

## 2009-2010 WORLD MISSIONS SERMON OUTLINE

# SATISFYING PEOPLE IN THE WILDERNESS

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### TEXT

Mark 8:1-8

*“How can one satisfy these people with bread here in the wilderness (Mark 8:4, NKJV)?”*

### INTRODUCTION

I would like to define “*wilderness*” as the distance between *needing a miracle ... and receiving a miracle*.

When someone needs a miracle, the need seems much bigger than the possibility of a miracle. We tend to look at the problem, which is bigger than ourselves, as having a power over us that makes us feel all alone and powerless. We may pray and have everyone praying for us, but until Jesus touches the problem and changes everything, it all may seem hopeless.

In my own ministry, I am always amazed when God does a miracle. I can never become accustomed to God’s healing power of multiplying resources, deliverances from demons or dangerous circumstances, or even seeing how God can change a selfish, evil person into a giving saint. I recognize there is no formula to Christianity because God is sovereign. But there are certain kinds of people who seem to *walk between miracles*. There seem to be three keys in watching Jesus and people who always seem to have signs and wonders following them wherever they go.

In our text we see:

- Jesus was filled with compassion for the multitude (verse 2).
- Jesus asked a revolutionary question, “*How many loaves do you have (verse 5)?*”
- Jesus asked his disciples to give ALL the bread they had (verses 6-7).

I. **Compassionate people** satisfy men and women with bread in the wilderness.

A. Jesus had compassion on the multitudes.

1. The multitudes had been fasting for three days and were hungry and weak. They could collapse along the way.
2. Jesus really cares about people all the time.
3. Jesus fed the people and all were filled. Seven baskets of food were left over.

B. I received an infusion of compassion from the Lord.

I had an unusual experience as a candidate missionary itinerating to go to the mission field. I was fasting and praying in a cave when the Lord spoke to me and asked me a

very important question: “Don, what do you want me to give you? Ask for anything you desire to receive from me.”

Immediately I thought, *Wisdom didn't help Solomon that much, and money is likely to make me greedy or idolatrous*. Therefore, I told the Lord, I wanted to have a double portion of compassion for the children of the world. If we don't love and care for people, we will quickly burn out in ministry.

God has multiplied my compassion many times over the years, and I have never regretted my decision. When a person cares about the things that Jesus cares about, he or she is in the best position to ask for a miracle that is on Jesus' short list.

### C. Three great missionary couples showed compassion.

Let me illustrate with three great missionary couples who have demonstrated compassion in a huge way and have seen powerful miracles as they have changed the world because they dared to care BIG.

1. *Missionary statesmen John and Lois Bueno* walked the streets of San Salvador and had compassion on the multitudes of children. The great Latin America ChildCare program, which is impacting children all over Latin America with its Christian schools, was birthed in their hearts
2. *Missionaries Bob and Hazel Hoskins* saw the tremendous spiritual needs of ALL the children of the world and purposed to give the *Book of Hope* to every child on earth. They have touched millions of children a year for more than 20 years, systematically reaching every school age child in country after country.
3. *Missionaries Mike and Karen Hines* with their preaching and candy drops from his Helio Courier aircraft with the only civilian-owned Vietnam-era military sound system that had been used for psychological warfare in Southeast Asia. Mike preached the gospel to 286 cities, towns and villages all over El Salvador from July 1-31, 2004.

Mike would preach from his pulpit in the sky to entire nations and give amazing altar calls to people on the ground who were waving white cloths, flashing mirrors or jumping up and down in fields, on roof tops, and in inner courtyards of prisons.

## II. **Revolutionary people** can satisfy men and women with bread in the wilderness.

### A. Jesus was revolutionary in every way because He always looked beyond the obvious.

1. Since there was no food to feed the multitude, He challenged His disciples to get busy getting together the food they had. Then, when He got the food and multiplied it, He organized the crowd to sit in small groups and collected empty baskets to distribute the huge amount of food to the people.
2. Today, 2,000 years later, it still sounds ridiculous to cautious people that one person would die to save the world as Jesus did.

3. Courage is essential for revolutionary men and women because they are the kind of people who get out of the boat in the middle of the lake even if they have to almost drown to experience the impossible.
  4. Jesus is still our best example in today's "Wilderness."
- B. Revolutionary people still see Jesus do miracles in their wilderness.
1. *Salvadoran missionaries Jorge and Silvia Villalobos* were helping us with American compassion teams during the 2001 earthquake relief effort in El Salvador.

Jorge was a former gang member in Los Angeles and works courageously preaching to the gangsters in El Salvador. Many times he faced death as he preached fearlessly in El Salvador. He loved to say, "Today would be a good day to die for the cause of Christ."

One day Jorge and his wife, Silvia, stopped to ask three young men for information as to the whereabouts of our medical team working in their community. The young men told him where the team was and seemed friendly as they chatted. However, as they were starting to drive away, one of the young men pulled out a .45 caliber pistol and shot Jorge point blank in the head. Silvia had never driven, but as her husband slumped over in the seat, she crawled over his body and drove away from the scene of the crime to save her life and get Jorge some medical attention.

She had to take her husband to three hospitals before anyone would treat him because they thought he was a gangster and were afraid to get involved. However, seeing their dilemma, I took Jorge to the best hospital in San Salvador where they immediately gave him a CAT Scan to determine the position of the bullet. The doctor came to me and asked if we had a camera because he wanted to document his statement. We told him no, but we would come back the next day to interview him. He proceeded to tell us that he was NOT a Christian, but that he had never seen anything like it. The .45 caliber lead bullet in Jorge's head had been flattened and looked like it had been shot into solid steel.

Two days later, Jorge and Silvia returned to continue helping the American medical team in that community. All Jorge could say was, "I told the Lord I didn't mind getting shot for the cause of the gospel, but not in the back of the head when driving a car and not actually preaching."

2. *Mario Moran*, King's Castle national director in El Salvador, was very sick. The doctors ran every kind of test on him they could to determine the cause of the terrible infection that was attacking his body. Three different physicians all told him he needed to check into the hospital to do emergency exploratory surgery to determine the cause of this infection or he could die.

Mario had planned a three-day Power Retreat for the young warriors of El Salvador, and he asked the doctors if he could attend the meetings before they did the surgery. They told him to go at his own risk but that they did not recommend him to do something so foolish.

I will never forget watching him get out of that taxi as he pulled up to the King's Castle Training Center. He was doubled over and could hardly walk. Then, as he walked towards me, he stood straighter, then completely upright, and was immediately healed. He led worship the whole retreat and never did go back to the hospital.

3. *Rosita Recinos* and her husband, Josue, are our second year Last Harvest Master's Commission supervisors in El Salvador. When Rosita was two years old she died in her grandmother's arms early one morning. A little more than eight hours later the family had all gathered to celebrate the wake at the all-night viewing. Rosita's little body lay stiff on a table in the home of her family, who were not believers at the time. Her remains were all decorated with flowers, as is the custom during a wake. Her family and friends had assembled to comfort each other.

Vasilio Figueroa, the local Assemblies of God pastor in Tepecoyo (her village), came to visit the family and asked if he could pray for her little body to be raised from the dead. The family thought the request unusual but said that it would be okay. As he bent over her little body, he lifted it up in the air and said in a loud voice: "Lord, if she will serve you when she grows up, bring her back to life!" Rosita immediately came back to life. She and her family have served Jesus all their lives. She is a credentialed AG minister, married to an AG minister, and is a graduate of Bethel Bible School, soon to be a mom to her first child.

### III. **Generous people** who put everything at the disposal of the Harvest Master.

- A. Jesus said, Bread and fish sandwiches would be a nice lunch to feed 4,000 men. Do we have any bread and fish?
  1. They had seven loaves (verse 5).
  2. They had a few small fish (verse 7).
  3. Jesus tells us to give what we have and He will make it be enough.
  4. Mark 12:41-44 refers to the widow's mite. Jesus said her offering was greater than all the others who had given.

I like to call this "coined humanity." Our time at work is in a real sense our life, our time and our energy placed into a paycheck. When we give to missions we are actually — through our offerings — fulfilling the Great Commission by going into all the world.

B. Something special happens when we put everything on the line to serve Jesus. Let me tell you about what happened when some folks put everything on the line for the Lord and experienced some amazing miracles.

1. On one occasion, *El Salvadoran missionary José Climaco* was leading one of the King's Castle AIM teams to a remote mountain in El Salvador. He took the bus along a long dirt road until he came to a steep mountain where the road was extremely muddy. He asked the bus driver to try and climb the mountain, but it was hopeless. The bus slipped all over the road, so he had everyone get off the bus. He had them lay their hands on the bus and he prayed: "Oh God, we are more than willing to walk up this mountain with the sound system, generator, literature, toys for the kids ... but it sure would be a lot easier if You pushed this bus up this mountain."

Then José told everyone to get back on the bus to experience the miracle. To everyone's amazement the bus got traction, like it had four-wheel drive or some kind of chains on the tires.

When they arrived at the village on top of the mountain, everyone came out of the school, city hall and the local businesses in amazement asking, "How did you get that bus up here? We have never had a bus up here before. Only 4 X 4 trucks can come up this steep road, but only in the dry season."

José said, "God pushed us up the mountain!" The whole town was so touched that God would care so much that they dismissed school and closed the local government offices to hear what God had to tell them. Needless to say, that day God did amazing miracles, signs and wonders. When the team had to get back on the bus to return down the mountain, the people wept openly because God had opened the doors to their hearts.

2. *El Salvadoran missionary Lidia Zelaya* was leading a Last Harvest Master's Commission team of students to do outreach in a community as part of a local pastor's vision. He had scheduled them to go to a local public school to do a *Book of Hope* distribution, but Lidia told him to tell the team she did not have enough books for the whole school.

The pastor was so excited that the school principal was going to let them do an outreach in the school and distribute the books, he forgot to tell the principal that there would not be enough books for everyone, especially the youth. When Lidia and the team arrived on campus with five boxes of *Books of Hope* on their shoulders, he kept asking where the pickup truck was with the rest of the books because he had announced to the whole school they each would receive a book. Books are treasured possessions in that part of the world.

Lidia was particularly concerned because there was only one box of youth books, but she decided to get the team together and just pray that God would multiply the books. They gave books to all the children and youth and still had enough to go to two small schools where they had been invited. When we looked at the statistics of all the children who had received the *Book of Hope* that day, the five boxes had

miraculously turned into 10 and a half boxes of *Books of Hope* to the glory of God.

3. *When I returned from Vietnam in 1971*, I was notified that I was to be awarded a Bronze Star for one of the last missions I had been part of prior to leaving the war. I had been on a mission where my squad had been ambushed and pinned down for one of the longest firefights of the war. I had been assigned to guard the back trail that day to make sure we were not cut off from the main body of soldiers in case we needed to retreat with our wounded as we waited for the MedEvac Helicopters.

At that particular battle I had wanted to charge to the front of the line to assume my position as point man in the fight. However, I had to obey my leaders and work from my new assigned position where they needed me that day and wanted me placed since I was going back to the States the next day. The new point man, after he had insisted that I walk drag that day, was shot during the battle.

The award letter said I could either have the medal mailed to me or go to the nearest military base to have the medal awarded to me with pomp and ceremony.

Since I had not wanted to watch the back trail I didn't feel my action was worthy of receiving the award, and chose to have the Bronze Star sent to me by mail. I threw it into a drawer when I received it, sure I would never look at it again. However, as I began deputation ministry as a new missionary, I thought about how hard it would be for me to stay in the United States and support missionaries.

I began to think of the Bronze Star in the drawer and began to treasure it as a trophy for being obedient that day. Lives had been saved, and we had accomplished our mission together as a military unit. I began to understand how missionaries and supporters work together to accomplish the Great Commission.

I have never looked at being a missionary the same again and am so grateful that God has put generous men and women to fund the work of the Kingdom. We could not do much out here on the front lines without a nation of generous believers standing with us, daring to say that we can reach the world in our lifetime.

Of the 236 nations in the world, together we have ministry in 212 countries and territories as we accomplish amazing results with a powerful body of believers, not worried about who gets the credit. Some day when Jesus is rewarding everyone for the things we have done while on earth, He is going to pull out many crowns of obedience to place them on the heads of generous men and women who stayed with the stuff and prayed and financed the battles for souls around the planet.

## CONCLUSION

Let's be full of compassion like Jesus.

Let's be revolutionaries who dare to believe Jesus can do anything.

Let's be generous people who put everything we have at the disposal of the Harvest Master.

We, the modern-day disciples, are called to walk like Jesus walked on earth 2,000 years ago. We can walk forward into the future, ministering to our generation with the same power and authority as when our forefathers delivered the power of Pentecost to their generation.

As you receive this message into your heart and life, keep your eyes on Jesus as He calls you out of your comfort zone and dares you to believe that He is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow.

The world may want to water down the gospel and neutralize your faith.

But, in spite of today's Christian humanism and postmodernism, Jesus is still looking for compassionate men and women who will care daringly about the things He cares about.

Jesus is still looking for revolutionary men and women who will dare to think outside the box to do the impossible every day.

Jesus is still looking for generous men and women who will dare to put everything they have at the disposal of the Harvest Master.

Welcome to the winning team because we have Jesus on our side.

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