

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Mark: Jesus The Perfect Servant Of God

Part II: The Perfect Service Of Jesus, The Perfect Servant Of God, Mark 1:1-10:52

V. Christ's Work To Counter The Threat Of "Burn Out" By Organizing Well

(Mark 6:39-44)

I. Introduction

- A. We learned in our first lesson in this series that Mark's Gospel presents the perfect service of God's Perfect Servant, Jesus, with Mark's focus of having rebounded unto upright service from personal failure.
- B. Sometimes such failure arises from what various Christian organizations call "burn out," human exhaustion and emotional collapse from being stretched too thin with too few resources in a variety of realms in life.
- C. We noted in our last lesson how Jesus countered this "burn out" in Mark 6:30-44, but His focus in Mark 6:39-44 on using **organization** in feeding the crowd of people is itself worth a study, for disorder in life is a key issue causing "burn out," and it can be solved simply by better **ordering** our lives, so we study this passage:

II. Christ's Work To Counter The Threat Of "Burn Out" By Organizing Well, Mark 6:39-44.

- A. When Jesus prepared to feed the five thousand in Mark 6:37-38 with 6:44, the five thousand number included **adult men** (*andres*), so the crowd possibly consisted of up to 20,000 people, Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 131.
- B. In addition, Jewish custom held that women and children were to eat separate from the men (Ibid.), a complication in this case as parting the 5,000 men from their approximate 15,000 women and children could have resulted in a number of children or women getting disconnected from their respective fathers and husbands, breaking up families and leading to chaos and the possible misplacement of vulnerable children.
- C. However, such a threat to the family unit not only counters the plan of God for orderly family life (Ephesians 5:22-6:4), but cultural disorder and disorderliness in general in ministry opens the door for demonic problems (James 3:15-16 NIV, ESV) that damage all sorts of human institutions. Thus, Christ directed that the disciples produce an ordered arrangement in seating the people to address each of these concerns, Mark 6:39-40:
 1. Jesus had the disciples seat the crowd on the green grass, a comfortable seating in springtime, Mark 6:39.
 2. To facilitate Jewish cultural order, Jesus had the disciples seat the people "table company by table company," *symposia symposia* (Ibid., p. 130), parting the men from the women and children, Mark 6:39.
 3. However, since there were about a third fewer adult family men than were there women and children, seating the people in equal numbers of groups would have strained the family units too far, so the disciples sat the people down in "garden plot by garden plot" (*prasiai prasiai*) groups of 100s and 50s. In other words, there were likely groups of men in 50s *flanked on each side* by larger groups of women and children in groups 100s to facilitate family order while also respecting the Jewish custom of having the men eat separately from the women and children, Mark 6:40; Ibid.)
 4. With these people seated in these groupings, there would have been approximately 50 groups for each of Jesus' 12 disciples to address, a workable arrangement toward each disciple's seeing one party per group receive food from that disciple to pass around to the rest of the people in his or her respective group.
- D. Consequently, in complete order, Jesus then took the five loaves and two fishes and gave a "customary Jewish blessing over" the food (Ibid.), looking up to heaven for the Father's provision of the miracle, and then He gave the broken pieces to His disciples in turn to deliver them to the various groups of people, Mark 6:41.
- E. However, once the miracle had produced enough food for the people to eat to the full, there were extra pieces of bread and fishes remaining uneaten, and John 6:12 reports that Jesus told the disciples in frugality to gather up the fragments that remained that nothing be lost. Accordingly, the disciples gathered up twelve basketfuls of leftovers for use at a later meal, Mark 6:42-44.

Lesson: *As part of His ministry of directing His disciples to avoid "burn out" in serving God, Jesus had them organize the huge crowd God wanted them to feed with regard both to Jewish culture and family unity, He gave the usual customary blessing and had the disciples save the leftovers in frugal care of God's miraculous provision.*

Application: *To help avoid "burn out" in living for and serving the Lord, may we organize ourselves with regard to the demands that culture, family, church, business and government realms place upon us, and then function in an orderly and frugal manner in each realm. [This may involve creating schedules for time use and a budget for money use, being careful to be both reasonably flexible (assigning groups of 50s and 100s) and frugal (the baskets of leftovers) to meet the many demands from many realms that are placed upon us!]*