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## A DAY IN THE LIFE OF JESUS | THE DAY JESUS FED THOUSANDS (26)

March 22, 2026

Mark 6:30-44

### PURPOSE

To discover and experience Jesus Christ in our midst  
To cultivate mutually encouraging relationships  
To participate in God's mission to the world

### GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER

#### Discussion Question

- What is the best meal you have ever eaten?

### WORSHIP 10 MIN

#### PLEASE OPEN IN PRAYER

#### RESPONSIVE PRAYER — Isaiah 25

On this mountain the LORD Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples,

**A banquet of aged wine - the best of meats and the finest of wines.**

On this mountain he will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples,

**The sheet that covers all nations; he will swallow up death forever.**

The Sovereign LORD will wipe away the tears from all faces;

**He will remove his people's disgrace from all the earth. The LORD has spoken.**

So we say: "Surely this is our God; we trusted in him, and he saved us.

**This is the LORD, we trusted in him; let us rejoice and be glad in his salvation."**

### SCRIPTURE READING

#### Mark 6:30-44

*<sup>30</sup>The apostles returned to Jesus and told him all that they had done and taught. <sup>31</sup>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. <sup>32</sup>And they went away in the boat to a desolate place by themselves. <sup>33</sup>Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they ran there on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. <sup>34</sup>When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. And he began to teach them many things. <sup>35</sup>And when it grew late, his disciples came to him and said, "This is a desolate place, and the hour is now late. <sup>36</sup>Send them away to go into the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat." <sup>37</sup>But he answered them, "You give them something to eat." And they said to him, "Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give it to them to eat?" <sup>38</sup>And he said to them, "How many loaves do you have? Go and see." And when they had found out, they said, "Five, and two fish." <sup>39</sup>Then he commanded them all to sit down in groups on the green grass. <sup>40</sup>So they sat down in groups, by hundreds and by fifties. <sup>41</sup>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. <sup>42</sup>And they all ate and were satisfied. <sup>43</sup>And they took up twelve baskets full of broken pieces and of the fish. <sup>44</sup>And those who ate the loaves were five thousand men.*

**BIBLE STUDY**    **Summary**  
**40 MIN**

This week we continue our Lenten series entitled A Day in the Life of Jesus during which we are exploring brief vignettes from the Gospels seeking a realistic glimpse into a typical day in Jesus' earthly ministry. The feeding of the five thousand, covered in this week's passage, is uniquely significant as the only miracle recorded in all four Gospels. That all four evangelists saw fit to preserve this account is no accident. It provides a picture of Jesus as a messiah who meets physical need with divine abundance and points beyond the sign itself to the fact that there is something far greater in store for a hungry world in need. The narrative opens with the return of the Twelve from their mission to the Galilean villages, weary and in need of rest, yet immediately confronted by persistent crowds who pursue them even into the wilderness. Mark sandwiches the account of Herod's feast (Mark 6:14-28) between the sending and returning of the Twelve, essentially juxtaposing the lavish festivities of the Herodian court with the simple circumstances through which Jesus satisfies the needs of the people. Where Herod's banquet ends in death, Jesus' provision in the wilderness results in life, revealing a kingdom of an altogether different character than that of the earthly powers.

The setting and imagery of this passage have several important connections to Moses and Israel's wilderness generation. Most obviously, the events explicitly take place in a wilderness setting. There is also the miraculous provision of bread, like the manna from heaven (Exodus 16). Yet Jesus is shown to be greater than Moses as the direct supplier of this bread rather than a simple mediator of provision (John 6:32-35; Hebrews 3:1-6). Additionally, the description of the crowd as "sheep without a shepherd" (verse 34) is a direct reference to passages such as Numbers 27 and Ezekiel 34 where the wilderness generation is portrayed as scattered and leaderless. In the Ezekiel passage, God promises the coming of a faithful shepherd, "my servant David" (Ezekiel 34:23), who will establish a covenant of peace, causing the people to "dwell securely in the wilderness" (Ezekiel 34:25). Here, that promise begins to take visible form. Jesus teaches the people, feeding them spiritually, and then provides for their physical needs, embodying the role of the true Shepherd (cf. Psalm 23:1-2; John 10:11). In this, he acts as the mediator who perfectly executes the offices of prophet, priest, and king for the salvation of his people (Westminster Larger Catechism 42).

The miracle itself unfolds with a deliberate emphasis on both insufficiency and abundance, and in so doing, it reveals the inbreaking of the kingdom of God and a foretaste of its consummation. The disciples, calculating the cost of two hundred denarii (nearly a year's wages), see only scarcity. Jesus commands them to organize the people, and, after blessing the loaves and fish, he distributes the goods so that all eat and are completely satisfied. The manner of the multiplication is not explained, nor is it Mark's point. Rather, the focus is on the revelation of divine provision. As in the days of Elijah and Elisha (1 Kings 17:7-16; 2 Kings 4:42-44), God provides for his people in unexpected ways, yet the scale here is far greater. Mark specifically makes mention of the superabundance. Not only are the five thousand men fed, but twelve baskets of leftovers remain (verses 42-44), displaying the open-handed generosity of God who "satisfies the desire of every living thing" (Psalm 145:16). The miracle shows that the kingdom of God has indeed arrived (Mark 1:15), and its firstfruits are manifesting themselves. These fruits are seen not only in the laying waste of Satan's house, in the freeing of the demonized (Mark 3:20-30; 5:1-20), in the healing of the sick, and in the dead being raised, but also here in the shepherding of Israel, as Christ feeds his people both spiritually through his teaching (verse 34) and physically through his provision (verses 37-44). The kingdom of God has come, and already the messianic banquet is being tasted.

## 1. Looking at the Bible

- Share with the group some key phrases or ideas that stood out to you from the passage.

## 2. Looking at Jesus

At Central we believe that all of Scripture points to Jesus. In other words, Jesus is the theological center of the Bible. Every passage not only points to Jesus, but the grand narrative of the Bible also finds its fulfillment in the person and work of Jesus.

- Given that the initial purpose of this journey was for the disciples to rest, what does it suggest about Jesus' character that he abandons this goal upon seeing the crowd?
- Jesus responds to the disciples by telling them to give the people something to eat (verse 37). Rather than problem-solving for them, Jesus invites them into the solution. What might this tell us about how Jesus works with and through his people?

## 3. Looking at our Hearts

- The disciples decided to focus on earthly means (denarii) rather than heavenly ones (God's power). How might you be tempted to do the same in your own life?
- In moments where it seems you've met your limitations, what would it look like to trust in God's power the way that Jesus did here?

## 4. Looking at our World

- We live in a culture that increasingly prizes self-care and personal rest, things that are not wrong. But Jesus here sets them aside when he encounters real human need. How do we discern the difference between rest that restores us for mission and withdrawal that insulates us from it?
- The gospel says that in Jesus, the true Shepherd has come to seek, teach, feed, and care for people who are lost and leaderless. How should that shape the way we engage with people around us who are spiritually adrift?

### **PRAYER** **15 MIN**

**Pray for each other:** Share any prayer requests you have.

Pray for God to give you eyes to see moments that call for compassion, even at inopportune times.