

#### God the Son

God the Son now dwells in all believers as the living and ever-present Lord.  
(See Galatians 2:20; Hebrews 13:8.)

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### BIBLE SKILL:

**Memorize a Bible passage and apply it to your life.**

Memorize Mark 6:31 in your preferred Bible translation. Write out the verse on several different index cards and place them in visible places that you will see throughout the day. Each time you see the verse, say it aloud. Reflect on ways you can include Jesus's invitation to rest in the normal rhythm of your life.



## DAILY EXPLORATION

### Day 1: Mark 6:30

*Read verse 30 in the context of verses 7-13.*

Jesus sent out the Twelve in teams of two and commissioned them as apostles to exercise authority over demons and preach a message of repentance (Mark 6:7). The Greek word translated “apostle” literally means “sent one.” Therefore, this commissioning was key to the role and ministry of the Twelve. In obedience to Jesus, they “went out and preached that people should repent” and “drove out many demons, anointed many sick people with oil and healed them” (6:12-13).

Later, they came back together to share their experiences with Jesus. They “reported to him all that they had done and taught.” In their report we see balanced ministry. There was a combination of teaching and service, proclaiming a spiritual message but also attending to the physical needs of people. By allowing the disciples to report back to Him, Christ provided a way for them to celebrate how they were being used to further the kingdom of God.

**How do you engage in Jesus’s mission?  
How do you celebrate victories in carrying out His mission?**

### Day 2: Mark 6:31-32

*Circle the word “rest.”*

Active service for Christ can be physically taxing, and Jesus recognized that the disciples needed restoration. They had been besieged by many people and “did not even have time to eat.” When both solitude and even proper diet are impacted by serving people, it is time for a change of pace and a change of place. Jesus directed the Twelve to get away “to a remote place and rest for a while.”

Ours is a hurried and harried society. Lives lived without any margin of rest lead to restlessness. The state of our bodies and emotions impacts the state of our souls. God has ordained rest to be a part of the rhythm of life. We neglect this at our own risk. Part of the disciples’ ministry training from the Lord was the need for rest from spiritual labor.

Jesus joined them in their trip to a remote place. True rest doesn’t come to us independent of Jesus. It is a part of His work on our behalf and in us. He promised it to those who would come to Him in humble submission (Matt. 11:28-30). In a spiritual sense, trusting the sacrifice of Jesus to cover our own sinfulness and justify us in the sight of God brings rest. Trying to secure our own salvation through good works brings restlessness and uneasiness.

**How does a lack of rest impact your ability to serve well?**

### Day 3: Mark 6:33-34

#### ***Highlight the word “compassion.”***

Jesus and the disciples were unable get away from the crowds. A large crowd arrived ahead of the boat to its destination. The intensity of their pursuit of Jesus was proportionate to the sense of the need they possessed. While we aren't told what the disciples' response was to the waiting crowd, Jesus “had compassion on them.” To have compassion implies that Jesus saw and felt their needs and their hurts. Just as He had shown the Twelve compassion and invited them to come away and rest, He showed similar love and concern for this multitude of people. He understood “they were like sheep without a shepherd.” His compassion was not mere pity; the word indicates actual help and involvement in the life of another person.

Before He would feed the crowd with bread, Jesus fed them with divine truth. In our humanity, we crave the satisfaction of our physical needs. Yet our needs run deeper than the physical. Everyone has a spiritual need, although some perceive it more than others, with some not at all. A leader in the ancient church named Augustine once wrote, “Thou hast made us for thyself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it finds its rest in thee.”

**What draws a person to the teachings of Jesus? What first drew you to Jesus?**

### Day 4: Mark 6:35-38

#### ***Contemplate why Jesus challenged the disciples to feed the crowd.***

The disciples pointed out that their location and the lateness of the hour necessitated that Jesus conclude His teaching so that the people could leave and find food to eat. “Send them away” was their advice to Jesus. Their assessment of the situation was not erroneous. However, they failed to factor in the power of Jesus. Any evaluation of a problem which doesn't take the power of God into account is inadequate. The picture here is that of the disciples lamenting a problem while standing right beside the One who possessed the power to solve it.

Jesus challenged the disciples, “you give them something to eat.” Previously, He had involved them in His work and made them partners in the fulfillment of His preaching and healing ministry. At this point, He was continuing to grow and develop them for an expanding role in His ministry. They were receptive to that partnership previously, but this seemed to go further than they wanted to go.

The disciples' response to Jesus lacked faith. Buying enough bread for the crowd would have cost the equivalent to about eight months of pay for a typical laborer. This was no small amount. Their words were tinged with sarcasm, perhaps supporting the notion that they resented the crowd interrupting their vacation time. Anytime we look at people as problems rather than opportunities for God to do His work, a renewed perspective is needed.

**When are you prone to focus on problems instead of considering what God can do?**

## Day 5: Mark 6:39-44

***Underline the word “satisfied” in verse 42.***

What Jesus did with the bread—blessed, broke, and distributed—was normal practice for a Jewish father at a meal. What was not normal was that out of those actions Jesus “kept giving” loaves of bread “to the disciples to set before the people.” No one left feeling empty, for “everyone ate and was satisfied.”

Jesus satisfies us with both who He is and what He provides. No one in Jesus’s presence that day went away unsatisfied, either physically or spiritually. The verb used for satisfied means “to eat one’s fill.” Any person who hears the message of Christ and sincerely trusts in Him will discover that Jesus is enough for all of life.

Jesus also satisfies those who serve Him. Our passage began with the disciples in need of rest. But they were thrust into a situation where they had to distribute food to “five thousand men,” not including the women and children. This was no small task for men who were already exhausted from service. Jesus provided for them both the energy needed to perform the task and food to eat after the miracle was done. There were “twelve baskets full of pieces of bread and fish” collected afterwards. The leftover baskets of food were how Jesus took care of His own disciples. Jesus can be counted on to provide what His servants need. There is always satisfaction when we allow Jesus to use us for His service.

**How can you find genuine satisfaction with all the things that Jesus provides?**

### APPLY THE TEXT

What problems are currently occupying your attention and focus? What can you learn from the direction the disciples received from Jesus? How does His example help you constructively address problems? How is the instruction you are receiving from Him through the Scripture adjusting your perspective on the situation?





# Satisfies

Session 4 • Mark 6:30-44



## ENGAGE

**PRIOR TO THE SESSION:** Conduct an online search for marketing images or a video clip that encourages dissatisfaction with what people have so that they will want to buy a different product. Prepare to display the images or video to the group.

**SUMMARIZE:** Show the marketing images or video clip to the group. Ask: **How do marketers encourage dissatisfaction with your life?** Read the introductory paragraph on page 37. Ask: **In what ways might a person be tempted to experience dissatisfaction in everyday life?**

**DISCUSS:** Talk about some reasons why it's so easy to become dissatisfied with life.

**TRANSITION:** *In today's session, we're going to look at how Jesus is the only One who can truly satisfy our needs.*

## EXPLORE THE TEXT

**CONTEXTUALIZE:** Use Understand the Context (p. 37) to provide an overview of Jesus's ministry leading up to chapter 6. Refer to **Pack Item 1** (*Map: Jesus's Ministry in Mark's Gospel*) to review the locations of Jesus's Galilean ministry. Remind the group about the places where Jesus ministered around the

Sea of Galilee. Distribute copies of **Pack Item 10** (*Chart: Miracles of Jesus's Authority*). Encourage adults to reflect on these miracles as they think about His authority during this session.

**READ:** Invite a volunteer to read **Mark 6:30-32**.

**DISCUSS:** Encourage adults to work in pairs to read verses 30-32 and to talk about why the disciples needed rest. After a few minutes, highlight that the disciples had given of themselves to ministry, and now they needed rest.

- **(6:31)** Once the apostles returned from their ministry experiences, Jesus invited them to get away from the demands of the crowds. Mark noted that their hectic schedules meant they hadn't even had time to eat. Jesus recognized that they needed a break from their mission. They found an out-of-the-way place where they could rest and recharge. Even those that minister in Jesus's name need time to get away. Jesus set the precedent here with the disciples, just as He had set the example for finding solitude with the Father earlier in Mark's Gospel (Mark 1:35).



## Sea of Galilee

### The Ministry of Jesus Around the Sea of Galilee

Get an aerial view of the Sea of Galilee and the location of notable events in Jesus's earthly ministry.

**ASK:** How can we recognize when we are exhausted? What impact can that have on the way we minister to others?

**DISCUSS:** On the board or a large sheet of paper, write the words: *Physical, Mental, Emotional, and Spiritual*. Encourage the group to list ways believers can find rest in each of these areas of life.

**TRANSITION:** *Though Jesus tried to give the disciples the opportunity to rest, the crowds kept coming. We need to see how Jesus responded.*

**READ:** Invite a volunteer to read Mark 6:33-34.

**REFLECT:** What words and images did Mark use to describe Jesus's response to the crowd? What does this say about Jesus and His feelings about the crowd?

- **(6:34)** Jesus recognized that those in the crowd were spiritually desperate and helpless. Matthew 14:14 indicates they also had physical needs, as Jesus healed many of them. Mark's wording suggested that Jesus was the only Shepherd who could guide them and save them from a life of destruction. Jesus wasn't just interested in providing physical food, though He would do that soon enough. He was

primarily interested in providing spiritual food and spiritual leadership. Whether the people realized it or not, that was their greatest need.

**EXPLAIN:** Point out that while other Gospel writers mentioned healing, Mark focused on Jesus's teaching. *The fact that people had gone to great lengths to get to Jesus and stayed to listen reveals how His teaching was just as compelling as His ability to heal.*

**ASK:** What draws a person to the teachings of Jesus? (p. 39)

**TRANSITION:** *While preaching about the kingdom was Jesus's primary mission, He understood that hurting and hungry people might not be as receptive to the gospel. Along with focusing on their spiritual needs, Jesus refused to ignore their physical needs.*

**READ:** Invite a volunteer to read Mark 6:35-38.

**DISCUSS:** Place adults into groups of three or four and give each group a sheet of paper and pencil. Direct them to create two columns: *Biggest Problem* and *Best Solution*. Encourage them to make a list of some big problems they have faced and how they solved those issues. Allow a volunteer to share what they discussed.

**ASK:** What kind of resources were necessary to solve each problem? Who did you enlist to help?

**COMPARE:** Read Mark 6:35-38 again and invite a volunteer to identify the problem the disciples presented to Jesus. Ask: **What steps would you have taken to solve this**

### problem if you were one of the disciples?

Lead the group to compare the disciples' solution to Jesus's solution. Ask: **Why do you think Jesus told the disciples to give the crowd something to eat?** (*Possible answers: to remind them of their previous work, to strengthen their faith, to show Jesus as the ultimate Provider, and so forth*)

**EXPLAIN:** Point out that the disciples focused on the problem, while Jesus focused on the solution. Ask: **Why are we prone to focus on problems instead of considering what God can do?** (p. 39) **What practical things can we do to trust Jesus more when we have a problem that seems impossible to solve?**

**READ:** Invite a volunteer to read Mark 6:39-44.

**DISCUSS:** Lead adults in a brief discussion about what these verses reveal about Jesus. Ask: **In what ways did Jesus satisfy the crowds?** Remind adults that God had used the disciples to meet many needs during their mission assignment. *But even when we know God is at work, we still face challenges that seem beyond us. Those should remind us that we can do nothing in our own strength. We need Jesus all the time!*

**STATE:** Allow a volunteer to read verse 43 aloud. Point out that Jesus not only fed the crowd, but He also met His disciples' needs. Remind them that the disciples never got a chance to eat themselves (v. 31), so Jesus provided twelve baskets of leftovers for them.

**REFLECT:** **How do we find genuine satisfaction with all the things that Jesus provides?** (p. 39)

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## CHALLENGE

**SUMMARIZE:** Review these points from this week's Bible passage:

- Believers should make sure they and others find rest.
- Believers need to feed their souls with the truth of God's Word.
- Believers can look to God to provide when facing a challenge.
- Believers should find satisfaction when Jesus uses them.

**ASK:** Which of these four application points creates the most difficulty for you right now? What principle from today's session can you use to resolve that issue in your life?

**CHALLENGE:** Discuss the Apply the Text question on page 39. Give each adult an index card and a pen. Direct them to write down one way they can seek rest this week. Encourage them to flip the card and to record one area where they will seek satisfaction in Jesus alone this week. Urge them to use the card as part of their prayer time this week.

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## AFTER THE SESSION

Reinforce the session by examining your own life to determine whether you are satisfied in Jesus. Contact the group through email or text, encouraging them to look to Jesus for satisfaction in life this week.