

**Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> July 2021**  
**Mark 6:30-44**  
**Rev.Scott Burton**  
**Brightons Parish Church**

Let us take a moment to pray before we think about God's word.

Come Holy Spirit, open our hearts to the word of God.

Come Holy Spirit, help us to follow Jesus.

Come Holy Spirit with power and deep conviction, for we ask it in Jesus' name. Amen

What are you watching on tv just now or maybe on a streaming service like Netflix or Now TV what things are you watching if I was with you I'd get you to actually shout out some of your top programs in the sanctuary so since we can't do that feel free to add your ideas on the live chat whether at home or in the sanctuary recently I got pointed towards our relatively new tv series about the life of Jesus it's been viewed over 214 million times and counting and has crowdsourced something like 22 million dollars with a total angle of 100 million dollars so that there can be seven series on the life of Jesus the project is called the chosen and you might be wondering why anyone would want to have a tv series about Jesus or you might be wondering about why anyone would spend so much money on it to give you some context the church of Scotland spent something like 30 million dollars on minister stipends last year but even that might raise some questions for some of us why do people do this why are billions of pounds and dollars spent every year all around the world on projects and people relating to Jesus why do some people see this person as important we might ask what is so special about this man

it's these kind of questions that are at the heart of the four accounts of Jesus life and it's at the heart of our passage today who is Jesus what is so special about him why is he important and why would that ever affect my life and yours there are two things that mark wants us to see in the story today too clues to the importance and identity of Jesus firstly mark thinks that Jesus is important because Jesus is seen as greater than who came before in the old testament our passage today is another story of power as part of our series on stories of power and parable but you know what the old testament had incredible stories of power as well the power of God intervening in this world and a good number of them were in the life of Moses one of the founding fathers of the Jewish faith we might see Moses was a revered figure in Jesus day and still is in ours for it is thought that Moses authored the first five books of the old testament which is called the Pentateuch indeed it was said of Moses in the scriptures no prophet has risen in Israel like Moses whom the lord knew face to face for no one has ever shown the mighty power or performed the awesome deeds that Moses did in the sight of all Israel

in fact it was with Moses that something very similar to our passage occurred in the book of numbers we read that God's people began to crave food as they journeyed in the wilderness and so they grumbled to Moses about the issue and he in turn goes to the lord who says that he will provide for the people but this seems too much for Moses and he replies here I am among six hundred thousand men on foot and you say I will give them meat to eat for a whole month would they have enough if flocks and herds were slaughtered for them would they have enough if all the fish in the sea were caught for them sounds a little bit like the disciples doesn't it and in Jesus day the people were in the wilderness as well nevertheless God did provide in the time of Moses providing

quail to eat on top of the manna he had already given each day mark wants us to see that Jesus echoes Moses and power and miracles through Moses came manna and quail through Jesus came bread and fish but with Moses there was limitation because the manna and quail were given daily and could not be kept to the next day yet not so with Jesus because his disciples pick up 12 basketfuls of broken bread and fish to take on their journey there's also another even bigger difference between Moses and Jesus in Moses day the lord sent the quail and the manna the lord brought it to the people Moses is barely involved but with Jesus he takes the bread he takes the fish and gives it to be distributed it is from his hands that food is given to the people in the wilderness of that day Jesus might echo Moses but Jesus is greater says more Jesus is greater in power and status because here we see God providing yet not in an unseen way here we see God and human form displaying his power

i wonder friends who is Jesus to you is he merely a man or a good teacher is he simply a figure from ancient times and someone for the kids at Christmas if that's your picture of Jesus you will think that money spent on projects and people in the name of Jesus is probably either a waste or simply crazy but mark wants us to see that in Jesus God came near God did the miraculous again and Jesus deity is met and Jesus we see God in human form that was a struggle for jews of the time to accept and still is it's also a struggle for folks of other faiths before because for God to become human is an unthinkable condescension yet it's the claim of Christianity it is what sets Christianity apart from all faiths it is what makes Jesus unique if this is who Jesus is if this is why people see him as important then friends is he enough for you or does it have to be Jesus plus something you know many people and many groups over the years and still even today even in our own community say or suggest that it must be Jesus plus something it might be in terms of salvation that for you to be saved it must be Jesus plus a particular behavior it must be Jesus plus a certain right or a certain action or a certain secret knowledge when it comes to worship or being part of our faith community or taking part in mission we often show by our actions that we believe it must be Jesus plus something I'm not going to church unless it's the style or preacher I want I'm not going to give to church unless I have the things I want in my life first I'm not going to get involved with that group of people at church unless they show me that I'm important to them I'm not going to get involved in sharing my faith if I don't feel comfortable doing that

whether you are searching for God and wouldn't call yourself a Christian yet is Jesus enough is he enough to start following or maybe you are a Christian as Jesus important enough is he enough for you to worship and serve and make known do we see the importance of Jesus and what mark shares

but maybe you need more convincing so let's see another echo and something else of the character of Jesus we read when Jesus landed and saw a great crowd he had compassion on them because they were like sheep without a shepherd so he began teaching them many things

not only are we meant to see in the feeding of the 5000 that Jesus is greater than Moses because he's God in the flesh it's also through this verse that we're to see Jesus is God as well before Moses died the lord said that Moses would not enter into the promised land and so Moses cried out to the lord may the lord the God who gives breath to all living things appoint someone over this community so that the lord's people will not be like sheep without a shepherd Moses knew that God's people all people even need a leader need a king a shepherd and if Moses can't be with them then he wants the lord to provide one over the years of israel's history many rose up to positions of leadership but most were poor substitutes including in Jesus day just before this passage we can read of herod taking the life of john the baptist while at a party and we're meant to see the contrast between our brutal converting selfish leader and that of Jesus the Jesus who was so moved by compassion that he had to do something for these people he had to be the shepherd they needed

because Jesus did this he echoes a very similar a very familiar psalm psalm 23 where we read the lord is my shepherd I lack nothing he makes me lie down in green pastures he leads me beside quiet waters he refreshes my soul he guides me along the right path for his name's sake let's note the similarities again in Jesus day he told the people to sit down in groups on the green grass verse 38. we often don't picture the scenes of the new testament as green places yet with the coming of the spring rain the grass did flourish and so Jesus the shepherd has the people rest on the green grass just as the lord the divine shepherd does in the psalm likewise the shepherd provides for his flock that is one of the principal duties of a shepherd to meet their needs and so as we've seen Jesus provides the miracle of the bread and fish to feed the people but the psalmist speaks of the lord as a shepherd who leads along the right paths who guides in righteousness who shows the way to go the way to live what did we see Jesus doing he began teaching them many things before he even provides the food he begins with teaching and so Jesus echoes the divine shepherd again and echoes Moses here as well because Moses was seen as a great teacher yet even here Jesus is greater because Jesus wasn't receiving revelation from God like Moses did rather Jesus taught as one who had authority mark chapter 1. friends Jesus is important because he is God in the flesh his is the power to do the miraculous his is the authority to teach and give revelation of the kingdom of God yet we also see that he is a humble compassionate God the divine shepherd who goes after the lost sheep who gives his life for the sheep who honors his servants friends what is your picture of God what is your picture of Jesus do you see him as grudging strict easily art slow to care in our passage it's the disciples who come across that way yet Jesus who's tired from ministry is moved with compassion in the depths of his being he is stirred with love to do something is that your picture of Jesus because your picture of Jesus will affect your attitudes to worship and church as well as how you treat others and how you reconcile Jesus's God in the midst of a broken world with Jesus as shepherd we see God does care we see he is the one we are to follow he is the one we are to submit to with Jesus a shepherd we can treat one another with humility with gentleness we can give the benefit of the day because he's God not us he's full of compassion and so we can be full of compassion friends what is your picture of Jesus and why is he important to you will you allow his word

today to maybe even reshape your picture and allow the importance of Jesus to increase in your life

in our story today Jesus is center stage but the disciples are also there and from their part in the story one final point arises the reply of Jesus to the disciples is really startling in verse he answered you give them something to eat five thousand men plus women and children which probably means there's ten to fifteen thousand people and after a brief search all they find is five loaves and two fish when in reality what they maybe need is the equivalent of 10 000 pounds how do you quickly raise that and go buy stuff for 10 or 15 000 people yet that's when Jesus steps in

and he but he does so only as the disciples share what they have and only as the disciples respond in faith if the disciples had turned around and said lord why are we putting these people into groups there's only five loaves and two fish why bother what then might have happened might the miracle have been lost it was only when the disciples both shared what they had and exercised risky faith to follow Jesus that then divine provision was made and God still calls his people even this day to this we are called to share what we have and exercise a risky faith history is full of examples where followers of Jesus have responded in this way we might look at the example of william wilberforce who together with many others sought and achieved the abolishment of slavery within the british empire they shared what they had they exercised a risky faith and something amazing happened

i shared earlier about the tv program the chosen the story of the feeding of the 5000 is key to how that project came about it's too long a story to share just now but the project got started in the midst of failure and brokenness a wilderness we might see and the director shares how the lord put upon his heart two things firstly it's not your job to feed the five thousand only to provide the loaves and fishes and then secondly he felt God saying I do impossible math brothers and sisters when you see Jesus as God in the flesh such that he is important to you and that Jesus is also the divine shepherd whose compassion is so very deep for you and for this world well then the question is how will you live in light of this will you give yourself to his way and to adventures of risky faith because it's just your job to provide the loaves and fish and it's his job to do impossible math where is God calling you to risky faith is Jesus important enough and powerful enough and compassionate enough that you are willing to risk it and follow him I pray it might be so

amen