

Title: More Than Enough**[Slide 1]****Text: Mark 6:30-44****New Exodus****The Disciples' Mission:****[Slide 2]**

Two by two they trudged back into the village by the lake. Jesus was waiting for them at the waterfront. Some days before they had set out on their mission. Jesus had allowed them to travel with sandals and a staff, but no bread, beggar's bag, pocket change, or even a change of clothes. They were setting out on a New Exodus, equipped in the same way as their ancestors on the night they ate the first Passover meal:

[Slide 3]*Exodus 12:11 NIV*

This is how you are to eat it: with your cloak tucked into your belt, your sandals on your feet and your staff in your hand. Eat it in haste; it is the LORD'S Passover.

Like the Israelites, they had depended on God to provide food and shelter as they announced His Kingdom. Mark tells us that:

[Slide 4]*Mark 6:12-13 NIV*

They went out and preached that people should repent. They drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them.

Now they gathered around Jesus and told Him what had happened:

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Mark 6:30 NIV

The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught.

A Boat and 12 baskets:

A line of fishing boats rested on the beach not far from where they stood. It was morning, and the boats had all returned from a night of fishing. Some of them, in fact, belonged to the disciples.

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In 1986 two members of a kibbutz located on the shores of this same lake, the Sea of Galilee, discovered the remains of a boat just like the ones on the beach that day. The lake level was abnormally low, due to a prolonged drought. Walking along the newly exposed lake bottom, the two men found the hull of a boat poking out of the mud. It turned out to be a boat from Jesus' time. It was 27' long, with a shallow hull suited for fishing close to shore.

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It would have had a mast and sail, as well as places for four rowers. It was able to carry as many as 15 passengers. In short, it was exactly the kind of boat that rested on the shore that day in Capernaum.

The excitement caused by Jesus and His disciples followed them into town that day. No wonder that Jesus called a "Time Out." Mark tell us:

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Mark 6:31-32 NIV

Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest." So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place.

As they climbed into the boat, each of them had on his shoulder a wicker basket with a rope handle and a capacity of about 2 gallons. These baskets used to carry a light lunch or odds and ends, just like a backpack today. So

common was this basket among Jewish people that it had become a symbol of being Jewish.

Desert Place:

The place Jesus took them was in Mark's original language a *desert place*. For a people who became a nation in the vast Sinai Desert, the word *desert* held deep meaning. The *desert* was not only the place where Israel was adopted by God as His Son and given a brand new identity and purpose; it was the place to which God's People returned for a fresh encounter with God.

Once again, Mark is stressing that Jesus was taking His disciples further along on a New Exodus. By taking them away from the town and its crowds, Jesus was fulfilling the words of the prophet Jeremiah:

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Jeremiah 31:2 NIV

This is what the LORD says:

*"The people who survive the sword
will find favor in the wilderness;
I will come to give rest to Israel."*

Jesus had come as the LORD who would meet His people in the desert and "give rest to Israel."

The Good Shepherd

Sheep without a shepherd!

It turns out, however, that there were a whole lot more people who wanted to join Him there!

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Mark 6:33-34 NIV

But many who saw them leaving recognized them and ran on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them.

When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things.

Picture the scene that greeted Jesus and His disciples: thousands of people milling about, looking for something, hoping that God would at long last set them free. Wasn't a desert place like this precisely where He had formed Israel into a nation? Wasn't it in a desert place that He had powerfully revealed Himself to them and formed a covenant with them? Could it possibly be that He was about to do this here and now – and that He would once and for all rescue His people?

“Send them away!”

Deserts may be good places for getting away from it all and regrouping, but they aren't very good when it comes to finding enough food for a massive crowd of people. Just as Moses how it felt to have hundreds of thousands of hungry Israelites clamoring for food:

[Slide 11]

Numbers 11:13 NIV

“Where can I get meat for all these people? They keep wailing to me, ‘Give us meat to eat!’”

Well, Jesus' disciples must have been afraid that the same thing would happen to them, because they came to Jesus with some urgent advice:

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Mark 6:35-36 NIVB

By this time it was late in the day, so his disciples came to him. “This is a remote place,” they said, “and it’s already very late. Send the people away so that they can go to the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat.”

Once again, a reference to the *desert place* (trans. As “remote place”). But now the *desert place* is a place not of rest but of need. It's a place that reminds you of what you aren't and of what you can never do. It's a place that strips you down to the bare essentials of existing, and leaves you wanting.

“What do you have?”

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Mark 6:37a NIV

But he answered, “You give them something to eat.”

Jesus’ answer only *intensified* the terror of the desert. “You feed them!” How? With what? No wonder they answer:

Mark 6:37b NIV

“That would take more than half a year’s wages! Are we to go and spend that much on bread and give it to them to eat?”

Their words drip with sarcasm. It’s just not gonna happen. Even Jesus, it turns out, needs a “reality check” once in a while.

But Jesus sends them back to their baskets – the ones they had slung over their shoulders when they boarded the boat early that morning.

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Mark 6:38 NIV

“How many loaves do you have?” he asked. “Go and see.”

When they found out, they said, “Five—and two fish.”

Whatever food they had started with that morning, they were now down to 5 little loaves and a couple of fish between all 12 disciples. Proof positive that they weren’t going to be feeding anybody that evening.

Or so they thought.

More than Enough

Dinner is served:

It’s all so familiar to us by now:

- Like the Good Shepherd in David's psalm, He has them lie down on the green grass, divided into companies just as Moses had done with Israel in the desert.
- Then Jesus takes the scraps of food, holds them up to Heaven, and blesses them, undoubtedly with the familiar Jewish dinner prayer that says, "Blessed art Thou, O Lord our King, King of the world, who bringest forth bread from the earth."
- He breaks the loaves, just as a Jewish father would break the bread and pass it out to his family.

Dinner is served:

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Mark 6:41b NIV

Then he gave them to his disciples to distribute to the people. He also divided the two fish among them all.

12 full baskets:

Mark tells us that God did for His people what He had done for Israel when they found themselves without food in the desert. And remember those baskets that the disciples had carried on their shoulders? Remember how empty they were at the end of the day. Just 5 little loaves and 2 fish was all they could find. What a different story when Jesus has finished feeding the crowd:

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Mark 6:42-44 NIV

They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces of bread and fish. The number of the men who had eaten was five thousand.

Now each disciple goes back to the boat with his basket brimming with pieces of bread and fish. Each morsel had been pulled from the loaves and the fish by the fingers of the LORD who gives rest in the desert.

More than Enough:

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How much is enough? Ask a millionaire and he or she will tell you, "Just another million."

How much is enough when you are in the desert? Enough for one more meal? And where will the next one come from after that?

How much is enough when you are in a desert place with Jesus? Is the tiny bit you have enough?

Only if you give it to Him.