


# The Gospel of Mark

Part 22

## Jesus the Revolutionary

# TALKINGPOINTS WALKINGPOINTS



A publication of , the adult discipleship ministry of Triangle Community Church.

**Talk** together about the glory of God's kingdom. –Psalm 145:11  
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. –Joshua 22:5

Triangle Community Church aims to be a “transforming church”. We exist to be used by God as He transforms ordinary people into extraordinary followers of Jesus Christ. TCC believes not only that life-change is possible—but that it is to be expected. Growth is God's will for his people. But transformation does not happen by accident. It requires intentional, intelligent action. 1 Timothy 4:7 instructs you to “discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness.” Since “Talking Points, Walking Points” is intended both for individual reflection and for group discussion, questions vary in degree of vulnerability required. Generally it is best to begin group discussions with questions which involve less personal disclosure—but don't linger there. Be sure to “dive deep” too! The questions which require the greatest openness and honesty, as well as those in the section entitled “Digging Deeper in your Daily Quiet Time”, are perfect for private reflection.

## Questions for Reflection or Discussion

- What from Sunday's message interested you? ...made sense to you? ...confused you?  
...intrigued you? ...upset you? ...encouraged you? ...and **why**?
- Read Mark 6:31-44 to remind yourself of the incident which was the basis for this week's sermon.

Now read Matthew 14:1-12 to understand the immediate context for this week's sermon, and read Luke 1:36 to understand how Jesus and John the Baptist were related.

If **your** cousin had just been cruelly murdered, in what state of mind would it put you?

- Read Mark 6:31-32. Given Jesus' grief, this seems like a reasonable desire, doesn't it?  
Now read Mark 6:33. If you were in Jesus' sandals, what emotions would you likely be feeling?  
But according to v. 34, what **did** he feel?  
What kind of a revolution would have to occur in your soul for you to have a similar response?
- Read Mark 6:35-36. Seems like a pretty reasonable idea, doesn't it?  
Explain how v. 37-38 is a training process to bring about a revolution in the hearts of the twelve.  
How is v. 41 a continuation of a lesson in revolutionary others-centered servanthood?
- Tell about a way that God is revolutionizing your heart to make you compassionate like Jesus.

## Sermon Summary **Key Text: Mark 6:30-44**

Today we come to a very famous passage: Jesus feeding the 5,000. After I do my own study of a passage I usually check my conclusions against what respected commentators have to say. Surprisingly, there is really very little controversy about this particular passage. There is wide agreement on what is going on here. My real challenge was to figure out how to convey it in a clear and comprehensive way.

**1. It's about an uprising.** On the surface it looks like Jesus hosted a big picnic—you expect to see red-checked tablecloths all over the ground. But this is about something quite different: this story actually is about an uprising! This remote spot Jesus headed to across the lake was a hotbed of revolutionary resistance to Roman imperial rule. A crowd of up to 20,000 gathered in the middle of nowhere. This was a politically volatile time—Herod had just murdered the very popular John the Baptist, the Jewish leaders want to kill Jesus—a crowd favorite whom they wished to make king (John 6:14-15). This crowd that was gathered wanted a revolutionary leader.

**2. The uprising Jesus had in mind was unlike what anyone expected.** Jesus was a revolutionary—but the uprising he had in mind was not the kind they expected. Jesus compares the multitude to “sheep without a shepherd” (v. 34), and the images that often come to our minds are those of Psalm 23. But Jesus likely had in mind Numbers 27:15-17, where Moses promised that God would raise up another political and military leader like him for the people of Israel. Almost every place where it talks about “sheep without a shepherd” talks about the need for a political-military leader (Numbers. 27:17; 1 Kings 22:17; 2 Chronicles 18:16; Jeremiah 10:21; Ezekiel 34:5 & 37:24; Nahum 3:18; Zechariah 13:7)! Jesus knew what they were after—a revolutionary leader to liberate them from Roman oppression. They want another Moses.

They hoped Jesus would start handing out weapons, but he did something these political zealots never expected—he taught them (v. 34)! Jesus had his own revolutionary agenda—he gave them his Word and bread. Bread was their primary food source; it was a symbol for life. Jesus connected life-giving Word with life-sustaining bread (cf. Matthew 4:4), and challenged them to lift their eyes beyond food that perishes to that which endures to eternal life (John 6:27; 32–33; 49-51). We have hungers that physical bread cannot fill; our spiritual hunger is deeper than our physical hunger. Through his teaching, Jesus is offering liberation from the power of sin and death.

Through his miracles, Jesus is returning the world to how it was before sin and death. When God created the world, there was no hunger, poverty, disease and death. Jesus' miracles reveal that he doesn't like the present state of the world any more than we do. Jesus' miracles point back to the way the world originally was—and will be again! Knowing this gives us hope and strength to face life in this fallen world. Secular people view world problems from a naturalistic worldview in which these things are totally natural. But how does one summon moral outrage over oppression, violence or hunger when according to the worldview it's all natural and to be expected? The Christian worldview, the gospel, says that these things are not natural; they are not inevitable. And Jesus started a revolution aimed at overcoming them. This was not the sort of revolution the crowd was expecting. But rather than addressing the injustices of Roman rule, Jesus taught about the kingdom of God.

But as he taught, it became lunchtime. The disciples expected him to send the crowd away to find food, but instead Jesus said, “You feed them.” They remarked that he was asking them to do something that was financially out of their reach. And that was Jesus' whole point: “Until you understand that what I'm calling you to do is impossible, you will be absolutely unqualified to do it.”

**3. This uprising is led by unqualified and inadequate leaders.** Jesus could have just caused beautiful trays of food to appear to the delight of the crowd, but that's not what he did. He worked with his disciples, whose faith needed to be developed. His power is displayed through the faithful and obedient actions of his disciples. Jesus was teaching them that the work he is calling them to do is impossible; it requires a miracle. When we go out knowing that what God has called us to do is impossible, and that we are unqualified to do it, then and only then will Jesus do his miraculous restoration work through us! Our adequacy is from God (2 Corinthians 3:5). It is not God's intention that we be adequate in ourselves. Rather, He wants us to embrace our inadequacy! If we only accept the tasks for which our powers are adequate, we won't attempt much for God! The church will always face seemingly impossible challenges. There will always be a lack of workers and a lack of money. But these are precisely the conditions in which God calls us to minister in His name. We are inadequate—but our God is not! It is only when you know that it's going to require a miracle that Jesus will begin to work through you.

**4. This uprising is based on a revolutionary act.** All revolutions begin with some kind of revolutionary act—typically an act of violence. The same is true of the revolution Jesus initiated: he brought eternal life out of his own violent death. Jesus brought blessing by breaking (v. 41, cf. 14:22). Remember—they tried to make him the leader of their revolution (John 6:15), but Jesus is saying to all those who are trying to make him king, “You want a new Moses, someone who will feed you with bread in the wilderness? You want a new Moses who will liberate you from oppression? Well, I am not just a new Moses. I'm the ultimate Moses. I have come to initiate the ultimate exodus! The purpose of the exodus I am bringing is not to liberate you from Roman political oppression, but from sin and death itself.” Jesus blessed us by being broken. Jesus was broken as our substitute. Think back about that loaf of bread he broke at the last supper. If it stays whole, we starve. For us to benefit from the life-giving bread, it must be broken into pieces for us. Either the bread is broken, or we end up broken. That is the symbolism here. When we see and embrace this, God saves us. Sin is our problem; this is true liberation! What's wrong with the world is our sin, our “me focus.” Jesus calls us to live a God-centered, others-focused life. For others to be whole, I must die to myself. I must be broken. I must give my life away, as Christ did, in the love and service of others. If you have received Jesus as the bread of life, are you living for him as a revolutionary? Remember, our adequacy is not in ourselves—but in Christ. It is only when we realize that the lifestyle Jesus calls us to is impossible, that he will begin to do his work in and through us.

## Digging Deeper in Your Daily Quiet Time

**"Five Question Bible Study"** (see below) *is useful for studying any topic. Let's use it to explore what it will take for us to become revolutionaries...*

**Monday**—Study Luke 14:25–26. To whom is the high standard of v. 26 demanded?

**Tuesday**—Study Luke 14:27. What does a cross accomplish in the life of a person?

**Wednesday**—Study Luke 14:27–30. Should you start the "building project" of discipleship?

**Thursday**—Study Luke 14:31–32. We're to "count the cost" of discipleship. What is that cost?

**Friday**—Study Luke 14:33. The Greek word "give up" means "set aside". What does that look like?

**Saturday**—Study Luke 14:34–35. Are you a disciple of Jesus, the Revolutionist?

### Five Question Bible Study

Bible Text: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



What idea particularly strikes me from this text? [Note in which verse(s) it is found.]



What question does this text raise in my mind—and how would **this text** answer it?



What about Jesus Christ—his character and/or his redemption—relates to this text?



What action must I take as a result of this text? Be concrete and specific.



With whom will I share what I learned from this text? [and what was their response?]