



Walk | Read | Pray | Join | Commit

The Jesus Manifesto | Week 5 | Isaiah 61:7 | Mark 6:30-44

Collect

A question to ask your group: If you could ask for one thing to make your week run more smoothly, what would it be? It could be a character trait (like more patience or joy), it could be practical (more time with friends).

This question is a prompt to think about the 'double portion' that is promised in Isaiah 61:7 and Jesus' capacity to notice the immediate needs of the crowds around him.

Context

Isaiah 61:7 sees the 'shame' of the Jewish nation being met with a double portion of provision and joy. Their return from exile won't fully restore the people of God; there's rebuilding work to be done, both the physical (61:4) and emotional. The shame and disgrace they felt as a result of being an exiled people – removed from their home, their identity, their God – is set to not only be undone, but they will receive a *double* portion of God's inheritance. It's not just a restoration to a former level, the Lord promises things will be better than ever before.

Discuss: Read Isaiah 61:7. What do you think of when you hear the words 'shame' and 'disgrace'? How does it feel to read the promise that God wishes to restore his people with a double inheritance?

Within Mark's account of Jesus feeding the five thousand, the disciples have just returned from a time of intense work: travelling from village to village in the northern region of Galilee and Samaria, preaching repentance, healing the sick and driving out demons.

Mark 6:30-44 starts with Jesus recognising the immediate needs of the disciples: they have attracted such a crowd of people 'coming and going' that they haven't been able to stop to eat. Jesus invites them away with him to rest in a 'quiet place', but as they attempt to leave the crowds behind by boat, the people run ahead of Jesus and the disciples to meet them at their intended destination. Jesus sees the needs of the crowd around him, both in their need for a shepherd and their need for physical nourishment and responds to this.

Discuss: Read Mark 6:30-44 and note the moments in which Jesus is stirred to show compassion to those around him. Can you think of other moments in the life of Jesus where compassion is his key response, and to who it is offered?

Content

In Isaiah 61:7, the voice of the one 'the Lord has anointed' continues to describe the 'good news' being proclaimed to the poor, those who mourn, those who are broken hearted: '...you will inherit a double portion in your land, and everlasting joy will be yours.' Jesus, the anointed one who fulfils Isaiah 61 (Luke 4:17-21), has shaped a ministry that embodies and declares this good news. It's so attractive, so captivating, that crowds follow him wherever he goes.



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Our passage in Mark begins with Jesus inviting the disciples, recently returned from a mission of teaching and healing, to ‘Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.’

Discuss: How could you take yourself out of the crowds to take up Jesus’ call to follow him to a quiet place of rest? How do you like to escape and find rest?

The crowds that follow Jesus and his disciples are described as ‘sheep without a shepherd’. Such is their desire to be around Jesus – a man who has raised the dead (Mark 5:41-43), healed the sick (Mark 5:28-34), driven out demons (Mark 5:2-16), all while announcing the good news of God’s kingdom (Mark 1:15) – that they have left their homes and villages without bringing enough food for themselves.

While the disciples see the need of the crowd, their reaction is to sympathise, asking Jesus to send the people away so that they can find their own provision. But Jesus responds with compassion – both toward the crowds and the disciples.

Jesus tells his disciples that they should give the crowd ‘something to eat’: they have recognised a need and now they should meet it. Jesus responds to the disciples’ doubt by taking what they have, giving thanks for it and meeting the needs of the people – both the crowds (in their physical hunger) and the disciples (in their need to learn that they can now operate under a ‘double portion’), witness what heavenly provision looks like

Discuss: Have you found yourself in a position where you’ve struggled to move from sympathy (acknowledging someone’s need) to compassion (love in action)?

Challenge

The feeding of the five thousand all came about because of Jesus’ compassion. He had made plans to find a quiet place for himself and the disciples to rest, but he was able to adjust and respond to the needs of others, to continue to embody the message of Isaiah 61 and bring them into a new level of provision.

Find some time in the next week, or ideally now, to enter a restful place with just you and Jesus. What inheritance does he long for you to discover? Where are the areas that you need a fresh sense of faith for his provision?

Connect

Spend time:

- **Praying with those in your group who might be seeking that fresh faith for God’s provision.**
- **Reflecting on those people you know who currently don’t know of the ‘double portion’ and ‘everlasting joy’ that God has in store for them. Ask God to bring their needs to your attention. Pray for their provision.**