

## CHRIST'S MINISTRY AT GENNESARET

Mark 6:53-56

As the morning dawned the disciples moored their boat at the plain of Gennesaret. No sooner had Christ landed on the other side of the lake than the news of His arrival spread through the whole of that region and He was once again surrounded by crowds. However slow to understand our Lord the disciples may have been, the multitudes were ready to believe Him. Their faith was less intelligent but it was no less real.

Refreshed by prayer on the mountain, Christ returned to work in the plain. What is made emphatic in this passage is not the peoples' faith so much as their need. There was scarcely a person in the crowds who had not come to get something out of Christ. They came to get. They came with their insistent demands. They came to use Him. What a difference it would have made if, among these crowds, there had been some few who had come to give and not to get. In a way it is natural that we should come to Christ to get things from Him, for there are so many things that He alone can give, but it is always a shameful thing to take everything and to give nothing, and yet it is very characteristic of human nature.

There are those who simply make use of their homes. It is especially so with young people. They regard their homes as being there to cater for their comfort and their convenience. It is there that they eat and sleep and get things done for them, but surely a home is a place to which we ought to contribute, and from which we ought not to be taking all the time.

There are those who simply make use of their friends. There are some people from whom we never receive a letter unless they want something from us. There are those who regard other people as existing to help them when they need their help, and to be forgotten when they cannot be made of use.

There are those who simply make use of the church. They are seldom to be seen there unless they wish some service from the church. It is their unconscious attitude that the church exists to serve them, but that they have no duty whatever towards the church.

There are those who seek simply to make use of God. They never remember God unless they need Him. Their only prayers are requests and even demands made of God. Some people regard God as a kind of universal bell-hop, only to be summoned when something is needed.

It would rejoice the heart of Christ far more if we would come to Him often to offer our love, our service, our devotion, and less often to demand from Him the help we need.

In Gennesaret Christ gave unstintingly of His healing power to the multitudes of sick and afflicted ones. Glorious as that was, there is something pathetic in this age-long eagerness to get rid of handicaps and to live. The quest is often misdirected, but it is ever pursued. As then, so now, many are eager for the temporal and material benefits which Christ gives, who do not want Him or His teachings. Our present-day institutions for the care of the sick and the poor are products of Christianity, yet multitudes who are willing enough to secure the benefits of these turn their backs upon the supreme blessing. It is better to have a healthy soul in a sick body than to have a sick soul in a healthy body. But this is not the prevailing view: the multitude prefers leaves to life, fishes to faith, and health to holiness. Do you?