

GOSPEL OF JOHN
JESUS FEEDING THE 5000+
JOHN 6:1-15

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Introduction

What we find in our text today is one of the most familiar and beloved miracles of Jesus. It is often referred to as “**The Feeding of the 5000**”, but we should put a “**plus**” at the end of the 5000 because the end of Matthew’s account of this occasion says “*they that had eaten were about five thousand men, beside women and children.*”

READ THE TEXT...

I. CONSIDER THE LANDSCAPE! (i.e. or THE SCENE!)

This is the only miracle of Jesus, other than His own personal resurrection, that is **mentioned in each of the Gospel accounts.**

According to *Matthew, Mark, and Luke’s account*, we find that this occurred just after Herod had beheaded John the Baptist to save face and to appease his adulterating live-in mistress, Herodias. (Who was Herod’s half-brother, Philip’s wife.)

Matthews Gospel points out that when Jesus was told of John’s death and burial, “*He departed by ship into a desert place apart.*” Jesus was seeking to get His disciples and Himself away to a quiet place where they could be in solitude following John’s death.

In fact, in *Mark 6:31-32*, Jesus said to his disciples, “*Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat. And they departed into a desert place by ship privately.*”

But word got around where Jesus had gone and according to *Matthew 14:13*, folks “*followed him on foot out of the cities.*” Verse 2 of our text here says, “*And a great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased.*”

Mark’s Gospel indicates that there were some of the multitude that “*outwent them*” (i.e. They passed by them as they were in the ship) and “*came together unto him.*”

Many folks dropped what they were doing and ran along side of the ship that Jesus was on without knowing where he was going!

What was the result? *Matthew 14:14* says that “*Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and he healed their sick.*” *Mark 6:34* also says that Jesus “*began to teach them many things.*” *Luke 9:11* says that He “*spake unto them of the kingdom of God.*”

When you are busy serving folks and teaching folks, it doesn’t take long for time to get away. Before long, the evening was at hand.

Matthew records in *Matthew 14:15*, *And when it was evening, his disciples came to him, saying, This is a desert place, and the time is now past; send the multitude away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves victuals.*

Mark puts it this way in *Mark 6:35-36*, “*And when the day was now far spent, his disciples came unto him, and said, This is a desert place, and now the time is far passed: 36 Send them away, that they may go into the country round about, and into the villages, and buy themselves bread: for they have nothing to eat.*”

Luke 9:12 says, *And when the day began to wear away, then came the twelve, and said unto him, Send the multitude away, that they may go into the towns and country round about, and lodge, and get victuals: for we are here in a desert place.*

So this is the *LANDSCAPE*, (the Scene or Setting), if you will for this miracle!

II. CONSIDER THE LACK!

A. The Lack Of The Multitude!

Mark 6:36 – “*...for they have nothing to eat.*”

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This great multitude of folks, which numbered 5000 men plus women and children could have been upwards of 10 to 20 thousand or more—**Yet there is only one lad among them who came prepared! (e.g. I get that!)**

As I said before, the various accounts of this event gives the picture of people hearing that Jesus was in the ship and going somewhere...they dropped everything they were doing and ran alongside the ship headed out to see Jesus when He landed!

(i.e. They were lacking because they made no preparation to meet with Jesus!)

As a side note, let me ask: Did you make preparation to meet with Jesus today? He is here today!
Matthew 18:20 For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

If Jesus were going to be physically present with us would your preparation for Church today have been any different?

Just something to think about.

The Lack Of The Multitude...

B. The Lack Of The Mountainside!

There is no mention of any fruit trees or any other kind of food in the area. There was no Circle K, Dollar General or any other kind of market like we have today! In fact I read before that it is called, *“a desert place”* in *Matthew, Mark* and *Luke’s* accounts.

(desert = wilderness; desert; desolate)

It was away from the towns...away from the markets...away from the vendors! (And it wasn’t like just a short distance back to civilization!)

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Multitude...Mountainside...

C. The Lack Of The Master’s Men! (i.e. Disciples) (Vs 5-6)

When Jesus said to His Disciples in *Mark 6:31* – *“Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while,”* we are not given any indication that they took time to make any preparations, they just obeyed Jesus and went!

The most important thing about Jesus’ instructions is just to obey Him! Anything else we might do pales in comparison!

Mark 6:37 He answered and said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they say unto him, Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread, and give them to eat?

The disciples may have thought that they lacked, but they had all they needed in Jesus! In fact Jesus shows Himself to be THE PRIMARY FACTOR in the provisions that day!

THE LANDSCAPE...THE LACK...

III. CONSIDER THE LAD! (Vs 8-9)

Mark 6:38 He saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? go and see. And when they knew, they say, Five, and two fishes.

So Jesus sent His disciples among the multitude to assess the situation and come back let Him know what resources were available.

A. Now Understand That Jesus Already Knew What The Lad Had! (Vs. 6)

B. Understand Also That Jesus Already Planned To Use What The Lad Had!

C. The Disciples Assessment Was That What The Lad Had Was Sad! (Vs 9)

Matthew 14:17 And they say unto him, We have here but five loaves, and two fishes.

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Luke 9:13 – “And they said, We have no more but five loaves and two fishes;”

Compared to what the need was, if that is all they had it would have been sad! But listen, they also had Jesus!
Jesus allowed this lad to be used, even though Jesus didn't absolutely need him to do what he did!

Could Jesus not have just created some bread for the multitude! Yes, He most certainly could have! But **Jesus CHOSE to use this lad and what the lad had, just as he uses each of us who willingly surrender what we have to him!**

I'm often amazed that Jesus would use someone like me!
But Jesus can only use us for His glory if we are available!

- D. What The Lad Had He Surrendered To Jesus!**
(Jesus did not force this upon the lad, but rather the lad willingly gave all he had to be used by the Master!)

IV. CONSIDER THE LOAVES AND FISHES!

Andrew describes that the lad had as “...*five barley loaves and two small fishes: but what are they among so many.*” (Vs 9)

Understand that loaves of bread take three forms in the Holy Land. First, there are the flat loaves which are thin like paper. (i.e. Somewhat like our pancakes only bigger around and much thinner).

Second, there the larger loaves, nearly as heavy as our loaves of bread, but round instead of rectangular. (The ten loaves that Jesse sent by David to the camp of Israel in *1 Samuel 17:17* were probably of this form.)

Third, there are the small loaves which somewhat resemble the light bread biscuits of our country.

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This would most probably be the kind this lad had to give Jesus!

Understand that barley was the grain of the common people. Barley was also the first grain to be harvested in the Spring, and the feast of unleavened bread celebrates the first fruits of the barley harvest.

Jesus performed this miracle as Passover was approaching, and as we will see shortly in *John 6*, He will go on to explain that He Himself is the bread of life.

Five is both the number of grace and the number of God's goodness!

The two small fish would likely to have been smoked or pickled.
Two is the number of union.

Five and two make seven which is the number of perfection or completeness!

“But what are they among so many!” Well, not much unless you have Jesus in the mix, which they did!

V. CONSIDER THE LORD!

A. We See The Lord Loving!

1. He Loved His Disciples!

This was originally an excursion to get their minds off of John the Baptist's beheading and burial!

Sometimes the best way to get our minds off of ourselves and the circumstances of this world is to stay busy with Jesus!

2. He Loved The Multitude!

Mark 6:34 says that Jesus “*was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd...*”

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Luke 9:11 says that Jesus “received them”!

Matthew 14:14 says that Jesus “healed their sick”!

Jesus showed His love for this multitude by meeting a present and pressing need in their lives that day!

All of these accounts show that Jesus more than satisfied their hunger that day! (Vs 12)

And listen, in the days to come, Jesus would show His love for each and every person in that multitude and each person here today as He died for the sin of the whole world!

Romans 5:8 **But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.**

1 John 4:9 **In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.**

He Loved His Disciple...He Loved The Multitude...

3. He Loved The Lad!

Part of Christ’s love for us is shown as He allows us to have a part in His great work!

Can you imagine what this lad thought about Jesus using the little that He had for such a great thing?!

But listen, the little that the lad had ultimately came from the Lord in the first place!

Everything that we have this morning we have because the Lord has allowed us to have it!

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1 Corinthians 4:7 **For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?**

We See The Lord Loving...

B. We See The Lord Leading!

1. The Lord Led His Disciples To This Place!

For the Lord’s particular purposes in their lives!
The Lord revealed Himself to them in a greater way than He ever had before!

They had one idea about why they were there, but the Lord changed their plans!

The Lord used them to help with this multitude!
They each had a part just in the simple tasks they were given:

Taking inventory of resources available...
Getting the multitude organized for Jesus’ ministry...
They both served Jesus and this multitude by orderly handing out the food and collecting the leftovers!

Some of this may have seemed mundane, but it was necessary! The Lord was leading them every step along the way!

2. The Lord Led The Multitude To This Place!

For the Lord’s particular purposes! To draw them unto Himself and to reveal Himself to them as He was!
(Vs 14)

Why are you here today? Or better yet, Why has the Lord led you to this place today? He did lead you here whether you realize it or not!

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Now, understand that many in the multitude had their own ideas about what to do with what they had just experienced, but that wasn't what Jesus was leading them to! (*Vs 15*)

But notice, Jesus rejected that which was contrary to His Father's will!

3. The Lord Led The Lad To This Place!

For the Lord's particular purposes!

When he left home with the lunch that he had, there was no way for him to know what was in store for him that day!

He thought he was just going to eat that lunch! But the Lord had bigger and better plans than that for him!

What is the Lord wanting to lead you to with what he has blessed you with—ever how little it may be?

We See The Lord Loving...Leading...

C. We See The Lord Laboring!

1. He Was Laboring To Work The Work That His Heavenly Father Sent Him To Do!

John 5:17 But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.

2. He Was Laboring To Take Care Of The Needs Of People Who Came To Him!

a. His Disciples.

b. The Multitude.

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VI. CONSIDER THE LEFTOVERS! (*Vs 12-13*)

With Jesus, this situation moved from **LACK** to **LEFTOVERS!**

**A. The Leftovers Were Their To Attest To His Sufficiency!
The Lord is more than sufficient to meet our needs!**

Ephesians 3:20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,

2 Corinthians 3:5 Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God;

The Leftovers Were Their To Attest To His Sufficiency...

B. The Leftovers Were Their To Attest To His Person! (*Vs 14*)

He was and is the Promised Messiah, the anointed one of God!

There were 12 baskets of fragments taken up and twelve is the number that symbolizes God's perfect, divine accomplishment actively manifested!

It is also the number of God's people.

Twelve tribes of Israel...

Twelve disciples...

Twelve apostles...

Conclusion

So...place yourself in the sandals of the crowd that day...or in the sandals of the Disciples... or even in the sandals of this lad!

All of this brought amazement to all involved and it is recorded here by the Apostle John for this purpose:

John 20:31 But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

Do you have that life...that eternal life...that abundant life...that changed life...that comes through the name of Jesus?