

Lenten Devotional March 7, 2024

Scripture

Mark 6:30-46

30 The apostles gathered around Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught. 31 He said to them, "Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while." For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. 32 And they went away in the boat to a deserted place by themselves. 33 Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they hurried there on foot from all the towns and arrived ahead of them. 34 As he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things. 35 When it grew late, his disciples came to him and said, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is now very late; 36 send them away so that they may go into the surrounding country and villages and buy something for themselves to eat." 37 But he answered them, "You give them something to eat." They said to him, "Are we to go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread, and give it to them to eat?" 38 And he said to them, "How many loaves have you? Go and see." When they had found out, they said, "Five, and two fish." 39 Then he ordered them to get all the people to sit down in groups on the green grass. 40 So they sat down in groups of hundreds and of fifties. 41 Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to his disciples to set before the people; and he divided the two fish among them all. 42 And all ate and were filled; 43 and they took up twelve baskets full of broken pieces and of the fish. 44 Those who had eaten the loaves numbered five thousand men. 45 Immediately he made his disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. 46 After saying farewell to them, he went up on the mountain to pray.

Devotion

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The feeding of the 5,000 is a story we know well. We are inspired by this miracle when we are caught in worries of scarcity, trusting that Jesus will provide. Yet, while we focus on the teaching and feeding, it is easy to gloss over the thing that makes it possible: rest.

Read verses 30 and 31, then verses 45 and 46. What do you notice?

Verse 30 is about *doing*. The apostles told Jesus what they *did* and *taught*. His response? Verse 31: come and rest. They did as they were told and got in a boat. Because a large crowd followed them to this deserted place, there were 5,000 people to unexpectedly feed that evening. Once everyone was nourished, verse 45, Jesus "immediately" made the disciples get back in their boat and go take the rest they never got, while he himself went to a mountain to pray.

It is easy to perceive resting as the passive work, and miracles—feeding, healing, teaching—as the active work. Our Western society is one that rewards productivity; one that praises *doing* more than *being*. Jesus, with an endless list of important work to be done, consistently made time for rest and commanded his disciples to do the same.

Is this a command you find easy to follow?

Are you consistent with scheduling rest for yourself?

Rest can look many different ways, but is ultimately a time of spiritual grounding and healing that is unprovoked by concerns of productivity. Jesus invites his disciples to rest for "a while"; to be unhurried

in their resting. Jesus invites you to do the same, for it is through spending time in rest that we are able to share the full abundance of our gifts with the world.

Prayer

Creator God, thank you for the divine gift of rest. Thank you for knowing that my body, mind, and spirit all need nourishment and for inviting me to care for them just as Jesus did. Help me to trust in the value of *being* as much as I value *doing*. Amen.