

Jesus Feeds the Hungry

John 6:1-14

After these things Jesus went over the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias. 2 Then a great multitude followed Him, because they saw His signs which He performed on those who were diseased. 3 And Jesus went up on the mountain, and there He sat with His disciples.

4 Now the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was near. 5 Then Jesus lifted up His eyes, and seeing a great multitude coming toward Him, He said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?" 6 But this He said to test him, for He Himself knew what He would do.

7 Philip answered Him, "Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may have a little."

8 One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to Him, 9 "There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish, but what are they among so many?"

10 Then Jesus said, "Make the people sit down." Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. 11 And Jesus took the loaves, and when He had given thanks He distributed them to the disciples, and the disciples to those sitting down; and likewise of the fish, as much as they wanted. 12 So when they were filled, He said to His disciples, "Gather up the fragments that remain, so that nothing is lost." 13 Therefore they gathered them up, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves which were left over by those who had eaten. 14 Then those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said, "This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world." NKJV

This chapter comes some time after chapter 5. From 6 months to a year later. There is so little of Jesus life recorded. But because of the persecution of the Jews in Judea He goes to Galilee. There He has been many people healed and this healing has drawn such crowds that the disciple do not have time to even eat. So Jesus tells them that they are going on a little vacation. They get into the boat and cross the Sea of Galilee to loose the multitudes. But that doesn't work. The multitudes come again, and Jesus teaches them and heals those with diseases. But as evening draws near, the multitude of 5000 men plus women and children are hungry and Jesus uses this as a teachable moment for His disciples.

I. The Need

- A. The people are hungry.
- B. There are thousands of people
- C. 2/3rds of a years wages is not enough to even give everyone just a little.

II. Jesus' Compassion.

- A. He was conscious of their needs.
- B. He saw them as lost sheep who had not shepherd to watch over them.

III. The disciples lack of faith.

- A. The have seen the mighty miracles of Jesus for many months but now they see this circumstance as normal men would.
 - 1. They were just being sensible.
 - 2. They were trying to be realistic.
 - 3. And all that would be fine if they were on their own, without God.
 - B. The disciples were looking at the problem rather than on Jesus.
 - 1. 200 days wages is not sufficient.
 - 2. We have a boy's lunch but what is that among so many.
 - 3. He did not scorn the loaves because they were few in number, nor the fish either because they were "small." How this tells us that God is pleased to use small and weak things! He used the tear of a babe to move the heart of Pharaoh's daughter. He used the shepherd-rod of Moses to work mighty miracles in Egypt. He used David's sling and stone to overthrow the Philistine giant. He used a "little maid" to bring the "mighty" Naaman to Elisha. He used a widow with a handful of meal to sustain His prophet. He used a "little child" to teach His disciples a much needed lesson in humility. So here, He used the five loaves and two small fishes to feed this great multitude. And, dear reader, perhaps He is ready to use you — weak, insignificant, and ignorant though you be — and make you "mighty through God, to the pulling down of strongholds" (2 Corinthians 10:4). But mark it carefully, it was only as these loaves and fishes were placed in the hands of Christ that they were made efficient and sufficient! A.W. Pink
 - C. But Jesus knew what He would do?
 - 1. We get a look behind the scenes.
 - 2. Often in Scripture it appears that God is looking for an answer but the question if for the benefit of those around Him.
 - D. How thankful we should be that God's blessings are dispensed according to the riches of His grace, and not according to the poverty of our faith. What would have happened to that multitude if Christ had acted according to the faith of His disciples? Why, the multitude would have gone away unfed! Ah! dear reader, God's blessings do come, despite all our undeserving. Christ never fails, though there is nothing but failure in us. His arm is never withdrawn for a moment, nor is His love chilled by our skepticism and ingratitude. A.W. Pink
- IV. God is a God of order.
- A. Make them sit down.
 - B. In olden times it was the teacher that sat while the crowds stood as they taught.

- C. This will not be a free-for-all but an orderly distribution of the food.
- V. The Miracle.
- A. A sign in John's gospel.
 - B. A miracle of nature, like the turning of water to wine.
 - C. The disciples distribute although they are only instruments
 - 1. But, remember, that we cannot give out to others, except we have first received ourselves. It is only the full vessel that overflows! A.W. Pink
 - D. Everyone was filled.
 - 1. "Precious, precious words! The supply stopped only with the demand. So, when Abraham went up to intercede with God on behalf of the righteous in Sodom, the Lord never ceased granting till Abraham had ceased asking. Thus also in the case of Elisha's oil; so long as there were empty vessels to be found in the land, it ceased not its abundant supply (2 Kings 4:6). Likewise also here, so long as there was a single one to supply, that supply came forth from the treasuries of the Lord Jesus. The stream flowed on in rich abundance till all were filled. This is grace. This is what Jesus does to all His people. He comes to the poor bankrupt believer, and, placing in His hand a draft on the resources of heaven, says to him, 'Write on it what thou wilt.' A.W. Pink
- VI. The purpose.
- A. That Jesus may give the lesson on the Bread of Life, which He Himself is.
- God knows our needs and has provided for us.
- God wants to feed us spiritually as well as physically.
- Later this multitude will forsake Jesus, for they wanted the loaves but not a Savior.