

Remnant Life Church
Intervention Teaching Series
Servanthood
Week 6
Mark 6:32-44
“Serving out of Compassion”

As we begin to move toward the conclusion of this series on servanthood –

- This morning and next week we will focus on two familiar stories of serving found in the New Testament
- Both, as you might imagine, center around Jesus – who was the greatest example of servanthood who ever lived
 - The circumstances are as different as they could be
 - The setting, the participants, the reasons
 - But they show us, yet again, that serving others is not dependent on the circumstances but on the heart of the individual

One of the most well-known stories of the Bible is the feeding of the 5000

- It is the only one of the 35 miracles of Jesus found in the NT that is recorded in all 4 Gospels

READ – Mark 6:32-44

- This was not the only time Jesus performed this miracle of provision
 - He also fed a crowd of 4000 recorded in **Matt 15** and **Mark 8**
 - Not with 5 loaves and 2 fish but seven loaves
 - Why does the Bible specify the type of bread?
 - In several translations we are told it was bread made of barley
- In both accounts, the number of those fed (5000/4000) only counted the men, not women and children
 - Both numbers could have easily been 3, 4, even 5 times that number
 - Note: In both cases we are told that everyone ate their fill
 - When Jesus served, it fully and completely met the need of the individual
 - In other words – it was done right

The reason I point this out is that it is not always done that way

- I have long had a problem with what I have witnessed in the way things are done in many churches
 - A weak or half-hearted effort is no effort at all
 - No heart is present when it is only a token physical effort
 - At RLC: No hand-written signs; things in place, spend a few extra dollars to make it nice
 - The worship team knows this
 - “Are we clean up front?”
 - the stage needs to be as neat as possible

- Why?
 - Because your effort is a reflection of your heart
 - That is true about whatever you do in your life, isn't it?
 - And that has been the theme of this series

What is it that motivates your action?

In **Mark's** account (chapters 6 and 8) of the two events, he records the same word

- It is a word of emotion, experienced by Jesus, as He looked out over the crowds of people
- Compassion – (6:34 and 8:2)

What is compassion?

- Because it is the precise word needed in both of the situations Jesus is addressing?
- According to Webster, it is *a sympathetic awareness of someone else's distress along with a desire to alleviate it*
 - What should be noted is that the definition of compassion comes in two parts
 - The first is to be aware of someone's distress
 - But the second must be present as well – the desire to alleviate it
 - In other words, to do something about it!
- Jesus' use of the word in **Mark 6:34**, in the original language (*splaugh-knee-so-mah*), it means to be moved with compassion
 - It is a word that requires action
 - Not just feeling bad for someone but taking action to be part of the solution for them
 - **James 2:16** - *If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it?*
 - It must be more than just words
- It is sad to say but we now live in a society today where words can no longer be taken as truth
 - There was a time when telling the truth was valued above almost everything else
 - Because it reflected your character
 - You were taught at home to be honest, don't lie, always tell the truth
 - Today, that is a completely foreign concept
 - I had the so engrained in me growing up that the one or two times I tried to lie to my mother, I was terrible at it
- In the same way many will talk about the needs of people they come across
 - But they are only words
 - "I feel really bad about what they are going through"
 - Really? What can you do about it?

Serving is not limited to dealing with the struggles or pain of another person

- Many times it is simply doing a random act of kindness
 - There is no reason you are doing it
 - There is no end-game in mind; there is no catch
 - It might even be (and these are the very best acts of kindness) anonymous

What might something like that look like?

- "I was in grad school and 70 miles from home when my car blew a gasket in a snowstorm. On a Sunday. No mechanic shops open, and no one would tow my car back to my place until the snowstorm lifted because of the dangerous roads. I was crying in a coffee shop on the phone, and a woman approached me and offered me a place to stay for the night. She did not know me at all, and she took me back to her house, where I ate dinner with her, her mom, and her kids and slept in borrowed pajamas in her office. The next day she drove me back to my car, and I got towed home. I will never forget what extreme kindness it must have taken to bring a complete stranger into your home with your kids like she did for me."

Acts of kindness are the visible outpourings of compassion

- And like every aspect of servanthood, it begins in the heart
- Paul writes in [Eph 4:32](#) - *Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.*

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In our compassion, we should remember, not only the struggle of that time, but the instrument God used to meet our need

- Was it another person?
- An unexpected blessing?

Might the very answer to a person's problem, sent by God, be you?