

Luke 9:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And when the day began to wear away, then came the twelve, and said unto him, Send the multitude away, that they may go into the towns and country round about, and lodge, and get victuals: for we are here in a desert place.

Analysis

And when the day began to wear away (ἡ δὲ ἡμέρα ἤρξατο κλίνειν, *hē de hēmera ērxato klinein*)—literally "the day began to decline," indicating late afternoon approaching evening. **Then came the twelve, and said unto him, Send the multitude away**—The disciples' request seems reasonable: it's getting late, people need food and lodging, and this is a remote area. Their logic is purely practical.

That they may go into the towns and country round about, and lodge, and get victuals (ἵνα πορευθέντες εἰς τὰς κύκλῳ κώμας καὶ ἀγροὺς καταλύσωσιν καὶ εὔρωσιν ἐπισιτισμόν, *hina poreuthentes eis tas kyklō kōmas kai agrous katalysōsin kai heurōsin episitismōn*)—The disciples propose dispersing the crowd to nearby villages for shelter and food. **For we are here in a desert place** (ὅτι ὧδε ἐν ἐρήμῳ τόπῳ ἐσμέν, *hoti hōde en erēmō topō esmen*)—the Greek *erēmos* means uninhabited, not necessarily arid. Their assessment is accurate but incomplete—they see the problem clearly but haven't yet learned to look to Jesus for impossible solutions. This sets up the miracle: Jesus will demonstrate that His resources are unlimited.

Historical Context

The disciples' concern reflects practical realities of first-century Palestine. Villages were scattered across Galilee, and travelers needed to reach them before nightfall for safety and hospitality. Food wasn't available in uninhabited areas—no restaurants or stores existed. The crowd numbered about 5,000 men (v. 14), plus women and children, possibly 10,000-15,000 total. Feeding such a multitude seemed impossible, yet Jesus had just taught them about the kingdom of God—and the kingdom operates by different rules than earthly logic.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How do the disciples' reasonable-sounding concerns reveal a failure to grasp Jesus's power and resources?
2. In what situations do you tend to see problems clearly but fail to look to Christ for solutions beyond natural means?
3. What does this passage teach about the relationship between human logic and divine provision in addressing seemingly impossible needs?

Interlinear Text

Ἡ	δὲ	ἡμέρα	ἤρξατο	κλίνειν·	προσελθόντες	δὲ	οἱ
G3588	And	when the day	began	to wear away	came	And	G3588
G1161	G1161	G2250	G756	G2827	G4334	G1161	
δώδεκα	εἶπον	αὐτῷ	Ἀπόλυσον	τὸν	ὄχλον	ἵνα	
the twelve	and said	unto him	Send	G3588	the multitude	that	
G1427	G2036	G846	G630		G3793	G2443	
ἀπελθόντες	εἰς	τὰς	κύκλῳ	κώμας	καὶ	τοῦς	ἀγροῦς
they may go	into	G3588	round about	the towns	and	G3588	country
G565	G1519		G2945	G2968	G2532		G68
καταλύσωσιν	καὶ	εὕρωσιν	ἐπισιτισμόν	ὅτι	ᾧδε	ἐν	
and lodge	and	get	victuals	for	here	in	
G2647	G2532	G2147	G1979	G3754	G5602	G1722	
ἐρήμῳ	τόπῳ	ἐσμέν					
a desert	place	we are					
G2048	G5117	G2070					

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 15:23 (Parallel theme): But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us.

Hosea 13:5 (Parallel theme): I did know thee in the wilderness, in the land of great drought.