

Living Word Fellowship Church

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The Teachings of Jesus While on Earth

Why is the Five Loaves Two Fishes so Important

This is the only story repeated in all four Gospels, why?

(Matthew 14:13-21; Mark 6:30-44; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-14)

I. Introduction

This was a time when the disciples had been sent out and instructed not to take a money bag or food with them. They obeyed Christ and did not return hungry. Nowhere in this miracle is it recorded that the disciples complained of needing to eat. After reporting all that had happened, Christ instructed them to pull away into the deserted place and rest for a while because so many people were following Him. There were so many people coming and going that the disciples did not have time to relax or eat. They attempted to leave by boat and go to the other side of the lake to be alone, but when the people realized they were leaving, they came out from the surrounding cities and followed them to the other side of the lake. Christ had compassion on them because He said that they were like sheep without a shepherd. Therefore, Christ continued teaching them.

II. The Test of True Faith

- A. The faith of the Centurion and the Syrophenician had already been defined. Jesus calming the winds and waves, as well as walking on water, challenged the faith of the disciples, leaving them to conclude, "*What kind of **man** is this....*" (Matt. 8:27). Therefore, their need for growth in faith remained critical. After this miracle, they were once again at sea, but this time Christ came walking on the water (Matt. 14:22-33). This experience strengthened their faith so that they worshipped Him, saying, "*You are **certainly** God's Son!*"
- B. Christ tested their faith by taking them to a desolate place, knowing the crowds were going to persistently follow Him.
- C. Now that they were in a desolate place and the people were a good distance from the city (Matt. 14:15; Mk. 6:35; Luke 9:12) the test begins:
 1. The disciples wanted the people to leave before it became too late because, as they stated, "*time is already pass.*" (Matt. 14:15; Mk 6:34) Their view of ministry was determined by circumstances rather than by what the Kingdom of God desired. (Luke 9:11) "*And the people, when they knew it, followed Him: and he received them, and spake unto them of the kingdom of God, and healed them that had need of healing.*" (KJV)
 2. The disciple's solution did not align with Christ's kingdom agenda (Mk. 6:36).
 3. Since the disciples observed what was taking place and decided to tell Christ what to do, Christ placed the solution in their hands.
 - a) Jesus said, "**You** give them something to eat." This is as if to say, "Since you notice the problem and you are going to stop my teaching to tell me, I will stop teaching and let you solve the problem."

The disciples did not have a solution; they only told Him how very difficult the problem was. **John stated Christ did this to test them** (John 6:6).

- b) Christ told the disciples, *"You give them something to eat!"* (notice the exclamation point). In other words, My work of compassion (Mk. 6:34 – *"they are like sheep without a shepherd..."*) is not completed with merely delivering the message; it is fulfilled when their needs are met.
4. Jesus showed them that He is their solution for the provision for ministry before He ask them to resolve this issue: *".....and He instructed them that they should take nothing for their journey, except a mere staff — no bread, no bag, no money in their belt — but to wear sandals; and He added, "Do not put on two tunics."* (Mk 6:8-9; NASU) The miracle of five loaves two fished took place immediately after they came back. They did not complain about being hungry or in need of anything. A lesson He had taught them:
 - a) *"And do not seek what you will eat and what you will drink, and do not keep worrying. 30 "For all these things the nations of the world eagerly seek; but your Father knows that you need these things. 31 "But seek His kingdom, and these things will be added to you. 32 "Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has chosen gladly to give you the kingdom."* (Lk 12:29-32; NASU)
 5. Please remember when Christ knows the good in us that He wants to perfect, He orchestrates the test (James 1:2-4; Hebrews 12:6; 1 Peter 1:3-7; Rev. 3:19).
 - a) *"Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life."* (Rev 2:10; NASU)
 - b) *"Because you have kept the word of My perseverance, I also will keep you from the hour of testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. 11 'I am coming quickly; hold fast what you have, so that no one will take your crown. 12 'He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he will not go out from it anymore; and I will write on him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God, and My new name."* (Rev. 3:10-12; NASU)
 - c) *"He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. 22 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'"* (Rev. 3:21-22; NASU)
 6. Jesus required faith from those who needed to be fed as well. Notice He **commanded** the people to sit down (Mk. 6:39). The disciples were told what to do, and the people were also told what to do. The solution totally depended on their obedience.
 - a) Luke states they were in groups of about fifty (Luke 9:14) and Mark records that it was hundreds and fifties (Mk. 6:40).
 - b) Christ only distributed the food to those who were seated (John 6:11). Sitting down was not a suggestion; it was a command.
 - c) Notice that they ate until they were filled. All four Gospels made a point to state this (Mt. 6:20; Mk. 6:42; Luke 9:17; John 6:12).

III. The Nature of the Miracle that Makes this Miraculous in Eyes of the Disciples

- A. Notice Jesus told them they already have loaves; *“How many loaves do you have? Go look!”* (Again, notice the exclamation mark). They were conventional in their thinking. Please reflect on the contrast:
1. They said it would take *“two hundred denarii on bread....”* (Judas must have been having some of series of heart palpitations). They said it would cost a lot of money. Christ, however, told them to work with what you have. He demanded this is where they begin just like it was when He sent them out with nothing.
- B. Jesus, *“looking up toward heaven, **HE** blessed the food and broke the loaves and **HE** kept giving them to the disciples to set before them, **HE** divided up the two fish among them all.”* (Mk. 6:41)
- a) This miracle is about the ‘Kingdom of God.’ (Luke 9:11)
 - b) God fed them when they were in the wilderness, but it was He who supplied them manna from heaven – the Kingdom of God.
 - ***“I am the bread of life.*** 49 *“Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. 50 “This is the bread which comes down out of heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. 51 ***“I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread also which I will give for the life of the world is My flesh.”*** Christ must die to give life (Jn 6:48-51; NASU)*
- C. Christ required the disciples to serve the people before they themselves ate (Mk. 6:41-43). Notice that food was left over. They could not eat anymore.
1. The boy who gave his food received back more than enough (Luke 6:38).
 2. *“And Jesus said to them, ‘Therefore every scribe who has become a disciple of the kingdom of heaven is like a head of a household, who brings out of his treasure things new and old.’”* (Mt 13:52; NASU)

IV. Conclusion

Jehovah-jireh – The Lord – Our Provider!!

The Lord has taught me that ministry can experience financial shortfalls. Even leaders may not always see the way forward. As a pastor it needs to be determined if what is being done is God’s Kingdom agenda - faith is required. *“I will supply your needs according to MY riches in glory.”* (Phil. 4:19). We must also learn contentment (Phil. 4:11; 3:2-8). This is why the disciples were only allowed to take what was on them before Christ preformed this miracle - for them and for the people He called them to serve.