

Matthew 15:32

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then Jesus called his disciples unto him, and said, I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat: and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way.

Analysis

Then Jesus called his disciples unto him, and said, I have compassion on the multitude (Ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς προσκαλεσάμενος τοὺς μαθητὰς αὐτοῦ εἶπεν, Σπλαγχνίζομαι ἐπὶ τὸν ὄχλον)—The verb σπλαγχνίζομαι (splachnizomai, 'to be moved with compassion') comes from σπλάγχνα (viscera, inward parts), indicating deep emotional response. Jesus felt compassion in His innermost being—not mere pity but gut-level mercy. This divine compassion preceded His provision, showing God's gifts flow from His character.

Because they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat (ὅτι ἤδη ἡμέραι τρεῖς προσμένουσίν μοι καὶ οὐκ ἔχουσιν τί φάγωσιν)—They had remained (προσμένω, prosmenō, 'to remain with, to continue with') three days. Their hunger proved their hunger for Jesus surpassed physical appetite. **I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way**—Jesus's concern for their physical welfare shows His incarnate care. He ministers to whole persons, not merely souls.

Historical Context

This is the feeding of the 4,000 (distinct from the 5,000 in 14:13-21). The three-day timeframe shows extended teaching/healing, suggesting people brought provisions

initially but exhausted them. The predominantly Gentile crowd's persistence contrasts with Jewish rejection, illustrating that God's salvation extends beyond ethnic Israel. The desert location emphasizes dependence on God's provision.

Related Passages

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. What does Jesus's compassion for physical needs teach about incarnational ministry versus solely 'spiritual' ministry?
2. Have you ever been so hungry for Jesus's teaching that you neglected physical needs?

Interlinear Text

Ὁ	δὲ	Ἰησοῦς	προσκαλεσάμενος	τοὺς	μαθητὰς	αὐτοὺς	
G3588	Then	Jesus	called	G3588	disciples	them	
	G1161	G2424	G4341		G3101	G846	
εἶπεν	Σπλαγχνίζομαι	ἐπὶ	τὸν	ὄχλον	ὅτι	ἤδη	
unto him and said	I have compassion	on	G3588	the multitude	because	now	
G2036	G4697	G1909		G3793	G3754	G2235	
ἡμέρας	τρεῖς	προσμένουσίν	μοι	καὶ	οὐ	ἔχουσιν	τί
days	three	they continue	with me	and	not	have	G5101
G2250	G5140	G4357	G3427	G2532	G3756	G2192	
φάγωσιν·	καὶ	ἀπολῦσαι	αὐτοὺς	νήστεις	οὐ	θέλω	
to eat	and	away	them	fasting	not	I will	
G5315	G2532	G630	G846	G3523	G3756	G2309	
μήποτε	ἐκλυθῶσιν	ἐν	τῇ	ὁδῷ			
lest	they faint	in	G3588	the way			
G3379	G1590	G1722		G3598			

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 9:36 (Parallel theme): But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.

Acts 27:33 (Parallel theme): And while the day was coming on, Paul besought them all to take meat, saying, This day is the fourteenth day that ye have tarried and continued fasting, having taken nothing.