

It was the end of a very long day

All Jesus wanted was some quiet time. Sound familiar. Jesus' ministry was expanding. More and more people wanted to hear about this different relationship with God and one another. This miracle of the feeding of the 5000, is related in all 4 gospels. In the Matthew, we start with "When Jesus heard what had happened". Well what happened is Jesus hearing the news about the beheading of his friend and fellow prophet John the Baptist. And Jesus just wanted time alone. Plus, after a long day of teaching and healing, it was getting late.

Jesus the son of God, fully human and fully divine, walking the earth like everybody else. He certainly knew basic human needs and Jesus undoubtedly experienced fatigue and hunger. Because of that human understanding he could have compassion for the masses that followed him. When the crowds before him hungered and required nourishment, Jesus didn't give them theology, he gave them food.

People were hungry and evening was approaching. Let's break this problem down a little bit. Do you all know the expression, "what would Jesus do?". When we ask that, it can almost be rhetorical. But the disciples had the advantage when they asked that question, they could literally ask Jesus. "What would Jesus do?", I don't know, go ask him. The disciples wanted to send the crowds away, but Jesus said "YOU give them something to eat".

But the disciples correctly saw the problem from a human point of view. They only had 5 loaves and 2 fish, as almost irrelevant to the problem. When we see problems and solutions from a human point of view, we fail to recognize where God is in all this. What is God's will for a solution? "Bring them here to me," he said. *So first, how often do we fail to bring our problems to Jesus?*

How often are we more like Peter than we are here about later? Everything is going along fine, a little bit of wind and waves kick up and immediately, "JESUS SAVE ME!".

And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks. *He gave thanks. It was so little, and impossibly short of what was needed, but he gave thanks.* ...and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people.

This wasn't just Jesus' miracle. It didn't just say the blessing and the food suddenly expanded. I think the story would have mentioned that. It implies the disciples handed out the food and just kept going. The disciples and the crowd were not just spectators of the miracle, but actual participants.

**To me the lesson here is not just about what Jesus did, but what the disciples were able to do with what was blessed. What the disciples were able to do with what was blessed.**

They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children. So that 5000 number is even much higher.

I really appreciate, there is nothing wasted in this miracle. ALL ate and were satisfied. Even the leftovers were gathered up and would be used to feed others.

The followers of Jesus have always been and will always be people with real life problems and needs. Jesus' way has been to address those needs meeting people where faith and life intersect. The mission can never be separated from the joys and pains of the followers and believers. We must ask the question, how as followers of Jesus, are we called to respond?

Does Jesus ask more of us than we can provide? The disciples certainly would have preferred to send away the hungry people. But Jesus had something else in mind. Like the disciples' problem, the problems of the world today may seem insurmountable. **But we are people of faith.**

This story parallels the Israelites receiving bread from heaven following the exodus of Egypt. Once again God has fed the people and provided for their needs. Jesus teaches us with heavenly authority and even commands

bread and fish, someone who is able to work divine miracles at this scale must be sent from God.

When we provide for the real needs of others, we continue the work of Christ in the world, that seems so overwhelming. There are so many hurting. And this accounting says, "all who were fed were satisfied". We can reflect on this with the world today. A world of hyper-consumerism, we eat, consume, we shop, we buy more and more, and yet we do not seem filled. Few of us have truly known chronic hunger. Yet we do know what it means to hunger for meaning, truth, and purpose. At the communion table we are fed with the bread of life. Jesus feeds us and then calls us out into the world to do the same

With so many demands put on our personal lives it's hard to find the time to address the needs of others. In this Bible passage, we clearly see Jesus's generosity, he gave up his quiet time to help others. Compassion on the crowd showed in teaching and feeding. That's an example for us. Service to others is sometimes costly giving up both our time and our personal preferences and sometimes we may not feel that we have anything to offer, but rest assured God wants to use our unique skills to serve others and in doing so, declare how much God has done for them. Even though we think it's very little, you can provide more than enough for all

**Let us pray. Lord God, you take care of us in all ways. Even when things look uphill you are working in ways we do not even know. Just like the Israelites and crowd of 5000, you have fed us with daily bread. Help us to stay aware of the needs of others, and be thankful for the blessings that we have received. Let us continue to share our abundance with others. In your name, Amen .,**