

## John 6:1–13

- <sup>1</sup> After these things Jesus went over the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias.
- <sup>2</sup> Then a great multitude followed Him, because they saw His signs which He performed on those who were diseased.
- <sup>3</sup> And Jesus went up on the mountain, and there He sat with His disciples.
- <sup>4</sup> Now the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was near.
- <sup>5</sup> 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?”
- <sup>6</sup> But this He said to test him, for He Himself knew what He would do.
- <sup>7</sup> Philip answered Him, “Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may have a little.”
- <sup>8</sup> One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, said to Him,
- <sup>9</sup> “There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish, but what are they among so many?”
- <sup>10</sup> 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.
- <sup>11</sup> 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.
- <sup>12</sup> So when they were filled, He said to His disciples, “Gather up the fragments that remain, so that nothing is lost.”
- <sup>13</sup> 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.

### ***“Feeding the Five Thousand”*** **John 6:1-13**

#### INTRO:

Often, as we look over the sea of human need surrounding us and then look at the meager resources we possess, we wonder how we can possibly make any impact at all on this need. I remember listening to many missionary presentations describing vividly the spiritual needs of the people where the missionary ministered. My heart pulled toward that ministry. John wrote his Gospel to introduce us to the One who is able to meet every need. Most of all, He is concerned with meeting our greatest need, the need to know our Creator.

**John 6** emphasizes the Lord Jesus is the Bread of Life Who satisfies the hunger of the longing soul. It opens appropriately enough with the provision for a hungry multitude.

***I. The Setting (v. 1-4)***

***II. The Test (v. 5-7)***

***III. The Nothing that Became Something (v. 8-13)***

***I. The Setting (v. 1-4)***

***“After these things Jesus went over the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias. Then a great multitude followed Him, because they saw His signs which He performed on those who were diseased. And Jesus went up on the mountain, and there He sat with His disciples. Now the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was near.”*** John 6:1-4

A. John set the scene for this miracle. Geographically, this is taking place in a remote mountainous region by the Sea of Galilee. It is not near Jerusalem.

B. Anthropologically, the audience was made up of people who came to see the miracles Jesus did. They were not greatly interested in His message. They were more interested in the ‘magic show.’

C. Chronologically, this was happening as they were preparing for the Passover in Jerusalem.

***(verse 4) “Now the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was near.”***

The Apostle John subtly pointed out the irony. The Jews celebrated their Passover Lamb not recognizing the Lord Jesus who would be our Passover lamb was miles away in Galilee.

***II. The Test (v. 5-7)***

A. Having set the scene, John described the prelude to the miracle. From the parallel accounts we know Jesus taught the people who flocked to Him for the better part of the day before the events of **verses 5-7**.

***“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? But this He said to test him, for He Himself knew what He would do.”***

***“Philip answered Him, ‘Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them that every one of them may have a little.’”***

B. Our Lord Jesus was always ready to seize any teaching moment. Seeing the crowd, He asked Philip what He and the disciples should do to solve the problem of feeding the multitude.

1. The crowd was mammoth. There were five thousand men, not counting the women and children. Estimates go as high as twenty thousand people there, all hungry and needing food.

2. Philip’s problem was an impossible problem to solve. When Jesus put this to Philip, he became painfully aware of the impossibility of the situation. Jesus asked Philip how big his faith was. The Lord also made us recognize the impossible difficulty confronting Jesus and His disciples. A fortune would not suffice to feed them. We are supposed to

feel the enormity of the trial here. There was an enormous need and no visible supply to meet it.

C. Lest we think the Lord Jesus could not solve the problem and so had to turn to Philip for advice, John added a divine editorial comment.

***“But this He said to test [Philip], for He Himself knew what He would do.”***

God the Son never needed anyone to teach Him or counsel Him. He Himself knew already what He would do. Over the years I have found these words to be an incredible comfort. Can you picture how John would have phrased it had he been the commentator on the work that God accomplished down through history?

1. Adam and Eve sin and plunge the entire human race into eternal condemnation. Yet, when this happened our God was not surprised or defeated. ***“He Himself knew what He would do.”*** In **Genesis 3:15** God promised a Savior who would die for our sins that we might be saved!

2. Moses led the children of Israel to the banks of the Red Sea. This looked about as bad as it could look. The single greatest army in the world with horses and chariots was on their heels. The Children of Israel were pinned against the Red Sea. What do they do? What about God? Is He surprised? No, ***“He Himself knew what He would do.”*** He opened the Red Sea and sent Israel into the wilderness with the vivid memory of a miracle to strengthen them and their enemy vanquished behind them!

3. One more example, Joshua led the Children of Israel into the Promise Land, but Jericho stood right in the middle of the road. Is Yahweh the God of Israel stymied? No, ***“God Himself knew what He would do.”*** Israel marched and obeyed and the walls came down and the victory was theirs.

4. Whatever problem pushes into our lives, it does not catch God by surprise. He is never befuddled. He knew about it and more than this, ***“He Himself knew what He would do.”***

D. Meanwhile, back in Philip’s mind, we find this ultra-practical disciple in distress. The predicament is impossible. He could see no solution. He cried out to the Lord that if we disciples amass all of our resources, we can’t even make a dent in the need. Do you realize how much 200 denarii was?

E. The job God gave us to do makes feeding the 5,000 look like a Sunday School Picnic. We can be consumed with the enormity of the task. Yet, we must not forget our resources available in our Savior. ***“He Himself knows what He will do!”***

### ***III. The Nothing that Became Something (v. 8-13).***

A. Finally, let us look at the methodology of the miracle. The spotlight moved from perplexed Philip to a second disciple. Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, found a little boy who brought a lunch and brought the boy and the lunch to the Lord.

***“One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, said to Him, ‘There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish, but what are they among so many?’”***

This miracle happened because a little boy was willing to give his lunch to Jesus.

B. Think a moment about this little boy and his lunch. The boy was small and young. His lunch could not have been very big. The lunch certainly could not on its own feed a multitude. Barley cakes were the fare of the poor. Five cakes and two small fishes were barely enough to satiate a little boy's hunger. How in the world was it going to help with the raging appetite of twenty thousand people? Still, as little as it was, he gave it to Jesus.

1. One point this miracle made was 'Little is much when God is in it.' He took the little lunch and multiplied it and met the need of twenty thousand people. Do you think the boy went without because he gave Jesus his lunch? He had more to eat than he would have had if he kept his lunch to himself.

2. God wants to use you and me. You might say, "*No, I'm not much. I don't have much to offer Jesus.*" That's all right. Just think of the boy and his lunch. If Jesus can use a poor boy's lunch, He can certainly use you and me.

D. Can you imagine the scene when the little boy went home that evening? "*Hey, Mom, you should have been there. Jesus taught us and healed a bunch of people and then He made them all sit down and they all ate my lunch!*"

**Hymn #178 O Sacred Head, Now Wounded**