

Remarkable: Feeding the 5000

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Mark 6:30-44 (Pew Bible #1542)

³⁰ *The apostles gathered around Jesus & **reported to him** all they had done & taught.*

*6:7 Jesus **SENT** the 12 out on a preaching mission. This was not a vacation; it was hard work. It was sacrificial. They had to be more devoted to the message than they were to themselves. This was a great learning experience. They were extensions of him.

*Their **MESSAGE** was about **repentance**. They had a very important message to share.

*Their **MISSION** was very successful. People's lives changed. They were excited and eager participants.

*Jesus **INVITED** the Disciples into the ministry. He didn't "NEED" them. He could've done everything w/o them. But he wanted to **INVITE** them into the ministry which would be **multiplied** through them. They were eager participants.

³¹ *Then, because so many people were coming & going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place & get some rest." ³² So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place. ³³ But many who saw them leaving*

*recognized them & ran on foot from all the towns & got there ahead of them. ³⁴ When Jesus landed & saw a large crowd, he had **compassion** (deep feeling linked with action) on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things. (his action)*

³⁵ *By this time it was late in the day, so his disciples came to him. (They saw a problem) "This is a remote place," they said, "& it's already very late. ³⁶ Send the people away (They solved the problem) so they can go to the surrounding countryside & villages & buy themselves something to eat." ³⁷ But he answered, "**You** give them something to eat." They said to him, (Astonishment? Anxiety? Anger?) "That would take 8 months of a man's wages! Are we to go & spend that much on bread &*

give it to them to eat?" ³⁸ "How many loaves do you have?" he asked. (They had something – but they didn't know what they had)"Go & see." When they found out, they said, "5 — and 2 fish." ³⁹ Then Jesus directed them to have all the people sit down in groups on the green grass. ⁴⁰ So they sat down in groups of 100's & 50's. ⁴¹ Taking the 5 loaves & the 2 fish & looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Jesus gave thanks – even in the middle of a seemingly overwhelming problem (The opposite = ungratefulness – a huge problem in the Old Testament. Jesus takes bread, blesses, it, breaks it and gives it to his disciples – just like the Lord's Supper. Then he gave them to his disciples to set before the people. He also divided the two fish among them all. ⁴² They all ate & were satisfied, ⁴³ & the disciples picked up 12 basketfuls of broken pieces of bread & fish. ⁴⁴ The number of the **men** (not counting the women & children – the whole Galilee region was said to have contained about 40,000 people – there may have been 10-20,000 people there) who had eaten was 5,000.

This is the only miracle found in all 4 gospels. Skeptics have tried to dismiss it. How we respond to the miracles of Jesus reveals our worldview. Some believe it's mythology because it's impossible to feed a multitude with 5 loaves & 2 fish. Skeptics claim Jesus talked everyone into sharing their brown bags with one another. That's not a miracle! Why would all 4 gospels talk about it? Eliminating one miracle raises the question - how do you deal with the next story, Jesus walking on water? Jesus was doing something dynamic to draw such large crowds from all over the region! The New Testament attributes this to signs & wonders. Eventually the resurrection happens. Some allege that Jesus didn't die on the cross; he simply swooned. When they laid his body in a cold, damp cave, after having been scourged and crucified and was indeed dead according to the Roman soldiers who did this for a living in a cold, he resuscitated, rolled aside the enormous stone, and overpowered the professional Roman soldiers.

Life is primarily about worldview – how we see the world. If Genesis 1:1 is false and there is no God, then it's everybody for themselves. If there is no God and the Bible is untrue – then we are wasting our time in church. All we can hope for is to grab a lot of gusto in life, to “eat, drink and be merry” because in a matter of years we will all be dead and

there's nothing beyond death. If there is no "Kingdom of God" then all we have is the "Kingdom of Self" – and that's where we have all the problems. There are enormous consequences when the Kingdom of Self absorbs us. There's no ultimate hope here. It is a lost feeling – like sheep w/o a shepherd.

Mark 8:1-21 *During those days another large crowd gathered. Since they had nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples to him and said, ² "I have **compassion** for these people; they have already been with me 3 days and have nothing to eat. ³ If I send them home hungry, they will collapse on the way, because some of them have come a long distance." ⁴ His disciples answered, "But where in this remote place can anyone get enough bread to feed them?" ⁵ "How many loaves do you have?" Jesus asked. "Seven," they replied. ⁶ He told the crowd to sit down on the ground. When he had taken the 7 loaves and given thanks, he broke them and gave them to his disciples to set before the people, and they did so. ⁷ They had a few small fish as well; he gave thanks for them also and told the disciples to distribute them. ⁸ The people ate and were satisfied. Afterward the disciples picked up 7 basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. ⁹ About 4,000 men were present. And having sent them away, ¹⁰ he got into the boat with his disciples and went to the region of Dalmanutha.*

¹¹ *The Pharisees came and began to question Jesus. To test him, they asked him for a sign from heaven. ¹² He **sighed deeply** and said, "Why does this generation ask for a miraculous sign? I tell you the truth, no sign will be given to it." ¹³ Then he left them, got back into the boat and crossed to the other side.*

¹⁴ *The disciples had forgotten to bring bread, except for one loaf they had with them in the boat. ¹⁵ "Be careful," Jesus warned them. "Watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees and that of Herod." ¹⁶ They discussed this with one another and said, "It is because we have no bread." ¹⁷ Aware of their discussion, Jesus asked them: "Why are you talking about having no bread? Do you still not see or understand? Are your hearts hardened? ¹⁸ Do you have eyes but fail to see, and ears but fail to hear? And don't you remember? ¹⁹ When I broke the 5 loaves for the 5,000, how many basketfuls of pieces did you pick up?" "12," they replied. ²⁰ "And when I broke the 7 loaves for the 4,000, how many basketfuls of*

pieces did you pick up?" They answered, "7." ²¹ He said to them, "Do you still not understand?"

Jesus must be exasperated at this point. He's fed over 9,000 men from meager resources and His disciples are worried because they forgot to bring their lunch! The 1st time, I get it. The 2nd time, maybe. The 3rd time? They are forgetting the both the power/compassion of Jesus.

Observations:

Jesus SENDS us, too. Like the original disciples, many of us feel unqualified or unworthy. We may feel anxious, uncertain or afraid. We may even feel angry when we hear – "YOU DO SOMETHING FOR SOMEBODY ELSE!" It all comes back to: HELPING OTHERS FOLLOW JESUS.

We must be CREATIVE. Miracles are "way outside the box." Jesus had to open their minds up to new possibilities.

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Launching new churches is one of the most effective ways of reaching people for Christ. New things create a vacuum for new people to fill. New things create new opportunities.

Opportunities for new members and leaders. A way to give new people opportunities to build.

In following Jesus, I'm often aware of this enormous need that far transcends my ability to respond to. Jesus looks at me and says: "*You give them something to eat.*" I don't want to send people away hungry, but I also know that I am not THE answer. In the world of hurt and pain, what are my 5 rolls and 2 sardines? Jesus is the answer. But He also invites me in to watch Him perform the miracle with what little I can bring.

Respond. Take 1 thing the Lord has laid on your heart and *do something*. Take an actionable step *this week*. There are many things WE can do – we don't need a big organization to figure it out for us. If you want to be in a small group, start one. Find one other person and you've got a small group. You want more in-depth Bible study? Participate in Learn2. Go to an Adult Discipleship Community. You want to serve, come to 2nd Saturday, which is this Saturday. You want to make friends?

Whatever the issue, we can pray for creativity and the power of the Holy Spirit - to be part of the solution.

Look at the **Results**: God's "left-overs" are far more abundant than our resources. He multiplies what we bring to Him/trust Him with. All good things come from Him. Whatever resources we have, He can multiply because He gave them to us in the first place.