



Scriptures and Doctrine :: When our feelings affect our Ministry

When our feelings affect our Ministry - posted by repenter, on: 2004/7/7 13:36

Good Day Brothers and Sisters.

I was reading in Mark chapter 6 this morning and I wanted to share with you what the Lord is spoke to me today.

Mark 6:30-52

Then the apostles gathered to Jesus and told Him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught. 31 And He said to them, "Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while." For there were many coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat. 32 So they departed to a deserted place in the boat by themselves. 33 But the multitudes saw them departing, and many knew Him and ran there on foot from all the cities. They arrived before them and came together to Him. 34 And Jesus, when He came out, saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them, because they were like sheep not having a shepherd. So He began to teach them many things. 35 When the day was now far spent, His disciples came to Him and said, "This is a deserted place, and already the hour is late. 36 Send them away, that they may go into the surrounding country and villages and buy themselves bread; for they have nothing to eat." 37 But He answered and said to 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 them something to eat?" 38 But He said to them, "How many loaves do you have? Go and see."

And when they found out they said, "Five, and two fish." 39 Then He commanded them to make them all sit down in groups on the green grass. 40 So they sat down in ranks, in hundreds and in fifties. 41 And when He had taken the five loaves and the two fish, He looked up to heaven, blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to His disciples to set before them; and the two fish He divided among them all. 42 So they all ate and were filled. 43 And they took up twelve baskets full of fragments and of the fish. 44 Now those who had eaten the loaves were about five thousand men.

45 Immediately He made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while He sent the multitude away. 46 And when He had sent them away, He departed to the mountain to pray. 47 Now when evening came, the boat was in the middle of the sea; and He was alone on the land. 48 Then He saw them straining at rowing, for the wind was against them. Now about the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea, and would have passed them by. 49 And when they saw Him walking on the sea, they supposed it was a ghost, and cried out; 50 for they all saw Him and were troubled. But immediately He talked with them and said to them, "Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid." 51 Then He went up into the boat to them, and the wind ceased. And they were greatly amazed in themselves beyond measure, and marveled. 52 For they had not understood about the loaves, because their heart was hardened.

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How often do we allow our feelings or our physical limitations to affect and impact our ministry for Christ in a wrong manner? Whether we're in full-time ministry in the local church, on the missions field, at work, school, or in our own homes and families we need to learn how to rely on Christ for everything we need, no matter how we feel. We have to learn to trust the Word of God instead of our own feelings. Here in this passage of Scripture we see the disciples returning from having gone out two by two to preach repentance, cast out demons, and heal many. Full time ministry is exhausting work. It taxes you spiritually, physically, mentally and emotionally. The disciples had also likely heard that John the Baptist had been murdered, and for some of them having been his disciples before they followed Jesus, this must have caused much grief. So here, the disciples have returned from their mission, excited to share what had happened, grieved, exhausted, and hungry! Jesus saw that they could use a break. So, they are on their way out to the country for some R&R. They were probably already in "vacation mode"—and then the multitudes came.

When they got to the other side of the lake, Jesus saw the people who were like sheep without a shepherd and had compassion on them. He began to teach them and evidently he taught until quite late in the day. So, how many of us have been in the disciples shoes here? Exhausted, hungry, wanting nothing more than to get away from people and rest; but Jesus has different plans.

Maybe you're like Jim who's just about to pack up from a long day at the office and a co-worker asks if he can to talk to

o you. He looks like he's really upset about something, but then again he often has problems. He probably just wants to borrow some money again, and he never does pay anyone back. You can practically smell dinner on the table, you've been at the office since 7:00 that morning, and you're supposed to be at a Bible study by 8:00. You're sure it can wait 'til tomorrow so you tell him you're sorry but you've really gotta run. He gets a desperate look in his eyes so you whip out your wallet, hand him a twenty and say, "We can talk tomorrow, buddy."

Perhaps Jen is more like your story. You've just finished flying around the house to get it cleaned up after the kids, got the groceries, and cleaning up the mess the cat made right in the middle of the living room floor, you've grabbed a cup of coffee (you didn't have time for one this morning), you're about to settle in with a good book for half an hour when the door bell rings. It's "that" lady from the church. She always has so many issues going on. She's always complaining, and someone is always sick in her family. Why did she have to come here? Why did I have to be so nice to her this Sunday—after all I was just being polite, I didn't really mean it! Maybe if I'm quiet she'll just go away...

Often when we're tired or hungry, or things aren't going the way we expected, we stop looking to Jesus and start getting a "me first" attitude. Our feelings and our own abilities and agenda suddenly jump to the foreground and we forget that the grace of God is sufficient for our every single need. We forget that we're supposed to put others before ourselves. Now, keep in mind that the disciples have just come back from preaching, healing and casting out demons. They were manifesting the power of God! But instead of continuing to rely on God's power to give them the strength to keep going they say "send the people away". Notice verses 35-36:

When the day was now far spent, His disciples came to Him and said, "This is a deserted place, and already the hour is late. Send them away, that they may go into the surrounding country and villages and buy themselves bread; for they have nothing to eat."

You hear them making their case. "Lord, we're out in the middle of nowhere, it's late, we're done here! Besides, we're tired and hungry too, and we're sure these people want to get home to get their own supper..." The disciples are already upset that their day of rest was usurped, they probably didn't hear a word of the teaching Jesus gave because they were so focused on not having their needs met, and then the crushing blow comes. Jesus says to them, "You give them something to eat." I can practically hear what some of them must have been thinking...

"What?!? Are you crazy? We already told you we're out in the middle of NOWHERE, it's LATE..and don't forget, Jesus, you sent us out without any money or food. Where do you think we're going to get the money to buy the food, much less find a place to buy it?!? How about some compassion for us? Maybe it's time to pack this whole thing up and go home, man, I don't think I can handle this anymore."

Have you ever felt like that? It's the proverbial "straw" breaking the camels back. I know I've been there. I'm at my limits already, and then just one more thing gets added to the pile and \*pow\* get outta my way 'cause I'm gonna blow and you're gonna go up with me if I do! Maybe I should just stop trying because it just isn't worth it. So what has really happened here? Obviously I've already been relying on my own strength to do the first things that I've been given to do. I'm doing it for my own glory and my own honour. Or, I had my own expectations of what should be going on, with my own agenda, and that isn't being met so instead of surrendering my will and my plans to the Lord and asking Him for the strength to see it through I get "I" problems. At this point, my will is hardened to the things of God and it's going to take a lot of humility to get back to where I'm supposed to be. When we're in that state it is impossible to enter into the blessings of Christ, and we see that here with the disciples. Jesus performs a miracle despite the attitude of his own disciples, and they miss it completely. Verse 52 says, "For they had not understood about the loaves, because their heart was hardened." When we get focused on self instead of dying to self, claim our own rights instead of realizing we have no rights, rely on our own strength instead of Christ's, we will lack the joy and peace that our hearts so desperately desire.

Remember Jim and Jen and their interruptions? They had hardened hearts when someone came to them with a need, and instead of asking the Lord what they could do to meet that need, they instead looked to themselves and their own feelings, strength, and desires, therefore missing out on the blessing God could have given them. Maybe Jim's co-worker had read the tract that Jim had left on his desk and he wanted to be saved but needed some help understanding a few things. Maybe the lady from Jen's church had listened to that message tape that Jen suggested on Sunday, and she was really convicted about how she was being an emotional burden on those around her, and she wanted to share her new-found joy and freedom with Jen. You see, Jim left the tract with his co-worker because the message on Sunday told him he should do that more often. He did it out of obligation, not out of a sincere desire to witness. And Jen had suggested that message out of sheer desire to end the conversation, not out of a sincere desire to bless that lady. Sometimes

we can even be insincere when we are supposedly ministering to others. This is really an insult to Christ--to minister in His Name without pure motives, and not only will false pretenses keep us from having joy and peace, they will keep us from true fellowship with our Saviour.

So, how do we start to live in a way that causes us to have compassion on the multitudes who are like sheep without a shepherd? Philippians 2:1-5 gives us some idea.

“Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus”

As Christians, as Disciples of Christ, we must stop living our lives based on our emotions, our felt needs, or our own agendas. Let us stand on the Word of God which gives us guidance how to respond to everything we encounter in life. Let us walk in the Spirit and be filled with the Spirit constantly that we may respond to everything life hurls at us with Christ-likeness. And let us surrender our wills and desires to Christ that we may be used to glorify Him alone.