

Spiritual Seasons in Our Walk with Christ: A Season of Serving
Mark 6:32-44

1. Seasons in Our Walk

- a. Just as there are seasons in the natural world, and seasons in the spiritual world, there are seasons in our walk with Jesus.
- b. Potential seasons revealed in the events recorded in Mark 6
 - i. A season of going - is a divine provision to join God in His mission to fill the earth with the knowledge of His glory, empowered by His Spirit and trusting in His presence.
 - ii. A season of grieving - doesn't need to be a season of defeat; it may be just easily a season that motivates a deeper, more active, more vital experience of Christ Himself.
 - iii. A season of resting - God calls us to a season of rest as He calls us to lay down our self-sufficiency, our "self-shepherding," and entrust ourselves to Jesus, the Christ, the Son of God, the Divine Shepherd.
 - iv. A season of serving - **a season in our walk with Jesus when the need of the hour calls us to live and serve with a strength, power, and purpose greater than ourselves**
 - (1) in other words, to shepherd ourselves and others in the Spirit of the Good Shepherd.
 - (2) to fulfill the ministry role of Jesus in the world in the manner and method of Jesus Himself.
 - (3) **In the season of serving, Christ calls on His disciples to further extend His ministry in the world by serving the physical and spiritual needs of others as He would.**

2. Four Conditions for Good Shepherding in the Season of Serving

- a. **v. 31 Good shepherding starts by seeing people for what they need more than just what they want.**
 - i. The crowd comes for the food and the fun
 - ii. Jesus, moved by compassion, sees they needs a shepherd
 - (1) He teaches
 - (2) He feeds
 - (3) He inserts Himself into their lives as an opportunity to supply their real need
 - (a) He is not merely emotionally moved
 - (b) He acts physically with spiritual wisdom and power.
 - iii. Disciples are prepared, having been born again and filled with the Holy Spirit, to minister in the world in the manner and method of Jesus.
 - (1) **2 Peter 1:3-4 (ESV) ³ His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, ⁴ by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature,**

having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.

- (2) Not just a divine mandate but the provision of divine power AND the divine nature
- (3) Not only can you see the world as Jesus does, you can love people as Jesus does and minister in the world as Jesus did

b. **v. 37 Good shepherding involves assuming responsibility for someone else's well-being.**

- i. Disciples reasonably, responsibly wanted
 - (1) The crowd to meet their own need
 - (2) Jesus to meet the need of the crowd
- ii. Jesus intended to meet both the need of the crowd and the need of the disciples by having them take responsibility through serving the crowd.
 - (1) They must accept the challenge
 - (2) They must offer what they have
 - (3) They must follow instructions
 - (4) They must actively serve
 - (5) They must witness the abundance of the outcome
- iii. **Philippians 2:13 (ESV) for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.**
 - (1) God works to give you the will to do His will
 - (2) God works in you to do the work that pleases Him
 - (a) The responsibility for the worker is God's
 - (b) The responsibility for the work is yours

c. **v. 38 Good shepherding takes into account both physical AND spiritual resources.**

- i. Relative to the immediate need
 - (1) It did not matter how much bread the disciples had
 - (2) It mattered how much power Jesus had.
- ii. The need of the crowd was not met through the provision of the disciples but through the power of Jesus.
 - (1) The disciples responded to the need by considering the limits of their personal experience
 - (a) Their lack of adequate supplies
 - (b) How much money it take to gather adequate supplies
 - (c) The comparable insufficiency of their current resources
 - (2) They based their response on themselves, their experience, their circumstances, and their resources.
 - (3) Jesus does not limit His response to human limitation.
- iii. When God brings you face to face with a real need and calls you to glorify Him by serving, trust Him to accomplish His goal.
 - (1) **1 Thessalonians 5:24 (ESV) He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.**

- (2) **John 15:5 (ESV)** *I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.*
- (3) **Philippians 4:13 (ESV)** *I can do all things through him who strengthens me.*
- iv. Someone might object that this is all “head in the clouds” thinking.
 - (1) Their experience tells them God doesn’t do this anymore
 - (2) **Colossians 3:1-3 (ESV)** ¹ *If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. ³ For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.*
 - (3) Your life is no longer the sum total of your experiences but the infinite expression of the person and purpose of Almighty God!
- d. **v. 43 Good shepherding requires we shepherd our own souls as well.**
 - i. Two final truths from the twelve baskets of leftovers as we close this morning
 - (1) The grace of God is never meant to be hoarded, but shared
 - (2) There were twelve baskets of leftovers.
 - (a) That means that Judas Iscariot, the betrayer, also served and collected a basket of leftovers
 - (i) Judas participated in the miracle of serving but never personally enjoyed the miracle of salvation
 - (ii) Judas chose to die in regret rather than live in repentance.
 - (iii) **Don’t be like Judas!**
 - (b) No amount of dutiful service replaces genuine saving faith in Jesus for the salvation of the soul!
 - (i) It is possible to participate in all the ministries and graces that accompany Christ and yet never actually belong to Christ.
 - (ii) The danger of attempting to serve Jesus without serving your own soul is that your service, instead of helping you, hurts you!
 - ii. The call to authentic faith
 - (1) Scripture
 - (a) **2 Corinthians 13:5 (ESV)** *Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you fail to meet the test!*
 - (b) **2 Peter 1:10 (ESV)** *Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall.*
 - (2) What God has done to insure salvation

- (a) God sent His Son
 - (b) God laid on Him the iniquities of us all
 - (c) God made Him to be sin for us
 - (d) God has poured out on Christ, on the cross, the full measure of His justice and righteous wrath
- (3) What you must do to embrace salvation
- (a) Confess
 - (i) **1 John 1:9 (ESV) *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.***
 - (ii) You have two choices relative to what you do with your sins
 - 1) Send them ahead and have them judged at the cross
 - 2) Carry them with you and have them judged at the Great White Throne of God's final judgement
 - (b) Repent - in the power of the Spirit and the grace of God and the love of Christ, commit to the new life God has for you
 - (c) Trust in Christ alone -
 - (i) there is no other name under heaven by which we may be saved
 - (ii) That includes the name of our own efforts and attempts
- iii. Good shepherding requires we shepherd our own souls as well as those of others.

3. Closing: Time for prayer, confession, repentance