

**Jesus, as the Lord who provides, blesses our meager provisions to meet the needs of others.**

**1) Jesus welcomes the people who interrupt His private retreat with the Apostles (9:10-11).**

- a) The Apostles report on their mission (10a).
- b) Jesus “withdrew apart” with them (10b) (Bethsaida; cf. v. 12 “a desolate place”—perhaps should understand the environs of the city)—for rest (Mark 6:31); mourning the death of John the Baptist (Matt. 14:13; cf. Luke 9:7-9); private instruction about the Apostles’ kingdom mission
- c) “the crowds . . . followed him” (v. 11a)—no rest for the One who gives rest to others
- d) “He welcomed them” (v. 11b)—Luke uses the language of hospitality; this “desolate place” (v. 12) is Jesus’ home (9:58), so He “welcomes” the people
  - i) “spoke to them of the Kingdom of God” (v. 11c)—host and teacher
  - ii) “cured those who needed healing”(v. 11d)—personal ministry, not just speaking into a faceless mass

**2) Jesus instructs the twelve to minister to the multitude (9:12-13).**

- a) “the day began to wear away” (v. 12a)—ESV translation conveys the Greek’s language that personifies the day as tired and ready to lie down; the “day” reflects the weariness setting into Jesus, who has been hosting this multitude, and that of the disciples and the crowds who sought Him
- b) “the twelve” recommend sending the crowd away to secure their own provisions (v. 12b)
- c) Jesus counters, “You give them something to eat” (v. 13a)—the Twelve are with Jesus, thus they have a responsibility to show hospitality to this crowd in their “home”
- d) The disciples respectfully protest due to their (Jesus and the disciples) insufficient provisions—“no more than five loaves and two fish” (v. 13b).
- e) “Unless we are to go and buy food for all these people” is not a suggested alternative, but an emphatic statement of the impracticality of Jesus’ demand.
  - i) The disciples assume the intermediary role of Moses in Exodus 16/Numbers 11 who appeals to God for the people and answers the people on behalf of God.
  - ii) *Moses said to the LORD, “Why have You dealt ill with Your servant? And why have I not found favor in Your sight, that You lay the burden of all this people on me? Did I conceive all this people? Did I give them birth, that You should say to me, ‘Carry them in your bosom, as a nurse carries a suckling child,’ to the land that You swore to give their fathers? Where am I to get meat to give to all this people? For they weep before me and say, ‘Give us meat, that we may eat.’ I am not able to carry all this people alone; the burden is too heavy for me. If You will treat me like this, kill me at once, if I find favor in Your sight, that I may not see my wretchedness.”* (Num. 11:11-15)

**3) Jesus, out of His abundance, meets the needs of the multitude through the meager provisions of the disciples (9:14-17).**

- a) “there were five thousand men” (v. 14a)—implying more with women and children (cf. Matt. 14:21)
- b) “make them recline in groups of about fifty” (vv. 14-15)—reclining approximates picture of table fellowship; tables were low, so that people laid on their side to eat with one hand from the table; there are no literal tables, but the people are reclining in groups for mealtime fellowship
- c) “Taking the five loaves and the two fish” (v. 16a)—the provisions of the disciples
- d) “He looked up to heaven” (v. 16b)—the gesture marks this as a Divine work; all natural “explanations” sound ridiculous and miss the main point of the narrative, namely, that Jesus is the Lord who Provides

- e) “He blessed them” (v. 16c)—the word “blessed” would usually have God as its object in such a context, but here the loaves are the object of blessing; Christ’s Word performs the miracle upon the loaves
- f) “then He broke the loaves”—the sequence of verbs “having taken,” “he gave thanks,” “he broke,” “He gave” parallels the Last Supper (Luke 22:19), foreshadowing the Lord’s Supper (cf. also Luke 24:30, Emmaus meal where disciples eyes are opened);
- g) “He gave [kept on giving] them to the disciples to set before the crowd”—Jesus bestows His blessing through the disciples (instruments of grace)
- h) “And they all ate and were satisfied.” (v. 17a)
- i) “twelve baskets of broken pieces” (v. 17b)—perhaps a double reference to the Apostles and to all of the people of God
- j) Psalm 78:19 “They spoke against God, saying, ‘Can God spread a table in the wilderness?’”
- k) The Messianic Banquet in the Wilderness
- l) Jesus is the Lord who supplies or needs out of His abundance.
- m) Jesus is able to take your meager supplies and bless them to minister to others.
  - i) Your words of counsel, correction and encouragement
  - ii) Your prayers of intercession
  - iii) Your deeds of love—even giving a cup of cold water in His name
  - iv) Your proclamation and demonstration of the Kingdom