

STORY

Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand - Matthew 14:13-21, Mark 6:34-44; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-16

TEACHER PRAYER

Dear Heavenly Father, You have richly blessed our land so that our bodily needs appear to be easily provided. Yet so often we take these blessings for granted and forget that You provide them and not we ourselves. Prevent our pride from failing to turn to You if we think we lack for any material need. Help me to show my students through my life as well as by this lesson, that we can trust in You to provide for us, even if we don't see how You will do it. But also may we learn to think not only of our bodily needs but also of our spiritual needs. In Your Word You have provided food for our faith so that we trust in Jesus. For You have sent Jesus as our substitute to take the punishment of our sins upon Himself so that we are forgiven and can live in eternity with You. Though our eyes may not see, may we trust in Thee, to whom we pray, for everything today, Amen.

VOCABULARY

Denarii - a silver coin worth roughly a quarter in today's money. (see Rupprecht figures for 1947)

OUTER AIM

Jesus showed his love and mercy to more than 5000 people by feeding them both body and soul.

INNER AIM

God provides for our physical and spiritual needs.

BACKGROUND

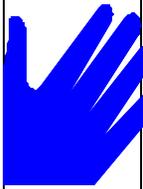
(Rupprecht Bible History References Vol. 2, pp. 193-200)

Jesus had sent out His disciples to preach in Judea and they had returned with news of all that they had done. Also Jesus heard that John the Baptizer had been beheaded by Herod.. After these things, Jesus tried to be alone with His disciples to rest. Jesus had crossed to the northeast side of the Sea of Galilee. (Rupprecht p. 194) This miracle is the only event of Jesus' ministry, other than His suffering and death, which is recorded by all four evangelists. The feeding of the 5,000 proved to be a watershed in Jesus' ministry. When He would not be their "bread-king," the majority of the people no longer followed Him. Mark 6:30-32 (Luke 9:10)

- ▶ Jesus attempted to give His disciples and Himself a much needed break in these hectic times of His ministry.
 - ▶ Mark tells us that they didn't even have a chance to eat (v.31) because of all the activity.
- vs. 33-34
- ▶ But the people heard where Jesus and the disciples were going and arrived on foot even before they had gotten there.
 - ▶ Jesus, despite the physical need to rest "was moved with compassion for them because they were like sheep not having a shepherd." Jesus saw their great need for spiritual guidance since they weren't getting it elsewhere.
 - ▶ So He again began to teach them about the kingdom of God (Luke) and to heal their diseases.

John 6:2

- ▶ The miracles (signs) had the purpose of identifying Jesus as the promised Messiah; however, they had the effect of becoming more important than the person to whom they pointed. The people came to Jesus to satisfy their own physical needs.



v. 3

- ▶ Jesus had tried to find an isolated spot to rest. It also gave Him a vantage point from which to see the large crowds gathered to see and hear Him.

v. 4

- ▶ This detail places the time of the event in the second year of Jesus' public ministry.
- ▶ A year later He would be crucified.

v. 5

- ▶ The other evangelists show that Jesus taught late into the day.
- ▶ The disciples urged Jesus to send the crowds away to find food and lodging for the night.
- ▶ In this verse we see Jesus' reply directed toward Phillip but also to the other disciples. He wanted them to consider ways to feed the people.

v. 6

- ▶ Jesus questioned Phillip and eventually the other disciples to get them to see how their thoughts were directed not toward faith in God, but to human means.

v. 7

- ▶ Phillip's answer shows that he could see only the money that they might have been able to gather among themselves.
- ▶ But he felt that with so many (perhaps over 20,000 people) they couldn't buy enough bread.

vs. 8-9

- ▶ Andrew's answer, although helpful, was also limited by human thinking.
- ▶ He had looked beyond the money, to other people, but still hadn't seen Jesus' ability.
- ▶ So, he too thought they couldn't perform the task the Lord gave them.

v. 10

- ▶ So Jesus set out to show them what they should have realized themselves. He could provide.
- ▶ The other gospels note that they had the people sit in ranks of 50 men. This allowed them to see how many people there were. Notice also the count is only of the men, not of women and children who were also there (Matthew).

v. 11

- ▶ Jesus took what was available, prayed in thanksgiving for what was provided, and had the disciples distribute the bread and the fish. And they had enough to feed all those people, as much as the people wanted to eat!
- ▶ The before meal prayer of thanksgiving and blessing is a good example to follow.

v. 12

- ▶ When everyone was full (not just the edges of their hunger satisfied, but full) Jesus told His disciples to gather what remained so that it wouldn't be wasted. (Note Jesus' concern that we don't waste what He provides.)

v. 13

- ▶ The quantities of leftovers impressively demonstrated Jesus' ability to provide more than enough food for the people.

v. 14

- ▶ The people too recognized the miracle that had taken place.
- ▶ They thought that He could very well be the Prophet that Moses had prophesied would come (Deuteronomy. 18:15, see also John 7:40f).

v. 15

- ▶ But Jesus knew that many of the people began to think of Him as only a provider of physical food and bodily needs, not as their Savior.
- ▶ See what happened the following day: John 6:22-71, especially 66.

STUDENT PRAYER

Dear Lord Jesus, we so easily fail to appreciate the food and clothing and other rich blessings that You provide to keep our bodies alive. Give us wisdom to use those blessings with thankfulness and without wastefulness. Help us to trust in You to continue to meet those needs even if we can't see how You will do it. But, also lift our eyes beyond our bodily needs to trust in You for our greater needs, those of our souls. Lead us often to repent of our sins and to trust in You for forgiveness. Don't let us take that forgiveness lightly but rather help us to appreciate that You purchased our forgiveness with Your own life by dying on the cross for our sakes. For then we will also give thanks for our Salvation as we pray in faith to You. Amen.

PRESENTATION

Briefly review previous story as time allows. Make links to the new story when possible.

Tell the story: Teachers, be encouraged to tell the story in your own words while remaining faithful to the scriptural account. When scripture records the story in more than one place, you may want to harmonize the accounts (including extra details found in each account). Let the students know where they can find the additional details in the Bible.

Discuss the story: While reviewing the major events of the story, discuss the possible applications to the students' lives. Ask questions that make them think about the story and show that they understand the story.

ACTIVITY ONE - WHO REMEMBERS THE STORY?

Teacher, read the following questions and answers to the class one set at a time, and have the students circle the letter of the right answer. Alternatively, read all the answers, then have the pupils raise their hands for the correct answer as you read the answers a second time. After each question, give the right answer. Do this as a game, rather than as a quiz. This also provides review/reteach opportunities.

ACTIVITY TWO - ART WORK - Teacher, have the students draw pictures illustrating the following themes (You may wish to prepare in advance a few “outline” pictures for coloring in, in case some pupils balk at drawing their own): Note that #4 is not a theme.

APPLICATIONS

1. We need to learn what the disciples learned from Jesus. Our sinful pride tries to make us believe the we can and must provide for our bodies by ourselves. The Lord says that it is He who provides. (Psalm 145:15-16; Matthew 6:31-34) God gives us food, clothing, goods and home. He usually does this through natural means, giving parents the strength and ability to work. He gives us doctors and nurses

and medicine and hospitals to help us when we are sick. We must learn to trust in Him to provide sufficient earthly blessings for our daily needs. Although we need to be good stewards with what He gives us, we must NOT trust in the blessings themselves. What are some ways that we can show God that we appreciate what He has given to us? (Pray before and after meals and use His gifts without wasting them)

2. Jesus also, and more importantly, provides for our souls. He was disappointed that the people began to think of Him only for their bodily needs. He had come to be their Savior, to suffer and die for them as their substitute so that their sins would be forgiven and they would have eternal life. Although we can trust in God for our bodily needs, we also need to trust Him daily for our spiritual needs. In faith, we can show we appreciate His work as our Savior by praying daily and often for His forgiveness of our sins and not "wasting" His forgiveness by sinning against Him.
3. Jesus gave His disciples a test or difficulty for their faith in order to strengthen their faith. He used the lack of physical solutions to help them grow spiritually. They learned to trust more confidently in Jesus, rather than to look only to themselves or to what their senses could perceive. (Proverbs 3:5-6).

PASSAGES

These passages can be assigned as memory work or simply discussed in class as to how they fit the lesson. Explain the meaning of this Scripture ("the miracles performed by Jesus prove that He is truly the Son of God, and our Savior from sin"), and spend five minutes helping the children to memorize it.

Lower

Psalms 145:15-16 - The eyes of all look expectantly to You, and You give them their food in due season. You open Your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing.

Middle any of the above and...

Proverbs 3:5-6 - Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.

Upper any of the above and...

Matthew 6:31-33 - Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

HYMN CHOICES

"Praise God, From Whom all Blessings Flow" (TLH #644)

"The Lord's My Shepherd, I'll not Want" (TLH #436)

"All Depends on Our Possessing" (TLH #425:1-3,5)