

Tusculum Hills Baptist Church  
Paul Gunn, Pastor

Sermon title: Jesus Knows Our Needs Before We Know Them, Mark 6:30-43

Date preached: May 1, 2016

For public use: See non-copyright comments at the end of the message

**INTRODUCTION:** Have you ever had a really good caregiver? This week, I visited a sick man, but a very happy man. I saw how his wife anticipated all his needs, and I realized why he was so happy. She anticipated his needs before he had them.

In Mark 6, we see Jesus anticipating and meeting the needs of people.

There are four main points to my message today:

1. Jesus knew when his disciples needed rest.
2. Jesus knew when his disciples had rested enough.
3. Jesus knew what was practical, but chose a miracle.
4. Jesus raised their threshold of faith.

**First, JESUS KNEW WHEN HIS DISCIPLES NEEDED REST.**

**SCRIPTURE:** Mark 6:30-32 <sup>30</sup> *The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught.* <sup>31</sup> *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.”* <sup>32</sup> *So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place.*

**EXPLANATION:** We live in a work, work, work, world. We see those who get ahead are the ones who work hard, and to compete with them, we’ve got to work harder.

**ILLUSTRATION:** I heard about a doctor who decided his work load was so large, it negatively impacted his practice and the advice he gave patients, so he decided to work less and make less money so his quality of care would improve. That’s kind of

unusual isn't it? Then, on the other hand, I got a letter in the mail one day from my doctor, explaining he was quitting his practice because he could not make a living practicing medicine with the level of care he offered his patients. So, there is a balance here somewhere—a fine balance between rest and work, between quality and quantity.

**APPLICATION:** If Jesus decided it was time to rest after working hard, then we should consider the importance of rest.

Some of the most burned out people I've ever known are ministers. And, one of the reasons is they feel their work is never done. There's always another call to make, another person to visit, another sermon to prepare. Care-giving professions are some of the unhealthiest people because most are dedicated people who spend more time caring for others than caring for themselves.

You know, if you are overcommitted, it's OK to say no. This past week, I had seven people who wanted to meet with me about various things. I was not able to meet with all of them, and I told several of them no.

**ILLUSTRATION:** When I lived in Texas, a great and famous preacher and teacher named Leonard Ravenhill spoke to a group of pastors. He wrote a book called *Why Revival Tarries*, which sold over a million copies. Dr. Ravenhill was in his mid-80s and no longer drove a car. A friend of mine was asked to give him a ride home, which was a little over a hundred miles away. Being a young seminary student, I was familiar with Dr. Ravenhill and was excited about riding in the car with this famous man. I had several things in my mind I wanted to talk with him about.

Dr. Ravenhill was quiet almost all the way home. I road in the backseat with his wife, and we talked some about her son, who was a curator in a museum. I was disappointed Dr. Ravenhill was not the live wire conversationalist I envisioned. When we got to his home, he invited us in, and then he talked about the winter grass in his lawn.

**APPLICATION:** You know, even great men of God need a break every now and then.

If you look at the scripture carefully, you'll see Jesus wanted to spend time with his disciples in a quiet place. They'd been going about the work of the ministry, healing people, and casting out demons. And, they had heard the news about John the Baptist being beheaded. Jesus decided they'd worked hard enough, and it was time for rest. The best way to get away from everyone was to get on a boat.

**APPLICATION:** I'm sorry for the cliché sounding statement here, but here it goes: It's important to be alone with Jesus—away from all the distractions of everyday life and work, alone with your thoughts and prayers.

### **Second, JESUS KNEW WHEN HIS DISCIPLES HAD RESTED ENOUGH.**

**SCRIPTURE:** Mark 6:33-34 <sup>33</sup> *But many who saw them leaving recognized them and ran on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them.* <sup>34</sup> *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.*

**EXPLANATION:** The Sea of Galilee isn't very big. It's about 8 miles wide by 13 miles long. The boat must not have been in a hurry because the crowd walked around the lake faster than the boat sailed.

What was Jesus' first reaction? Was it *disgust* because a bunch of people interrupted his rest? No. It was *compassion*. Jesus, ever the teacher, began teaching. But, Jesus had a lesson he was about to teach the disciples—a lesson they would never forget.

**APPLICATION:** There is time where there's been enough rest and it's time to go back to work.

### **Third, JESUS KNEW WHAT WAS PRACTICAL, BUT CHOSE A MIRACLE.**

**SCRIPTURE:** Mark 6:35-37 <sup>35</sup> *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.* <sup>36</sup> *Send the people away so that they can go to the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat."*

<sup>37</sup> *But he answered, “You give them something to eat.”*

*They said to him, “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?”*

**EXPLANATION:** Earlier, in verse 8 of this same chapter, Jesus commissioned his disciples to go drive out evil spirits. He said, *“Take nothing for the journey except a staff, no bread, no bag, no money in your belts.”* So, they had no money. What were they to do?

The practical thing to do was to go buy food, but Jesus chose not to do what was practical.

#### **Fourth, JESUS RAISED THEIR THRESHOLD OF FAITH.**

They had watched Jesus as he controlled the spirit world with the casting out of demons. They watched Jesus as he controlled the weather. And, they watched him as he controlled even death. And, Jesus gave them authority to drive out demons themselves.

They did not have the faith to realize Jesus could feed them himself. Jesus was about to show them that he also had control over the material world. Here is the beautiful story of the feeding of the 5,000.

**SCRIPTURE:** Mark 6:38-44 <sup>38</sup> *“How many loaves do you have?” he asked. “Go and see.”*

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

<sup>39</sup> *Then Jesus directed them to have all the people sit down in groups on the green grass.* <sup>40</sup> *So they sat down in groups of hundreds and fifties.* <sup>41</sup> *Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to his disciples to distribute to the people. He also divided the two fish among them all.* <sup>42</sup> *They all ate and were satisfied,* <sup>43</sup> *and the disciples*

*picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces of bread and fish.* <sup>44</sup> *The number of the men who had eaten was five thousand.*

**EXPLANATION:** In this day, as I understand it, only the men were counted, so this means 5,000 plus women and children. Even if it only meant 5,000 exactly, it would still be an incredible number. In the large crowd, there were only five loaves of bread and two fish.

Jesus was preparing his disciples to carry on his work when he would be gone someday. He knew he could not dump all the revelation of faith and truth on them at one time. He had to incrementally do it. While increasing their faith, he taught the disciples several things:

- They were to rely on him for everything.
- They were to look to him for the solving of problems.
- They were to believe he would come through for them.

**ILLUSTRATION:** I've been in numerous brain storming sessions where a group tried to solve problems. I've sat in military board rooms where our country's brightest and smartest people solve problems. The brainstorming sessions go quite long. Sometimes arguments break out, sometimes people are offended, and then hopefully by the end of the sessions, courses of action are presented.

**EXPLANATION:** In this case, the disciples could think of only one course of action: Go to town and buy some food.

Think of the absurdity of that course of action—12 disciples going to a shop and ordering take-out for 5,000 men plus women and children. Think about this—*“Can I help you please?” We'll take fish and bread for over 5,000. And, please hurry, the day is almost over.*

**ILLUSTRATION:** One time, I had a youth lock-in at the Family Fun Center in Hendersonville. It was New Year's Eve, and we had a lot of teenagers. At meal time, I drove across the street and ordered 100 Krystals through the drive-thru. My

car smelled like a Krystal burger for weeks afterward. But, one hundred Krystal burgers are nothing compared to five thousand family meals.

**CONCLUSION:** In raising their threshold of faith, the disciples became the conduit of the blessing. Jesus gave the baskets of food to give to the people. You see folks, let's never forget it's all about Jesus. He just allows us to partner with him. When you pass along the blessing, never think it's something you created on your own.

Verse 42: *"They all ate and were satisfied."* Now, with twelve baskets left over, each disciple had their own "take home" basket of food. Life is good when Jesus is in control.

Today, Jesus wants to increase your threshold of faith. He wants you to see him at work in new ways.

To preachers, teachers, students, and anyone else reading or using this message: I have posted this for all to use as you see fit. There is no need to cite me as the source. You are free to delete sections, add your own, or do whatever you want. There is no copyright. My request is that you do not copyright or sell my work. I am sharing my preaching notes in good faith with you because I know the challenges of putting together a lesson, especially when your week gets consumed with other things. Use it and enjoy!

I use the NIV translation of scripture because of its conversational nature. Feel free to go to Bible Gateway and copy and paste whichever translation you want to use. This transcript has been edited to an outline format that improves readability and therefore may not exactly follow the video edition.

Find me at [www.thbc.com](http://www.thbc.com) Click on sermons or YouTube channel: Pastor Paul Gunn  
Thanks to Judy Andrews, Kori Bailey, and Nancy Claire Smith for their editing assistance.

Sincerely, Paul Gunn  
Tusculum Hills Baptist Church  
Nashville, Tennessee  
USA