

## **We Are Called To Care**

(Matthew 14:13-21)

Sermon August 6, 2017

We read that, one day, Jesus decided to take a day off because he was tired and quite upset with many things. He decided to go far away from the village to a quiet place, to pray and meditate in His Father's presence. But some people heard that Jesus was in their area and followed him, bringing him ill people to heal.

Jesus decided not to take that day off. He turned towards the people and healed them. Then He started to preach them the Gospel. He was busy with that large crowd until late afternoon.

It was late afternoon. Jesus was still healing and teaching people about God and His Love. These people were very poor and they did not eat all day long. For this, the disciples were concerned.

Here, we are witnessing a dialogue between the disciples and Jesus. The disciples were coming up with their suggestion. Jesus answered them with one sentence.

The disciples were coming up again with other ideas. Jesus' answer is very short again. He says only one sentence.

The disciples said to Jesus: "This is a remote place, and it's already getting late. Send the crowd away, so they can go to the village and buy themselves some food." (Matthew 14:15)

Listening to their suggestion, we should say that they are caring people.

- It is supper time.
- The evening is coming soon.
- They do care for those who are hungry.
- We have to finish our gathering and they have to go somewhere to find food.

But looking back at their ideas, I am wondering if they really cared for these hungry people or if deep in their hearts they wanted to get rid of them.

In their suggestion, there are TWO BIG mistakes:

- they just dismiss Jesus, and
- they don't care about His presence and they don't act like they would really know who Jesus is.

The disciples played the boss and they were ordering Jesus to send these people away. They were rude and arrogant with Jesus as they presented their request.

There were only 12 disciples, but everybody wanted to be the boss, each of them wanted to be smarter than the other. I can hear them saying to each other: "We know what Jesus has to do at this time, and WE will tell Him what HE HAS TO DO."

They played the leader, and they did not realize who the real leader was: JESUS. Isn't it ridiculous that the disciples wanted to lead Jesus? Humans wanted to direct God.

When people try to act and play the boss, often they cannot think clearly because their own selfish thoughts are mixing their minds up.

They said: “This is a remote place, and it’s already getting late.” Where did they want to send those poor hungry people? There were more than 10,000 including women and children. Where could 10,000 people get enough food in late afternoon? They did not have supermarkets like we do today.

Instead of saying what they said, they should have turned to Jesus, asking Him if He had another suggestion, because He is GOD. Instead of acting as they were acting, they should have said, in a humble way:

- Lord Jesus, you are the boss, the leader here;
- You were healing these people in miraculous ways;
- You preached to them the Gospel and You made them happy;
- You gave them hope, love and life.
- Now, what is next, because it is supper time and they are hungry?
- Lord, do you have any suggestion? You are God!

I have a feeling that they just wanted to get rid of the crowd.

We hear people talking like this these days, saying:

- Go away and leave me alone, people.
- You should care for yourself.
- I have my own problems, and I cannot deal with yours.

Jesus was thinking and feeling differently

### **What kind of spirit do you have?**

There was a family with 4 small children. Their mother got very ill and she was hospitalized for a long period. The father had great difficulties in managing alone their 4 minor children. His work shift started every morning at 6 a.m. Some of their friends and neighbours offered their help saying: “If you need us let us know.”

There were friends who were asking him if he would take his holidays in order to be with his children. The father said that he has no more holidays and he cannot get any days off at this time because he cannot jeopardize his job.

Then their friends said to him: If you trust us, just give us a house key. We will be there every morning to feed your children and to take them to school. After you are done with work, you can pick them up.

### **Which one really cares?**

- Let us know if we can help, or
- I am here to help you!

## **We are called to care**

I heard about another large family where the mother was hospitalized for a longer period. The husband was by himself with all their 5 young boys, who were not able to cook for themselves.

Some relatives and neighbours showed up giving them great advice:

- Now since your mom is gone, you will learn how to cook.
- Life will give you a lesson.
- If you get married, your wife will be happy with you.

Life was going on. They all ate in a different place and different time. The family was falling apart.

Once, early in the morning, as the father was ready to head to work, he almost fell over at the door because 3 large pots was placed there with lots of delicious food. Somebody brought them early in the morning. “Who brought this to us? To whom do these pots belong? To whom should we be thankful?” They didn’t know it.

In two days, the same scenario happened. At that time, there was a little card on it with a little note:

*“Until your mom is back from the hospital, please accept from us this gentle help. You don’t have to be thankful. We do this from the bottom of our heart. Just please place the empty pots outside of your door and we will get them from there. If you don’t like what we cooked, please let us know and we will cook something different for you. We hope you will enjoy it. Signature - XY”*

Now the father and his sons knew who they should say thank for the food and where they have to return the pots.

Which one really cares? Giving advice or providing food?

- *If you trust me, give me a key and I will care for your children.*
- *You are in trouble NOW and I want to help you NOW.*

Please, turn towards your partner for 90 seconds and share those memories when you were in trouble and somebody helped you with food or money.

Please take a few moments and recall those memories when you had an opportunity to help out people with food or money.

What kind of spirit do you have?

- The disciples were ready to provide advice to Jesus and to the crowd.
- Jesus was ready to help them with real food.

Our Lord will give us not only advice but also exactly what we need.

Please take a few moments and check your feelings and actions.

- Do you really want to help in every situation? Or would you say that you have your own problems and you don’t need more?

- Do you want to help only those who helped you before? Or “nobody helped me before so I am not helping anybody anymore.”
- Do you help only when people can see that you are generous? Or in those situations too when only God can see your actions?
- Do you help only if you won’t have any further responsibilities? Or in every situation, no matter what?
- Do you ask Jesus to grow in your life, to give you His Holy Spirit to grow? Or are you satisfied with yourself as you are?

*Teach me to do Your will, for You are my God; may Your good Spirit lead me on level ground.*  
(Psalm 143:10)

This is the word of the Lord.

The Lord says: “*listen, so that you may live.*” (Isaiah 55:3)