Mark 6 (Part 2): 7-44 - Trusting God

Teacher: Pastor Paul LeBoutillier
Life Bible Ministry

It says, *"7 And he called the twelve and he began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. 8 He charged them to take nothing for their journey except a staff- no bread, no bag, no money in their belts- 9 but to wear sandals and not put on two tunics. 10 And he said to them, "Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you depart from there. 11 And if any place will not receive you and they will not listen to you, when you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them." 12 So* (it tells us here that) *they went out and proclaimed that people should repent. 13 And they cast out many demons and anointed with oil many who were sick and healed them." (ESV)*

Like a good teacher, a good leader, Jesus is giving His disciples an opportunity to go out and actually experience ministry for themselves. Hard to believe that these guys were an interesting bunch of fellas, who Jesus continually accused of having hard hearts. And yet He sends them out to do ministry. I don't know. Sometimes I'm like, Jesus, You freak me out a little bit here on this stuff. Because I tend to struggle sometimes, a little bit trusting if something is really seriously important. But Jesus sends these guys out.

But you'll notice that He gave them authority and that's cool. It says right there in verse seven, if you look with me again. It says He gave them authority, obviously over sicknesses, obviously over demonic spirits that they might be able to cast those things out. And this is just a really important reminder for us that authority is an important matter in the kingdom of God. When we minister, we need to operate in the power of the Holy Spirit by the authority of the name of Jesus Christ. And sometimes we don't think about that.

I mean, when people come up... Has anyone ever come up to you and asked you to pray for them? That they like... Because they were sick. Right? Or something like that? Ever had that happen. Happened to me a couple of billion times. And you know what?

I've never... I usually don't sit and think to myself, gee, I wonder if I have the authority to do this? We just do it. Right. And we just pray because we're... We think in terms of asking Jesus to heal this individual. And there's nothing fundamentally wrong with that.

But this is an interesting reminder that when Jesus sent His disciples out to do ministry, He wanted them to do ministry. And He gave them authority to go and do that ministry. Right? He said, go do this and I'm giving you the authority to speak to these demonic spirits and oust them from wherever they happen to be inhabiting. And I've given you authority to speak to these specific diseases that they might be cured..., and so forth. And it's just, it's a great reminder. I mean, authority.

Somebody might be wondering, well, as Christians, aren't we all given this authority of the name of Jesus? And I think the answer is yes and no. We're all given authority from the sense that, we're given access to the name of Jesus to use that name that is above all names and so forth. But I don't believe that we're all given the same authority.

I think that there may be authority given to some individuals. Well, we know that as it relates to the gifts of the Spirit, we know that God gives those abilities. And to some He talks in... When Paul refers to the gifts of the Spirit, he talks about those who are given the ability to heal diseases—certain diseases. And he calls it gifts of healing. There's obviously some authority that's given to that individual over certain infirmities, and illnesses, and stuff like that.

And there's a lot of things in the body of Christ, that a person can do. And I recognize that I don't have authority to do many of those things. In fact, I feel like God's called me to be a teacher. And that's pretty much all I've been given to do, for the most part. But, I just see a lot of other giftings, and abilities, and authorities, and stuff that I don't have. And that's why I rely on you. Because many of those things you have. And one of the reasons we need one another in the body of Christ.

But once again, we just don't often think about authority. Do we? We just go and do. Makes me think about the next time I pray for somebody, maybe the first prayer should be, Lord, give me the authority to speak with Your name, on behalf of this individual that they might be set free... or something related to that.

It's interesting, when Jesus gathered His disciples together after His resurrection, He spoke of authority, not just have his own, but that which He was giving them. Let me show you a passage on the screen, which is known as the Great Commission.

Matthew 28:18-20 (ESV)

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

And (it tells us here that) *Jesus came to them* (and notice the very first thing He says) *"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me."* Who has all authority? Jesus has all authority. Right? As God the Son, He wields that total, complete, absolute authority over all things. But what does He go on to say here? Jesus doesn't stop there.

Now He begins to commission the church to go out under His authority and accomplish the work of the ministry. What does He say? He says, therefore go. Right? Go! Go where? Well He basically told them to go to all the nations. You're to go and *"...make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you."*

And then He reminds them that, He'll be with them till the end of the age. And don't worry and da, da, da. I have all authority and I've given authority. Now this is one of those examples in the Bible of general authority being given to the church. In a general sense, the church has been given authority to go, make disciples. Right? Teaching them to obey, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, we have that authority. Because Jesus gave that authority.

It's interesting. We've taken many biblical concepts or ideas of authority. And I say, we—talking about the church at large, the church universal. And many times we have limited who can do certain things based on what position they hold within the church.

I was talking to my son-in-law, just this last week. He works in Boise, as a physical therapist assistant. And he was doing physical therapy for a retired Roman Catholic priest. And every single day this particular gentleman has another priest come into the clinic there it's an inpatient clinic—and give him communion.

And my son in law was saying to me because we were chatting about this. And he was saying—he says, I'm tempted to ask him sometime, you want me just to

do that for you? But I said—well, I smiled and I said, he wouldn't accept it from your hand, would he? And he said, no, he wouldn't.

And here's the question: Why not? Well, because we've heaped things on top of that whole concept of authority. Jesus gave authority, generally to the church, to do many, many things. And we in our religiosity have said, well, but that's got to be somebody who's this or that or the other thing. And then we even came up with things that only they can do that aren't even necessarily in the Bible. And it is, only this person can do that.

I remember when I was originally ordained. I remember my ordination certificate—it was... That was back just after Noah got off the ark. And it was... It said these things on there about how: We bequeath this individual to be able to marry, and do this, and perform all the other functions of the ministry. And the language is interesting. Because it seems to suggest that there are certain individuals who can do certain things. And that's because we've got it in our mind, that authority is limited. And that is still big in some sectors of the church. And it's still going on.

And I understand that there are certain aspects of authority that are given. But they better be biblical. You know what I mean? If we're going to say this is limited to this individual, then we better be able to confirm that in the Word of God, as it relates to apostolic authority. I'm not called to be an apostle or an evangelist. I don't have that kind of gifting and authority from God to do that sort of a thing. And yet those things are very biblical. And we expect that when someone functions in that role, that they are walking in that authority from Jesus to do those things.

Anyway. You'll notice that He goes on here and it's very interesting. He talks to them also, about what to take along on this little, missionary trip that He's sending them on, on foot.

And it says in verse 8 that, He charged them to, essentially, take nothing for the trip. He says, okay, take a staff... I assume it's like a walking stick sort of a thing. But don't take any bread. Don't take any food. Don't take any money, or a money—belt, or... Sure, wear your sandals. But I—don't even want you to bring along two tunics. Because a tunic could be used to not only, wear during the day, but it could be used to cover yourself at night like a blanket. And so it's...

He's almost, essentially, saying, don't take a sleeping roll or a sleeping bag. And all of this doesn't sound terribly practical to us. It's like, I'm going to send

you guys out and I don't want you to take anything. Which is really the opposite of the way we do things, isn't it? Maybe some of us more than others.

My wife smiles. When I talk about this because I am a pack rat whenever we go like camping. We've got this travel trailer that we take camping. And I'll find something, I'll see something and I'll think, I better take that. Because you never know when you might need it. And I like never do. But I bring it anyway, just because I want to be prepared.

My oldest son, when he was a little boy went on vacation. And we were so, amused. He packed a calculator. And we were like... I was like... Aaron was like 5 years old. And I was like, Aaron, why are you bringing a calculator on vacation? He goes, well, you never know, you might need to figure up some numbers. I think he's got the same disease. But it's that pack rat sort of a mentality.

Well, and yet Jesus tells them to divest themselves from all of that. And just take really very, very little along with them on this trip. What is He doing? He's putting them in a situation—He's forcing them into a situation where they're going to have to be dependent on God, during the course of this ministry. Right?

Why is that important? Well, it's important because in the midst of that ministry, they're going to face many situations and circumstances for which they will need to rely on God. Jesus is putting them from the very first step out, in a situation where they're going to need to depend on the Lord to take care of them along the way. Right? When they get to the place of ministry, they've already been doing it.

Doesn't that sound smart? And yet, in our culture today, we're so prepared for any issue that might come along? Boy, if I tap your car, or scrape your car with mine, don't worry about it. Got insurance. If we need groceries, hey, it's just down the street. We're prepared.

I was talking to... I think I was talking to Selena just this last week. We were talking about snow. And getting snowed in. And I was sharing that, from our background in Minnesota, people used to prepare a cellar somewhere in their house with canned goods and they could last.

Sue lived out in the country. I lived in town—if you can call it a town. It was smaller than Vail. But anyway, Sue lived a few miles out of town. And they had this little cellar down in the basement. It was jam packed full of fruits, and

vegetables, and other things. They could probably live for a month, easily if they got snowed in. They rarely did because it was Sue's dad who actually had all the equipment to open the roads, which was convenient. But we're just... That's our culture today. We're prepared.

We're prepared in case of any contingency. It's like, I've got this thing dialed in. I got my life insurance. I got my health insurance. I got, we're prepared for this. I've got money. And we're told to put money away. Put it into... And not that there's anything wrong with any of that. If you're an insurance guy, I'm not dissing your job.

I'm simply saying that culturally speaking, we're just so ultra-prepared for life, that when we step into ministry and we're completely out of practice. And we wonder why it's so difficult to rely on the Lord. We get into this thing of ministry and we face an issue. And we're like, whoa, what are we going to do about this? Call my insurance guy? Or what? Because this is... I don't know what I'm going to do about this. Well, you got to depend on the Lord. Well, I haven't been doing that for a long time.

We talk about trusting the Lord with all of your heart. But, really, truly, how many of us are doing that? We hardly know what it means. I mean, we understand the words. But we're out of practice. What is the first thing Jesus does before He sends them out to do ministry? Put them in a situation where they're forced to rely on God.

You want to know what happens when you're forced to rely on God? He's faithful. We say that—God is faithful." And if I put that on my Facebook page, I'll get all kinds of likes. Yeah! God is faithful. How many of us know it experientially, God is faithful?

Well, there are times, aren't there? When God allows us to have every support structure that we've erected in our lives to try to bring stability, and peace of mind, and preparedness, He allows those things to all fall away. There are times and those are scary times. And what happens? Well, we have a choice. We can freak out or we can trust in God.

But, those few times in our life - and I'm talking about my family - where we've just set out on a faith adventure, I got to tell you, those have been some of the most exciting times in our life. When we left Montana to go to the Seattle area, for me to attend Bible college, we believed the Lord was sending us. And we packed up, we sold all of our stuff—everything except what would fit in a van.

And we drove to Seattle without a place to stay, no contacts no jobs. And we had a five month old little girl. And it was a little scary. And I mean, just talking about that, some of you are probably just getting the shakes. And yet, you know what? At every single turn, we watched as God systematically, took us by the hand and walked through every act of His provision. Just miraculously open doors, connected with people.

I mean, we went into this big, huge apartment complex, just north of Seattle. And we walk into this office and we say to the lady, we'd like an apartment. And she says, well, you need to fill out this form and put down your employers. And we said, we don't have any jobs. And she just sat and chatted with us for a while. And she goes, you know what? We're not going to demand that today.

And she just crossed out those areas. And we're just looking at each other like, Wow! And, oh, we'll need a month in advance and then another... Well, we don't have that. Well, we won't do that then. We'll just cross that.

It was just, God just gave us favor. And it was just... We saw His provision over, and over, and over. And yet then what happens? We get into life, and we just start living our lives with all of our preparedness in place. And we forget.

I remember when we were getting ready to leave Montana to Seattle, a guy in our church, I didn't even really know very well. Came up to me after a service knowing that we were leaving. I'd been on staff at that church. And he said to me, he said, I really envy you for what you guys are about to do. I didn't have a clue what he was talking about. I mean, I was a fairly young believer myself.

And yet he knew. He knew that, you guys are about to put yourself in a place where you are going to experience God's faithfulness. And I envy that because I've gotten myself in a situation where I don't experience that much anymore. Because I'm so prepared. And I really don't have to call out to have Him take care of things for me much anymore.

I love this passage. Scares me to think of being in a place where you have to depend on God. Isn't that weird? Oh, we talk all the time about depending on God. And then we make sure we never have to do it.

Anyway, let's keep going. He also tells them in verse 11, that there's going to be situations where people aren't going to receive them. He says, listen, if any place will not receive you and they're not going to listen to you. They choose to harden their heart, stiffen their neck, whatever. He says, alright, fine. When you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet, as a testimony against them.

And this a symbolic sort of an act that essentially says, listen, God has given you the freedom to reject Him if you want to. But you are not free from the consequences of that rejection.

And that act of shaking—off the dust from your feet, or, as Paul did sometimes taking out his garment and shaking the folds of it out. It was all a picture of saying, essentially, listen, this is on you now. I've shown you the way to life. In other words, you're in this ocean and you're drowning and I've thrown you a life preserver. It's the only one you're going to get. It's the only life preserver there is. It's Jesus Christ. I've thrown it out and you rejected it. Well, okay, fine.

Listen, you're free to do that if you want to. You're also free to drown because that's your choice. You've rejected the only method of being saved that God has offered you. Because there is only one. Remember Jesus said, no man comes to the Father except by Me. (John 14:6) He is the only life preserver. And hey, you're free. You're free to do that.

I tell people when I'm witnessing to them, you are free to reject everything that I am saying to you. But you are not free from experiencing the consequences of that rejection. And you will experience the consequences of that rejection. Because if Jesus is not lord of your life, you will be. And you're not a very good lord. And you will be miserable. So, it goes.

Verse 13, we find out the guys did exactly what Jesus told them to do. It says, *"And they cast out many demons and anointed with oil many who were sick and healed them."*

Let's keep reading. *"14 King Herod heard of…* (all this, you can imagine it's crazy how the word is spreading about this) *for Jesus' name had become known. Some said, "John the Baptist has been raised from the dead. That is why these miraculous powers are at work in him." 15 But others said, "He is Elijah." And others said, "He is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old." 16 But when Herod heard of it, he said, "John, whom I beheaded, has been raised."*

And of course, we're going to read here in a few minutes why he thought that. He probably had a severe case of the guilts going on. And whatever all else went into his conclusion.

But what's interesting about this passage to me, is that the masses are really dumb. I mean, let's just face it, people in general love to take guesses. And they love to put it out there like they've got some kind of real insight. And some people will say, well, actually, you see, this is Elijah. And other people said, no,

this is John the Baptist. He's come back from the dead. No, this is one of the prophets, which is basically, one of the safe positions, one of the prophets of old who's come back to do..., sort of thing.

And everybody's got an opinion. And what this shows you, is that people are often very passionate about their opinions. But they are usually, completely wrong. Especially when they make those conclusions upon their own sense of understanding.

And if you want a hint of this I say this all the time, just, if you don't have a Facebook account, get one, and you will see this whole thing going on today. Especially when any comment about God or the Bible comes up. People are just so quick to give their opinion, well, here's the deal... And they put it out there. And it's usually laughable. I mean, they're so far off base. People still love to do that sort of a thing.

Well, verses 17 through 29, Mark stops the narrative here for a moment. And he gives us a little historical background on the martyrdom of John the Baptist.

It went like this. *"17 For it was Herod who had sent and seized John and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife,..."* Notice, Mark doesn't even call her his wife even though he married her. And it tells us here, *"because he had married her.* (but) *18 For John had been saying to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife."* Philip was still alive, and yet Herod went out and basically stole his brother's wife.

"*19 And Herodias had a grudge against* (John) *and wanted to put him to death. But she could not,* (do it because) 20 for *Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and he kept him safe.* (And) *When he heard him,* (so, obviously he went to go talk to John and hear him speak, it says) *he was greatly perplexed, and yet he heard him gladly."* He liked listening to him, but he was completely confused and baffled by what he said and so forth.

And by the way, just so that historically speaking, this is Herod Antipas, the son of Herod the Great, who slaughtered all of the baby boys in and around Bethlehem when he heard about the birth of Jesus. (Matthew 2:16-18) Herod Antipas, his son, rules over Galilee and an area called Piraeus back then.

And the whole family was a bunch of nut jobs. I mean, they were absolutely whacked out from the word go. It was said about Herod the Great, that it was safer to be his goat than his son. Because he would literally put anybody to

death who he thought was a threat to his own rule. And so the Herods were, yeah, wouldn't want to be friends with these folks.

Anyway, it tells us here in verse 21 that, *"But an opportunity came* (up) *when* (for) *Herod on his birthday* (he) *gave a banquet for his nobles and military commanders and the leading men of Galilee. 22 For when Herodias's daughter came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his guests. And the king said to the girl, "Ask me for whatever you wish, and I will give it to you." 23 And he vowed to her, "Whatever you ask me, I will give you, up to half my kingdom."* (And obviously everyone in the room heard him give that vow.) *24 And she went out and said to her mother, "For what should I ask?" And she said, "The head of John the Baptist." 25 And she came in immediately with haste to the king and asked, saying, "I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter." 26 And the king was exceedingly sorry, but because of his oaths and his guests he did not want to break his word to her. 27 And immediately the king sent an executioner with orders to bring John's head. He went and beheaded him in the prison 28 and brought his head on a platter and gave it to the girl, and the girl gave it to her mother.* (Are these people whacked out or what? I mean, passing around a plate with a guy's head.) *29 When his disciples heard of it, they came and took his body and laid it in a tomb."*

That's the little interruption in the narrative to give you a little historical background. And now with verse 30, he picks up once again the whole thing of the apostles being sent out. And tells us here that, *"The apostles returned to Jesus and told him all that they had done and taught."* And you all know, they were probably jazzed about what had happened.

We know that this isn't the only occasion when Jesus sends out disciples. This is the sending out of the 12. But there's going to be another occasion when He'll send out 72 people to go out and do the work of the ministry. (Luke 10:1)

And we'll be told at the end of that time, that the guys came back and they were just talking and they were full of joy, it says. They were just, wow, this is great! And they'll say, demons were submitting to us in Your name. And it was amazing.

And you'll remember what Jesus said to them? He said, don't rejoice that demons submit to you. Rejoice rather that your names are recorded in heaven. (Luke 10:20) And you can imagine that these guys are exhausted. Ministry is just a constant. They've been out ministering and now they need some time away.

And it says in verse 31, if you look at these two verses, 31 and 32, these are great verses. *"And he said to them, "Come away by yourselves to a desolate place 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 desolate place by themselves."* Stop there for just a moment.

I got to tell you, I really love these verses for a couple of different reasons. I love it because it reminds me that, God knows me better than I know myself. And He knows when I need to take a break. And He factored into, even His creation, a time of rest. And even if you don't keep the Sabbath for religious reasons, which of course we don't because we're not under the law. There's great wisdom in taking a day and resting— just recharging your batteries.

Hey, if the manufacturer says in His specifications, "Take a day and rest" probably a good idea. And yet we... Some people are just like, what does that even look like. either? And they don't ever take a rest. Or if they do, they say, we're going to Disneyland. And they go down and play with Mickey for a few days. And then they come home and what do they need to do? Take a vacation. Right? From their vacation, because it's been just whacked out craziness, while they were gone. I think there's really something to this idea of just getting quiet.

And you'll notice that Jesus doesn't say, hey, guys, just take 5 or take 10 or... Notice what He says. He says, come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while. And the implication there is, come with Me. Come along with Me. The idea here is not that we're going to go to Disneyland and just be so busy with all this other stuff. But that we're going to go away with Jesus. There's a going away with Him. He's saying, come with Me. Come let's go chill for a while. This is good advice.

I think it's really good. In fact, I've wondered sometimes when people are just living life at a breakneck pace, and then you see something happen in their lives where they are forced into a place of rest. Whether it's a health issue crops up, or a family thing, or... They just kind of get benched. Somehow, some way, God just does it. He just takes them off the floor and benches them and says, "Just sit here for a while."

And inevitably those people will come back after that season, which is usually very difficult and sometimes even painful. But yet they will often reflect on that later and say, I didn't even begin to understand how desperately I needed to rest, until God just shut it all down and forced me into that place of just taking that time to reflect. And they'll say things like, for the first time, I really just sat and read my Bible all day long. And I just rested because I couldn't do anything

else. Knee surgery or back surgery, I'm lying on my back. What am I going to do?

Wow! You ever stop to think when some of those things happen to you maybe that was God saying, you need to rest. You need to come away with Me by yourself. And just hang with Me and let Me just restore you. Because there's something to being restored.

Now, in this situation we see that whatever time they had was extremely short lived. Because look at verse 33. It says, *"Now many saw them going* (in other words, going to that place of rest) *and* (they) *recognized them, and they ran there on foot from all the towns and they got there ahead of them."* They get to this place of rest and the people are already gathered.

It says, *"34 When he went ashore he saw the great crowd,…"* And He rebuked them, saying, you guys, we need some rest. Would you just go home for a while, and give us a break? Everybody's going, wait, I don't see that here.

No, that's because Jesus didn't say that. I might have said that quite honestly. There have been times, I am ashamed to say, during my time of ministry when I have felt slighted by people having needs on my day off. You know what? And there's something to be said about protecting your day off. Particularly, when you're a parent. You've got small kids or family at home, you've got to protect that time with them.

But I'm reminded in this passage that my Savior sees people differently than do I. And *"He has compassion on them."* That's what it says here. And remember people, when we see something about Jesus, explaining how He sees people, responds to people - remember people, we are seeing the heart of God. This is how God feels about people. How does He feel about people when they gather with all kinds of needs? We talk about people, wow, she's needy. And we all kind of back away like, eww.

How did Jesus respond to needy people? He had compassion. He didn't turn them away. And He saw them as sheep without a shepherd. Now, I don't know about you, but I've never been a shepherd over sheep— in a literal sense of, Baaaahh. (Pastor Paul bleats like a sheep) sheep thing— deal —animals. But I mean, I've read about what it's like. You probably have too.

And what really interests me too, is that there's one very prominent shepherd in the Bible. Who spent a great, many years actually doing the business of taking care of literal sheep who later became one of the kings of Israel. Who wrote

later about his relationship with God. And he likened God, as his shepherd. And he understood what a shepherd was like. Right? He had the means to be able to really understand what a shepherd was to his or her sheep. Because there were shepherdesses as well in the Bible.

Let me show you this very popular Psalm where David simply makes this statement,

Psalm 23:1-4 (ESV)

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

"The LORD is my shepherd." He's been a shepherd. He knows what this is all about. And he says, you know what? That's God in my life. He is the one who shepherds me. And I need a shepherd. Right?

It's also interesting. There's this confusing sort of a thing in this Psalm that says, *"I shall not want."* When I was a young person, I remember thinking, why in the world would I call God my shepherd and then say in the next breath, but I don't want Him.

Well, you guys know what it means. It's talking about having no need because of Him doing such an incredible job as a shepherd. In other words, what David is saying is, He so completely takes care of me, that I literally don't lack for anything. The Lord is my shepherd and I don't lack for anything in my life. He has given me everything I need for life and godliness. Right?

"He makes me lie down in green pastures." Wow, talks about finding our rest in Him. "*He leads me beside still waters."* Not rushing waters with all kinds of hectic but He brings me to that place of the stillness.

And then you'll notice that he says, *"He restores my soul."* Do you know guys? That's why I think we've lost sight of what it means to have our soul restored.

We live in a culture where things are so quick, so busy, so constantly moving, that we got to have drugs to fall asleep, and then drugs to wake up in the morning. Because our soul is so agitated and so out of order.

And we're just... There's something in our culture that thinks being busy is just so cool, that we've made ourselves weird. We're just reverberating with weirdness. And David talks about having his soul restored. And we all kind of read that and we go, oh! What's that? Soul restored?

There's a passage in the course of David's life that I've always appreciated, where David was actually going through a period of disobedience in his life. And he was so convinced, at one point, that Saul was going to find him eventually and kill him. (1 Samuel 27:1-4, 30:3-6)

This is during that time when he was, obviously on the run that he concluded that the only place he would ever find safety is among the enemies of Saul. He went to go live among the Philistines for a period of time. And he was right. Saul didn't come look for him there. But he went through a lot of challenging things during that season that he wouldn't have gone through otherwise.

But anyway, the point of the whole thing is, that there was a time when David and all of his men left and then came back to their town that they lived in. There were so many of them, they literally lived in their own town. And they found that their belongings and their families were missing. Gone. They'd been raided. Some raiding party had come through, taken everything, the lot of it, including the people.

And it says that David and his men—these warriors, these were men. But they just began to weep. They cried out and with just agony and sorrow. And it says that some of the men were so filled with sorrow and anger that there was talk among them of stoning David. And David was in the same situation they were in. His family was missing. Who knows if they were alive or dead.

And then there's this little statement in the midst of that story that just stands out so prominently. It says, but David found strength in the Lord, his God. And that was even before they did anything about it. We usually don't settle down until the thing has been resolved. And then we go, aww! But when things are unresolved, we're still in a tailspin.

And here David is missing his family and all of his belongings. Including, feeling the responsibility of all of his men missing their families and all of their

belongings. We don't know if they're dead or alive. And in addition to that, they're so angry at him, they're thinking of killing him. And who's to stop them?

And yet, in the midst of that kind of turmoil, David found strength in the Lord, his God. In other words, David turned to his Shepherd and his Shepherd caused him to lie down in green pastures and to come beside still waters in the midst of that challenge. That blows me away. I want that kind of a relationship with my Shepherd, where I can have my soul restored. Don't you? We're out of practice on that one.

Verse 35. Look in your Bible. It says, *"And when it grew late, his disciples came to him and said, "This is a desolate place, and the hour is now late. 36 Send them away to go into the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat." 37 But he answered them, "You give them something to eat." And they said to him*, (you have to be joking. I just threw that in there because that's what they were thinking. They said) *"Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give it to them to eat?"'"*

Two hundred denarii was probably the equivalent of several months—maybe 8, 9, 10 months of wages. And even if we could find that much bread...

What's going on here? Why in the world would Jesus make such an outlandish statement? And you have to admit, on the surface, it's outlandish. Here's this multiple-thousand group of people that is gathered out in this desolate place where Jesus intended to get rest and they aren't getting any. And it's getting late in the day.

And the disciples come to Him and they say, you need to send these people away. Because otherwise, they're not going to make it. There aren't any street lamps back in those days. Right? It's like... Darkness is going to fall. These people are going to have problems. Send them away so they can go get some food and be safe for the night. They're hungry. They need to eat. And Jesus makes this statement that just seemingly comes out of nowhere.

And He says, you feed them. You got to love Jesus. You feed them. But remember something here, remember something. This... And this is important. Where have they just come from? They've just come from their little missionary journey. And what did Jesus say to them before they went on that missionary journey? Don't take any food. Why? My Father's going to take care of you. Don't worry about it. He'll provide.

Now, not a big deal when you're sent out two by two and God's going to provide for two people. Eh, it's not a big deal. Now you can see what Jesus is doing, can't you? He just basically cranked up this thing a couple of billion notches. And said, all right, you've been trusting God for His provision for two people while you were out on your little missionary journey, well, how about several thousand? What's that do for you?

Well, it gives me the shakes. Thank you very much. Because, you see, that's a whole different step of faith, isn't it? Trusting God to feed a multitude - multiple thousands of people. What do we have? And we're going to see this as we go through the verses. He'll say, well, what do we have? Well, we've got five loaves of bread and a couple of fish. That's not going to go far at all. It's not even enough for us. That's alright, fine. Tell the people to sit down and we'll feed them.

Here's a question, very important question: Which is more difficult for God? To feed two people or to feed multiple thousands of people? Ah, forget it. It's a trick question. You know that. There's no difference.

Now, where is the difference? The difference is in our faith. See, that's the problem. Right? I can actually get to the place where I could believe that God will take care of me and my wife. But now we've got these other people that come along into our family. And suddenly now my faith has to go to the next level.

Thank God we didn't, have a thousand children to have to start taking care of. Right? But you can imagine what that's like when you suddenly feel responsible, and what are you going to do?

Well, you have to ask the question: Is it more difficult for God to take care of those thousands of people than it is one or two? And the answer of course is no. This is just the power of God. God can do anything. Nothing is impossible for God. Right? Don't we love to say that?

Nothing is impossible for God! Okay, feed these people. What? Right? As soon as we're faced with a situation where that kind of faith has to be put into practice, suddenly we're like, well, hang on a minute here.

Jesus is turning up the faith counter. Why? Why? Just to see the looks on their face? Watch them fail big time? No, Jesus is turning it up because you know what? These guys are going to face some major challenges to their faith in the coming years. As they begin to walk in the power of the Holy Spirit out into

that world to take the Gospel, they are going to be confronted by situation after situation, where their faith is going to be tested and tried all the way. We might as well start doing this now, guys. We might as well start learning the lesson that whether it's two people or whether it's 20,000, it's still God. It's the same power of God.

Paul later... Paul the apostle, who learned a lot about trusting God, later wrote to the church in Philippi. And he said this,

Philippians 4:19 (ESV)

...my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

…my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

In other words, he's saying, there is a glorious unlimited supply, a glorious infinite abundance, to God's personal storehouse of blessing and provision. And the sooner you and I learned that the better we're going to be. And start trusting God.

Verse 38, here's how He does it. He says to them, so how many loaves do we have? Go and see. They come back and they say, yeah, well, we've got five loaves and two fish. And even the fish are starting to stink.

"39 Then he commanded them all to sit down in groups of, on the green grass, 40 And they sat down in groups by hundreds and by fifties. 41 And taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing and broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples to set before the people. And he divided the two fish among them all. 42 And they all ate and were satisfied."

Very important words there. Don't let those words slip away from you, *"they… ate and were satisfied."* And that word means more than just they got full. It does mean that. It does mean they ate and they were full. But it speaks of something that the world is looking for, satisfaction. I want to be satisfied.

And we try so many things in this world, in this life, and they don't satisfy. And especially when there are needs in our lives for which we attempt to resolve and to provide for those needs. You're not going to be satisfied by your own provision. But let me tell you something, when you start to trust in God and allow Him—then the provision becomes satisfying.

And it ends here basically by saying, *"43 And they took up twelve baskets full of broken pieces and of the fish.* (as well) *44 And those who ate the loaves were five thousand men."*

That's because they didn't count the women and children. They counted the men and there were 5,000. So, how many people were there total? I don't know. They didn't count them all. But all we know is there were probably a lot of women, maybe even as many, we don't know. How many children? I don't know.

Let's guess there were 15,000 people. That's a lot of folks to feed. Can you imagine catering a party for 15,000? Well, Jesus does it supernaturally. And teaches His disciples a lesson in the process, trust in the Lord with all of your heart, even when it doesn't make sense. And whether it's feeding two or feeding 15,000, I got this covered. It's the power of God we depend upon, amen.