

# They Did Eat And Were Filled

When the Lord Jesus Christ began His ministry He chose twelve men whom He immediately began preparing for the apostolic ministry. It would be the job of these men, following Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension, to preach atonement by Christ's blood and carry His gospel into all the world. It would be their lives' work. Several had been fishermen, now they would be fishers of men.

## **A lesson at meal time**

The Lord taught His disciples by example, parable and miracle. No opportunity was missed to explain to these men the nature and purpose of Christ's work and their duty, in turn, to minister the gospel of their Master to the hearts and souls of men and women. When the Lord looked out upon the great crowd who had gathered for healing and to hear Him preach, but who were hungry and without food, He saw yet another occasion to enlarge the disciples' education. Mark tells us, 'Jesus called his disciples unto him, and saith unto them, I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat'. Here we see the Saviour's care for the wellbeing of the people, and His diligent instruction of the disciples. As usual, we look beyond the physical and temporal act to discover the spiritual and eternal meaning.

## **The power of repetition**

It was not the first time the Lord had fed a large number of people, and used very meagre rations to do it. By repeating this miracle the Lord showed His disciples how frequently preaching the gospel would be needed to feed and nourish His church spiritually. The regular preaching of 'Christ crucified' is as necessary to our souls as is daily bread to our bodies. The gospel sustains the strength of God's people on their pilgrim journey in this world. It enables them to successfully gain their heavenly home despite the wilderness challenges of this earthly life.

## **'Feed my sheep'**

The compassion of the Saviour will not permit His people to go hungry. He instructs His disciples, 'Feed my sheep'. He Himself supplies spiritual food for their souls, broken and blessed, to be distributed as the bread of life to dying sinners. The miracle of the feeding of the four thousand with seven loaves and a few fish, like the feeding of the five thousand with fives loaves and two fish, taught the disciples it was their responsibility to feed the flock of God, and every gospel minister to do the same.

This is a blessed comfort for the Lord's people. We have discovered that the dainties offered by the world do not satisfy our hunger for righteousness and truth. We yearn for food more substantial, and enlivening; spiritual food such as only the gospel supplies.

## **The privilege of gospel preaching**

As the disciples received from the Lord and distributed to the multitude so gospel ministers still receive life giving bread from the Lord and continue to serve His church today. When the Lord calls us to 'sit down on the ground' where we may hear His word, and to wait upon the message of salvation, we 'eat and are filled' with good things from His hand, delivered by the hand of His servants.

## **A table prepared**

The Lord supplies our needs. He always has and always will. He restores our souls, He prepares a table before us in the presence of our enemies, and He feeds our souls with holy food from off the altar of the Lord. Christ is our strength, our nourishment, our sustenance and our life. May our souls feed upon the living bread and be restored lest we faint by the way.