

## **Feeding of the 5000**

### **Matthew 14:13-21; Mark 6:30-44; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-15**

The Feeding of the 5000 is the only miracle recorded in all four Gospels. This reveals the importance the Holy Spirit put on it when setting the details of Jesus' life and ministry in the Scripture. All believers should carefully study this event! The feeding of the 5000 is the 14<sup>th</sup> miracle of Jesus out of 37 recorded. Jesus has ministered for about 2 ½ years and will go to the cross in a year.

#### **Why is this miracle so important in the timeline of Jesus?**

1. Christ's "Bread of Life" discourse was given in response to this miracle. Only John records this teaching in John 6:31-65.
2. Christ used it as the turning point in His ministry focus. Jesus' ministry will turn its focus from large crowds to the disciples. He had one year left to instruct these men before the cross.
3. Christ shows His great compassion and ability to relieve suffering. This is a great core principle of God and Jesus constantly reveals it.
4. Christ shows His great creative ability. Making something from nothing! Again, this is a characteristic of God!
5. Christ continues to build the disciples faith in His power. This will be an ongoing project. Building their faith and the disciples' understanding His power will be key in their work after Christ's ascension.
6. Christ ultimately shows His deity. Son of God; Power of God; Creator Please realize, that Jesus was not setting up a lesson on how He will supply the needs of His people. Though He had taught this principle in the past, the amazing point taught in the Feeding of the 5000 was the **deity of Christ!** He was displaying who He was, which is why all four Gospel books highlight it! **This was the main large-scale miracle done for the Jewish people.** Yes, we can also learn much about God's supplying our needs, how He can make much of little, and many other points, but on that day, this grand grassy hillside became the stage showing Israel that their Messiah had come.

#### **10 Facts Found in all 4 Gospels**

1. Deserted place - no people around, no towns or villages
2. Great multitude - the people came to Jesus on purpose; Christ was very popular
3. No food available
4. Five loaves and two fishes barley buns and dried/pickled fish
5. People sat down in orderly groups
6. Jesus gave thanks and "breaks it" whenever we see Jesus handle food, this was His pattern!
7. Disciples handed it out

8. Everyone was filled everyone was satisfied – man, woman, and child!
9. Disciples picked up 12 baskets of leftovers untouched food
10. 5000 men ate

Let's begin this amazing miracle. We start with Mark's passage as our base narrative but we will add details found in Matthew, Luke, and John.

**"And the apostles ("when they were returned," Luke 9:10) gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught. <sup>31</sup> And he said unto them, 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. <sup>32</sup> And they departed into a desert place by ship privately. ("belonging to the city called Bethsaida." Luke 9:10 "over the sea of Galilee, which is the sea of Tiberias." John 6:1). <sup>33</sup> And the people ("a great multitude" John 6:2) saw them departing ("had heard thereof, they followed him" Matthew 14:13) and many knew him, and ran afoot thither out of all cities, and outwent them, and came together unto him. (" because they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased. And Jesus went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples. And the passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh." John 6:2-4)" Mark 6:30-33**

**I. Jesus Withdrew with the Disciples** As we continue to study the life of Jesus moving forward, we will find Him withdrawing from the crowds of Galilee four times (1. This time 2. Tyre and Sidon 3. Decapolis 4. Caesarea Philipp) But the crowds will always followed.

1. The disciples gave a report of their ministry trip. (v. 30) Earlier, these twelve men were sent out two by two to preach and heal. They have now returned weary and ready to give an account to Jesus of what they did and taught. The same is true for us! We are accountable to God for our time and words!
2. Rest away from the demands of ministry. (v. 31) The text tells us they were so busy teaching and doing good they had no time to rest and eat! These were men, full of youth and strength, yet they were physically exhausted from days of ministry work! Jesus recognized this and set for them a time of rest.
3. Move out of the territory of Herod Antipas. Matthew 14:13 refers to Jesus' hearing of John's death, and now at this point, Herod desired to see Jesus. He had already killed John the Baptist on a whim. Jesus made Himself unavailable to Herod by moving into Herod Philip's territory briefly.

## II. Location – Desert Place

1. Near Bethsaida I recently learned there were two Bethsaidas at the time of Christ! We all probably know of two towns with the same name, which is not unusual, but the difficulty comes when cities with the same name are relatively close. It's just over a two-hour trip between Rome, WI in Jefferson County to Rome, WI in Adams County. Or it will take about 1 ½ hours to get from Utica in Dane County to Utica in Winnebago County! The Bethsaida spoken about here was northeast of the Sea of Galilee and on the east side of the Jordan River. It wasn't on the seacoast. Often, it was called Bethsaida-Julias and was within the territory of Philip the Tetrarch. He had turned it from a village to a significant city and named it after Caesar's daughter. The other Bethsaida was a part of the collection of towns on the west side of the Sea of Galilee, close to Capernaum, the ministry base of Jesus.

2. On the coast of “Sea of Tiberias” John the Apostle wrote his book about 85 AD, 15 years after the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, all of Palestine was restructured by the Romans; the nation of Israel literally ceased to exist. The Romans even renamed towns and rivers, and the Sea of Galilee. Notice how John makes this clarification for those reading his Gospel.

3. Jesus and the disciples took a boat. They set out on a 4-mile boat ride. It is interesting to note that in Greek Mark actually says, “the ship,” not “a ship.” We have learned that Jesus used the same boat for His travels on the Sea of Galilee, probably part of Peter’s fishing fleet.

4. Time of Year – Spring (Green grass - Mark 6:39; Passover – John 6:4) These hints help us build the timeline for Jesus’ life and ministry. This would be about a year before Christ’s death on the cross!

### III. Great Crowd Followed Jesus

1. They followed Him on foot. The book of Mark tells us the people “ran” to follow Jesus! Wow! As a matter of fact, in Mark, the Greek word used for “outwent” actually means “beat them,” “arrived before” or “met them.” This wasn’t a pleasant walk along the beach! It was either rocky or inhabited, so the people of Galilee had to go around properties or cliffs. Also, the Jordan River had to be crossed! But despite the difficulties, do you understand what happened here? While Jesus and the disciples were sailing across the Sea of Galilee, people were so eager to see them that they outran the boat, met them on the shore, and probably helped Jesus and the disciples out of the ship! Every gospel book tells us about this huge crowd that came after Jesus!

2. They came because of Jesus’ healing miracles! The needy, brokenhearted, desperate, ill, injured, and perhaps just curious came! They all followed Jesus eagerly!

3. They came from cities in the area. The area cities must have almost emptied as people realized Jesus and His followers traveled by boat across the Sea of Galilee.

“And Jesus, when he came out, (“lifted up his eyes,” John 6:5) saw much people (“great multitude,” Matt. 14:14; “great company” John 6:5) and was moved with compassion toward them because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: (“and he received them, and spake unto them of the kingdom of God,” Luke 9:11)and he began to teach them many things (“and he healed their sick” Matt. 14:14).<sup>35</sup> And when the day was now far spent (“when it was evening,” Matt. 14:15; “the day began to wear away,” Luke 9:12), his disciples came unto him, and said, This is a desert place, and now the time is far passed: <sup>36</sup> Send them away, that they may go into the country (Lit. – fields) round about, and into the villages, and buy themselves bread (“and lodge” Luke 9:12): for they have nothing to eat. <sup>37</sup> He answered and said unto them, Give ye them to eat. (“They need not depart;” Matt. 14:16; “he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?” <sup>6</sup> And this he said to prove (Gk - test ) him: for he himself knew what he would do. <sup>7</sup> Philip answered him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little. John 6:5-7) And they say unto him, Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread, and give them to eat?” Mark 6:34-37

#### IV. Jesus' Reaction to the Great Crowds.

1. Jesus had compassion on them. Here is **the heart** of Jesus when He meets the needy! **Compassion** This literally means **“internally moved with love and pity to external action”** Most often when we see a need, we feel sympathy or empathy. These feelings of pity are almost completely motionless. Oh, we might send a card or a quick prayer to God, but it is compassion that moves one into action! How's your “compassion meter”? This world is full of people with compassion; compassion on whales, bats, sequoias, dairy cows, wolves, cats, monarch butterflies, rhinos, elephants, the list goes on and on...but how about those of us who claim to be believers in Jesus Christ. Our Savior is **full (filled up)** of compassion. (Ps. 145:8) Watch and soak up Jesus' reactions on the mountainside with the needy multitude. Realize that this same Jesus is your Lord and that He feels the same for you!
  - Jesus saw them as shepherdless sheep. Jesus recognized the crowd's desperate and grave condition. He saw more than just their empty stomachs but their true helplessness, the consequences of their sin, and their spiritual darkness. They lacked the guidance only God could give. The heart of God is one of compassion and to shepherd His sheep. Don't forget the beauty of Psalms 23, “The Lord is my shepherd I shall not want.”
  - Jesus “received” them - welcomed them. Jesus was not impatient or “put out” over the massive crowd's inconsiderate invasion into His and the disciples' quiet time! Instead, He welcomed them! Oh, what a special moment it is when we arrive at one of our grandkids' homes. We just celebrated Father's Day and drove to our son's house for the weekend. I loved watching how my husband, the Papa, was received by his little 2-year-old grandson Silas. He didn't come with a shy smile or even a hearty handshake. Instead, there was wild squealing, running, door banging, arms open wide, hugs ready, and many smothering kisses. Silas welcomed his grandpa! This was always Jesus' attitude with the crowd. With open arms, He engaged with individuals, giving His time and energy. What a wonderful example to us!
2. Jesus taught them of the kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God was Jesus' main sermon topic! The Sermon on the Mount is an example of what Jesus preached every day, and much of it pertained to God's Kingdom! In the first twelve verses of Matthew 5, Jesus gave the characteristics of those who are part of this kingdom, which we call the Beatitudes. They are poor in spirit, mourn, meek, hunger and thirst after righteousness, merciful, pure in heart, peacemakers, and persecuted because of Jesus! Later in the Sermon on the Mount, He said not to worry about their daily food and clothing needs, but to remember God feeds the birds and clothes the lilies. Jesus finished that thought in Matthew 6:33, by saying, “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you.” And here we see Jesus' teaching of the kingdom of God to this great multitude.
3. Jesus healed them of their diseases. Out of love and compassion for the crowd, Jesus focused on the needs of individuals, including healing the body and teaching truth to the soul. Just as God loves the world and sent His Son Jesus for the sins of the world, and God is focused on the needs of each individual...on you and me...God loves and focuses on us as individual! Romans 8:38-39 gives us the wonderful comfort that we can never be separated from God's amazing love. “For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

**V. Reactions Concerning the Need for Food.** “evening” – The Jews had two different times of day that could be called “evening.” 3 pm – the transition time from day to evening; 6 pm – or sundown – the sun would have gone down about 7 pm. Most believe the wording of these passages makes the time closer to 6 pm. The dinner prep time had come and gone, evening was settling in!

1. Disciples – As Jesus was dealing with the spiritual and physical needs of the people, the disciples saw only the physical.

- “send them away” While Jesus embraced the multitude, the disciples wanted to dismiss them! This was the disciples’ council; they saw no ability to help or feed these people. They were thinking with human wisdom, which was faithless! Remember, by this time, the disciples had seen Jesus help thousands of individuals, but there was a huge crowd that needed food now.
- “two hundred pennyworth” The questions of Jesus were not a rebuke but an opportunity for the disciples to think and consider! He was stretching their faith and understanding! He was about to show that His power extends to the masses!

The book of Mark seems to indicate that the disciples' collective purse had 200 pennyworths (Gk—denarius—a blue-collar worker’s daily wage), which was almost two-thirds of a year’s wage. This was a lot of money for fishermen and common laborers. But they realized it was no use to spend this money. Philip told Jesus, “Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little.”

2. Jesus – The apostle John, reminds us, “he himself knew what he would do.” In all of this, every action and word was for the disciples learning!

- “They need not depart; give ye them to eat” – Jesus knew these precious people did not need to leave; He assumed they were all staying for supper! So, Jesus gave the disciples the command to feed them as if a large banquet had been prepared, and realize this was a command! The emphasis in this phrase is “ye.” Don’t forget the order of events here; Jesus had not taken the food and multiplied it. That will happen later, and Jesus will have the disciples help perform this miracle. Here, Jesus is giving them the power and authority to feed this crowd, but right now, this is way past their faith level! It never occurred to them that Jesus could feed this great multitude. Christ loves to give us a command that seems impossible, but as we obey Him, He gives us the power to complete it!
- Discussion with Philip—Only John gives us the narrative of Philip’s faith being tested. According to John 1:44, he was from Bethsaida and would know where to buy food. Yet scholars believe it could have been as far away as 5-9 miles! This whole discussion highlights the impossibility of getting these people food immediately! Philip would have been keenly aware of this. Jesus said, “Give ye them to eat.” But we see a very large hungry crowd, no money or place to get food for them, a seemingly impossible command in an impossible setting! But remember, Jesus’ power is all that is needed in impossible situations! One of God’s characteristics is that He provides His people’s needs!

**“The Stage is set for a miracle! Impossible situation—great need!”**

I am now switching my base text from Mark to John. Only John speaks of the interaction between Andrew, the young boy, and Jesus.

“(He saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? Go and see.” Mark 6:38) One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him, <sup>9</sup> There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many? (“He said, Bring them hither to me.” Matt. 14:18) <sup>10</sup> And Jesus said (“commanded” Mark 6:39), Make the men sit down (“on the grass,” Matt. 14:19; “by fifties in a company.” Luke 9:14; “And they sat down in ranks, by hundreds, and by fifties.” Mark 6:40). Now there was much (“green” Mark 6:39) grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand (“beside women and children.” Matt. 14:21). <sup>11</sup> And Jesus took the loaves; (“he looked up to heaven, and blessed (“them” Luke 9:16),” Mark 6:41) and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them (“the multitude” Luke 9:16) that were set down; and likewise of the fishes (“divided he among them all.” Mark 6:41) as much as they would. (“And they did all eat,” Mark 6: 42) <sup>12</sup> When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost. <sup>13</sup> Therefore they gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets (“full” Matt. 14:20) with the fragments of the five barley loaves (“and of the fishes.” Mark 6:43), which remained over and above unto them that had eaten. <sup>14</sup> Then those men, which they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet (lit. Messiah) that should come into the world.” John 6:8-14

## VI. Five Loaves and Two Fishes

1. Jesus asked, “How many loaves have ye?” Answer: 5 loaves and 2 small fishes
  - Andrew – Andrew seems to have been out and about among the overwhelming crowd and connecting with individuals, for example, this boy. What a wonderful example to us! But though Andrew was doing great interacting, his faith was small! It was Andrew who brought the 5 loaves and 2 small fishes to Jesus, but it was he who asked the question everyone else was thinking, “What are they among so many?” To Andrew, as well as the rest of the disciples, the answer to this question was---NOTHING; they’re MEANINGLESS; this little bit of food is completely USELESS among so many people! But to Christ, the Creator of the world, it was perfect for an all-you-can-eat feast for over 5000 men with leftovers!
  - Lad – The Greek is not very age-specific. The word can even be used to indicate a male slave. Many English translations seem to indicate this boy would have been under 12. In my study, I found these words: boy; little boy; youth; young fellow; youngster. Looking at the amount of food and thinking like a mom of former boys, I would agree this boy was younger. He is old enough to be out and about by himself but not need much food for lunch – so maybe 12! And there’s the first two miracles! A boy who had gotten to the end of the day and hadn’t eaten his lunch and then willing to part with it! The whole miracle rested upon the choice of this child. WOW! In his innocent willingness, his lunch was placed into Jesus’ hands to multiply. What a lesson is here! **When we carefully look in the Bible, we see age is no barrier to the Lord! He used the young, the old, and everyone in between!** God has no age limit or long qualification list; He only asks for willing availability and obedient faithfulness! It is the Devil who puts lies within the heart of man concerning age and lack of abilities! Oh, that we depend on God for our insufficiencies and make ourselves available to His work! 1 Tim. 4:12; Ps. 71:16-18; 78 1-7
2. Meager meal – When you read the word “loaves” please do not visualize a nice big loaf of French bread! The Greek word would have been better translated “buns” or even “crackers”. As a mom, doesn’t that make more sense when considering packing food for your 12-year-old son? But also, it

was “barley,” a grain used for animal food; wheat was human consumption. **This was a meager meal, indicative of a poor family.** In the same way, the fish were not slabs of salmon! The fish were called “small.” They would have been dried or pickled bite-size pieces meant to be eaten with the bread – a kind of fish sandwich. A quick grab lunch by a boy or a hurried mom! **This was truly a meager meal,** low-income, and nothing luxurious, but Jesus called for it!

## VII. The Orderliness of Jesus

Christ takes command and prepares the crowd to eat!

1. How was this done? What we see here is the normal Jewish way of serving large crowds. As a matter of fact, parts of the world still do something like this at feasts, weddings, and large gatherings when it’s time to serve food. The men would sit in rows, while the women and children would sit apart from the men but would do somewhat of the same.
2. Why was this done? Orderliness - Easy to serve, manage crowds, and collect leftovers.

## VIII. The Miracle

1. Begins with prayer. This was always Jesus’ pattern before eating. He was known for it! Jews did thank God for their food, but they didn’t usually look up to pray. Jesus is recorded to have done this several times. Here is an ancient Jewish meal prayer that gives God glory; it blesses Him, not the food. I would think that would be Jesus’ heart! “Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who bringest forth bread from the earth.”
2. Jesus personally created food for every person there. Jesus took the time to tear this food for 5000+ people. He could have “zapped” it before every person there, but He wanted to make this a wonderful, visual object lesson of His great power. All knew where that food came from: the hands of Jesus of Nazareth!
3. Disciples distributed the food. The wording in Greek indicates that the disciples went back and forth to pick up more food to take to the masses! Remember, the disciples had counseled Jesus to send the people away, and now they were serving them! They all knew there had only been 5 buns and a few dried or pickled fish, but every time they returned to where Christ sat, there was more for them to load and distribute! Let’s talk about the 5000 men! Every Gospel account makes a record of this. In Matthew, we read, “beside women and children.” In my study, I found the possibility of numbers between 10,000 to 20,000 people altogether! That’s a huge crowd to feed! Not long ago, I went to a banquet that fed 3000 people at a sit-down dinner – men, women, and children. I told one of my daughters, look around; you may never eat with a crowd like this again! The room was huge, the staff was like a well-oiled machine – fast, efficient, polite, focused, attentive – and there were hundreds of them – bringing plates, taking plates, filling water and bread baskets, yet taking time to make sure each table was happy and comfortable. It was amazing to watch, and the food was good too! I think we can comfortably say that all of Jesus’ followers helped that day. We can get stuck thinking of only Jesus’ 12 disciples, but that number is not the total number of His followers. The Scriptures record both men and women who were faithful followers throughout Jesus’ ministry, and their main job was to assist and learn. And at this great banquet on the grass, we can be sure they also helped. **Please remember, God doesn’t have just a select, elite few that He calls to serve,**

**but He calls all His followers to participate in the work. That is a principle of God, now, and it would have been the same that day on the hillside.**

4. Everyone was “filled.” (John 6:12) All four gospels announce that everyone went away satisfied! No one needed or wanted dessert! All were filled! Of course, that is another characteristic of God! He is always generous, never scanty! “I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt: open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.” Ps. 81:10
5. Twelve baskets were picked up. The Greek indicates these were small baskets. They would have been Jewish, kosher, market food baskets. Not only did Jesus feed the great multitude, but provided 12 personalized food packs for each of the disciples moving forward! Please remember, more was left over than what was started with!

**“Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world. When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone.” John 6:14-15**

### **IX. Reaction of the Crowd**

1. Recognized Jesus as the Messiah. As we started this study of the Feeding of the 5000, we highlighted the fact that this miracle was to showcase Christ’s deity. His ability to create and control the things of earth and the people got it! This was a convincing and impressive Messianic sign. The thought concerning “that prophet” goes back to Moses and Deut. 18:15-19. The Messiah was often referred to as the Prophet.  
**Moses was the prophet** who was part of the feeding of the children of Israel in the wilderness.
  - Exodus 16:3 – the need was great and the situation seemed hopeless
  - Exodus 16:4,31 – God gave them manna**Another Prophet would come** like Moses. Deut. 18:15-19 The people easily connected the manna from heaven with the creation of the food on the hillside that day and they saw Jesus as their Messiah.
2. Desired to make Him their king. As we have studied Jesus, we quickly realize the Jews were looking for a Messiah to rid them of their Roman enemies and place Israel back to the glory seen under Solomon and David. They did not understand the “suffering Savior” who would come to redeem man back to a relationship with God. This was why they rejected Jesus from the beginning. Though He gave every indication and sign that He was their Messiah, for most Jews, their only focus was a political Messiah and one who would meet their needs, not a spiritual One. Therefore, we see Jesus depart away from the crowd after this miracle.

### **Applications to Believers:**

1. Please, don’t be surprised when God gives you work to do during your leisure time! I’ve heard the saying, “you rest when you die!” Well, I believe in God’s plan, and that is partially true. Don’t get me wrong; God desires us to come apart, recharge, and rest. But God’s pattern found in His Word seems to indicate we must be ready for the opportunities He brings during our rest periods, rely on His strength, and not be selfish with our “leisure!” Jesus knew what was to come, and I believe Christ taught this principle to the disciples. We see here

how Christ handled disturbed rest time! **Sometimes, when we are more relaxed, opportunities and unscheduled time come together to produce eternal results!** Often, these are special times of disciple-making and Bible teaching with the ones we love and are the closest to ---family, friends, and neighbors. This principle has been so evident at our cabin in northern Wisconsin. Over the years, when we were there to unplug, reconnect, and fish! God would bring unique opportunities to encourage our children while kayaking in the bay, having spontaneous Bible studies with neighbors, fellowship, and speaking truth over great meals or campfire smores! It might have been tempting not to embrace these times and see them as an intrusion into “my time”/“my space.” But God used them for His Kingdom! Look for, embrace, and cultivate leisure time harvests!

2. Though we will find the great multitude sought Christ for the wrong reason, they were eager and endured hardship to see Him. Do we have a drive and desire to spend time with Christ? What priority do we put on our time with Christ? Do you find yourself excited to study? Disappointed when your time is disrupted? Do you inconvenience yourself to learn about Jesus? How much do we put ourselves out to hear Bible preaching? Or are we easily talked out of hearing from Bible messages? Do we set ourselves up to be good, engaged hearers and studiers? Is our heart ready to receive and obey God’s Words? Let’s commit to being eager and enduring Jesus scholars! Make that a daily prayer of your heart!

3. Be careful not to tell God what to do. Did you notice that the disciples became Christ’s advisors and expert counselors?! They told Jesus what to do! The disciples came to Jesus boldly and said, “Send them away, or we need more money!” They told God what to do! **How foolish!** Didn’t they see hundreds of miracles daily? Where was their faith? Concerning this event, Warren Wiersbe said, “The first step is not to measure our resources; but to determine God’s will and trust Him to meet the need.” p 107 **But let’s not get too hard on the disciples. We forget God’s power all the time.** God’s ways are not our ways. We desire life to be easy, convenient, and pain-free. But God knows how to grow our faith and demonstrate His power for His glory! Paul had an issue, “a thorn in the flesh,” a physical problem that he sought God for relief! 2 Cor. 12:7-10 God’s reply was for Paul to rely on His power! Let’s remember, “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.” Isaiah 55:8-9 Don’t tell God what to do during those hard, low days. Instead, seek His power and live by faith!

4. Be careful not to forget God is with you. The disciples seemed to struggle remembering they walked with Christ the Messiah! They instead lived in fear for lack of basic needs! **How foolish!** They wanted to send thousands of men, women, and children away hungry while in their midst was the God of the universe! **But let’s not get too hard on the disciples. We forget God’s presence all the time.** We worry and fret over the needs of our lives, while as Christians, we claim to be walking close with Him! So often, our resources can be low and our responsibilities high. My Life Application Bible had this to say, “We can limit what God does in us by assuming what is and is not possible.” p. 1812 Remember Jesus’ words in Matthew 17:20, “...If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.” Later, in the Great Commission, Jesus told the disciples, “and, lo, I am with you always,” Don’t forget God is with you and as a believer, you have the power of God within you!

5. Be careful not to send the needy away. While Jesus taught and healed the sick, the disciples sought to send them away! **How foolish!** Jesus was helping the physical and spiritual needs of this great multitude, and the only thing on the disciples' minds was food! **But let’s not get too hard on the disciples. We forget God’s priorities all the time.** Seeking lost souls, living with love and compassion, taking time with individuals,

giving of ourselves, holy living, and obeying the Scriptures .....these were just some of Jesus' priorities, and they should also be ours! Jesus had seen the people as shepherdless sheep when he got out of the boat that day. And as He ministered to the physical and spiritual needs of the multitude. He was demonstrating to the disciples that God's priority is to feed the needy sheep of the world! After the resurrection, Jesus still taught this principle to the disciples as He told Peter three times to "feed my sheep." And I love that they eventually understood the heart of Jesus, as we see Peter instructing those under him in 1 Peter 5:1-4. Let's make sure we are keeping this priority of God, too!

6. The nature of ministry – Jesus lived His life as an example in ministry. His first objective was to care for the spiritual needs of His sheep.

- Feed the spiritually starving – This was always Jesus' pattern. He met the spiritual needs of those around Him! As believers, this should be our pattern as well. Boldly give them spiritual food in the form of Biblical truth! The Devil loves to fill our minds with lies concerning the inadequacies we have in this area! Perhaps you don't know a lot of Scripture or have difficulty articulating the Scriptures to others, but remember, when Andrew reported to Jesus of the little boy's meager lunch, Jesus' reaction was, "Bring them hither to me." And Christ would say the same to us when we offer ourselves to help feed the spiritually hungry! As Jesus could and wanted to use that little lunch, He desires to do the same with what you offer Him! The theologian Pentecost said, "The followers of Christ do not have the ability of themselves to meet the spiritual need of people, but when they make available what they have to the Lord, the Lord can take it and multiply it and use them to minister to the multitudes."

Jesus also regularly cared for the physical needs of His sheep. Here we read that He both healed and fed the people. We, too, are called to.....

- Provide for the physically needy – We must remember ministry belongs to the Lord but is done by His disciples---even today! The physical needs of others are to be cared for by God's people. They must be ready, able, and willing to give of themselves. However, this must not be the primary focus of the investment in others. Christians must not neglect the spiritual needs of the world! In Jesus's life, the individual's spiritual needs were always first to Him, but He did not neglect the physical needs, and we must not either.

7. Trust God for personal needs and also for the great, impossible looking needs! God still proves or tests our faith. Questions, concerns, issues, and uncertainties arise in our lives regardless of our age or station in life! But learn from this event of Jesus that it is not for us to run about and try and solve life's troubles in our strength!

Let's review the questions found in the Feeding of the 5000.

Answer these questions from the Feeding of the 5000!

"Where shall we buy bread?" John 6:5 – Nowhere! Can't! Too far! No Time!

"What are they (fish & loaves) among so many?" John 6:9 – A drop in a bucket! Not near enough!

"Shall we buy 200 pennyworth of bread and give them to eat?" Mark 6:37 – Even all the the money they had combined would not be enough!

"How many loaves have ye?" Mark 6:38 – Not enough!

God's power and care for His own is a Bible core principle. Old Testament – Gospels – Epistles

Ps. 81:10 “I am the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt: open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.”

Eph. 3:20-21 “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, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end.”

Don't let your great needs blind you from seeing God's great power! Don't let what seems to be an impossible situation keep you from doing a task! Be brave and walk in faith! “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might!” Eph. 6:10

Remember:

***2 fish + 5 loaves + Jesus = 8000+ people feed + 12 baskets leftover + a great lesson in faith given***