

Mark 6:31

And He said to them, "Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while." For there were many coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.

When we read today's verse, if we skim over it or read it too fast, we can miss out on, what I think is an important part of this verse, which it's the end of the verse that says, "***they did not even have time to eat.***"

So, you may be wondering why this is so important, or even what does it really mean? If you read the first part of chapter 6, here in the gospel of Mark, we read that Jesus sent the disciples out to share the gospel.

† **Mark 6:7** *And He called the twelve to Himself, and began to send them out two by two, and gave them power over unclean spirits.*

And now they have returned and are hungry, which is a key thing to think about, because right after this verse it talks about how they tried to get away to rest and get a bite to eat. And as they did, it says that.

† **Mark 6:33** *But the multitudes saw them departing, and many knew Him and ran there on foot from all the cities. They arrived before them and came together to Him.*

So when we read that, I believe that even at this point, the apostles still didn't have a chance to eat. And the next key verse would be.

† **Mark 6:35-36** *When the day was now far spent, His disciples came to Him and said, "This is a deserted place, and already the hour is late. Send them away, that they may go into the surrounding country and villages and buy themselves bread; for they have nothing to eat."*

And when you put what we first observed "***they did not even have time to eat.***" along with their next statement of "***Send them away, that they may go into the surrounding country and villages and buy themselves bread***" Could it be that the apostles were saying in a sense. Jesus, we are tired and hungry, and we still haven't eaten, send these people away so they can go home and eat, and so that we can get something to eat too.

But I believe that Jesus was teaching them about serving by example, just like He did when He was talking to the Samaritan woman at the well.

† **John 4:31-32** *In the meantime His disciples urged Him, saying, "Rabbi, eat." But He said to them, "I have food to eat of which you do not know."*

Two key verses in this account of Jesus talking with the Samaritan woman, which we are relating to today's verse, which are,

† **John 4:6 & 8** *Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from His journey, sat thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour. For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.*

In both scenarios, Jesus was teaching them, and all of us, that we need to first see to the needs of others before we see to our own needs. And if you go back to the account of Jesus feeding the five thousand men, at the end it says that.

† **Mark 6:42-43** *So they all ate and were filled. And they took up twelve baskets full of fragments and of the fish.*

Since they were obedient to the Lord and serving others first, instead of brushing the people off so that they could get a quick bite to eat that they wanted, they each had their own basket of bread, which would have been enough to feed their families or even themselves for several days or even a week.

As a lesson for us, it reminds us that we should stop making excuses when help is needed in the church and even outside the church. Now I know things do come up that are legit why we can't help out at a church function, or somewhere else. Yet how many times do we think they are good excuses, but if we were really honest with ourselves, it's because we don't want to do it. And our "OUCH" statement may even be, "*We want our own will instead of being obedient to the Lord and what He has asked us to do?*"

Because how many times have we brushed off the Lord by not helping out in the church? But for that same time slot, if something like going to a movie, or if you are single, you could go out on a date with someone, or anything else you would enjoy doing. Would you make and find time to do it, yet not make or find time to serve the Lord in the church or outside the church?

Let's ask the Lord to change our hearts (I include myself in this) so that we can serve and love on others with joy and gladness, instead of making excuses, because we think that it's an inconvenience for us. And where is the sacrifice in that type of thinking?

- † **1 Chronicles 28:9** *As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a loyal heart and with a willing mind; for the LORD searches all hearts and understands all the intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will cast you off forever.*

- † **Romans 15:32 (NLT2)** *Then, by the will of God, I will be able to come to you with a joyful heart, and we will be an encouragement to each other.*

- † **Psalm 100:2** *Serve the LORD with gladness; Come before His presence with singing.*