

# The Lord is my shepherd

## Mark 6:30-56

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### Introduction

The Lord Jesus identified himself as the good shepherd both in what he said and did during his ministry. The gospel of John records the words of Jesus, "I am the good shepherd. I know my sheep and my sheep know me" (John 10:14). Mark has not recorded these words for us as John has done but what he does in chapter 6 is he shows us the same truth by showing us how Jesus cared for the sheep. What do you know about shepherding? What did shepherds do back in NT and how does it compare to what shepherds do today?

Before the people of Israel entered the Promised Land Moses asked the Lord to appoint a man over the people who would go out and come in before them, one who would lead them out and bring them in, so the Lord people would not be like a sheep without a shepherd (Numbers 27:17). The immediate answer to Moses' prayer was the appointment of Joshua. Joshua would go out and lead his people in (Numbers 27:21). Yet ultimately the answer to this prayer would be a much greater Joshua, the Lord Jesus. In this passage today we see that the Lord is our shepherd.

## The shepherd and the sheep

The Lord Jesus having commissioned the Twelve and given them authority sent them out two by two into the towns and villages of Galilee to preach the message of the kingdom and calling on people to repent (6:7-13). Please read verses 30 to 34 to hear what happened when the Twelve returned from their mission.

1. Why was Jesus concerned for the disciples?

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2. How did Jesus respond to the crowd that ran ahead and got there before them?

### Think about it

Why were the people like sheep without a shepherd?

In what way are all people like sheep without a shepherd?

What is revealed about the shepherd of the sheep?

## Feeding the sheep

A remote place might have been intended as a place for the disciples to have found some rest, but it was not a good place to get something to eat. Please read verses 35 to 43 to hear how the disciples brought this to the attention of the shepherd and how the shepherd responded.

3. What did the disciples want Jesus to do and how did Jesus initially respond to their request? Why do you think Jesus said this to the disciples?

4. What did Jesus direct the disciples to then do?

5. How were the people fed that day?

6. How well were they fed?

## Think about it

Later in the chapter Mark tells us that the disciples didn't get the point of what was going on that day. We are told that they did not understand about the loaves because their heart was hardened (6:52).

What do you think they were meant to understand from seeing Jesus feed this crowd in the wilderness?

The Lord speaking through the prophet Ezekiel spoke against the shepherds of Israel and promised that things would change for the better. Please read Ezekiel chapter 34. How does Jesus fulfil these words?

## Rescuing the sheep

That day the disciples should have gone away with a great confidence in Jesus. They ought to have recognised the shepherd whom God had sent to lead them. Yet during the night even when Jesus was there to rescue them the disciples displayed a lack of confidence that highlighted that as yet they had not really understood what the Lord was showing them about himself. Please read verses 45 to 52.

7. Where did Jesus direct his disciples to go next?

8. When Jesus saw the disciples struggling on the lake, he went out to them. How did the disciples respond to seeing Jesus walking on the lake?

### Think about it

The disciples were afraid when they saw Jesus out on the lake. Why do you think that Jesus presence out on the water brought fear rather than comfort to his disciples (52)?

Why were the disciples completely amazed?

What is hardness of heart and why do we need to be careful that our hearts are not hard?

What should we do if we are feeling anxious and fearful?

## Caring for the sheep

Landing at Gennesaret the people immediately recognised Jesus and soon people were flocking to Jesus. Please read verse 53 to 56 to see how Jesus responded to those who flocked to him.

9. Why were people flocking to see Jesus and how did Jesus respond to them?

## Conclusion

Many of us are familiar with the words of the 23<sup>rd</sup> psalm. "The Lord is my shepherd I shall not want..." Mark has shown us that Jesus is the shepherd through whom he shepherds his sheep.

### Think about it

What does it mean for you for Jesus to be your shepherd?

What difference does it make to your life?