

# Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand

Matthew 14:13-21; Mark 6:34-44; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-15



Jesus and His disciples are giving food to this crowd in the picture.

With what else did Jesus feed this crowd that day? (*His Word*)

## Prayer

We thank You, Heavenly Father, for sending Jesus, Your Son, to be our Savior. We praise You for revealing to us the identity of Your Son and the truth of His teachings by the miracles He performed. Help us, we pray, always to trust in Him for our salvation, and for all our needs. Strengthen our faith by the working of the Holy Spirit as we study Your Holy Word, Amen.

## The Story - John 6:1-15

**Introduction** If you were born in India, the odds are that your religion would be Hindu. If you had been born in Iraq, you would probably be a Moslem. Or again, if you had been born in modern-day Israel, you would probably be a Jew. The fact that most people's religion is determined by their culture and upbringing has led some people to challenge the very concept that any one religion is right, and all others wrong. How can you answer this challenge, when it is presented to you?

Christians believe that there is only one true God, and that the true God is Triune in nature (that is, consists of three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). Furthermore,

Christians believe that mankind has been reconciled to God by the perfect life and atoning death of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. We also believe that although Jesus has won salvation for all people, only those who have genuine faith in Him will have eternal life in heaven. How can we answer those who say that all religions are equally valid, and that all religions are just different paths to the same destination?

Today's Bible lesson presents the account of a miracle performed by Jesus of Nazareth. Like His other miracles, this one provided indisputable proof that Jesus was Who He claimed to be: the Son of God, and the Savior of the World. No other religion



has such undeniable proof of its authenticity. The miracles Jesus performed, His fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy, and also His Resurrection all provide proof that Christianity is the only true religion.

(1) After these things Jesus went over the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias. (2) Then a great multitude followed Him, because they saw His signs which He performed on those who were diseased. (3) And Jesus went up on the mountain, and there He sat with His disciples. (4) Now the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was near.

(5) Then Jesus lifted up His eyes, and seeing a great multitude coming toward Him, He said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?" (6) But this He said to test him, for He Himself knew what He would do.

(7) Philip answered Him, "Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may have a little."

(8) One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to Him, (9) "There is a

lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish, but what are they among so many?" (10) Then Jesus said, "Make the people sit down." Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. (11) And Jesus took the loaves, and when He had given thanks He distributed them to the disciples, and the disciples to those sitting down; and likewise of the fish, as much as they wanted.

(12) So when they were filled, He said to His disciples, "Gather up the fragments that remain, so that nothing is lost." (13) Therefore they gathered them up, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves which were left over by those who had eaten.

(14) Then those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said, "This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world." (15) Therefore when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king, He departed again to the mountain by Himself alone.

---

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

---

**What the Lesson Tells Us** - Discuss some of the following questions in class, based on the Bible story for today. Ask questions about parts you may not understand.

1. According to verse 2, what was the reason for the popularity of Jesus in Galilee? Does this mean that the people recognized Him as the Savior, or just that they desired the material benefit of His miraculous works?

2. If the primary purpose of the miracles Jesus performed was not to meet temporary, earthly needs, what was it? (John 20:30-31 is a key to understanding the purpose of miracles)
  
3. Jesus provided a test of faith for His disciples, by asking them how the crowds of people could be fed (vv. 5&6). He wanted them to recognize that although meeting this need was beyond human ability, they could simply turn to Him Whom they recognized to be the Messiah (cf. John 1:45), confidently looking to Him to supply any genuine need. In this connection, they might even have remembered the example of Mary, Jesus' mother, who at the wedding in Cana simply brought the need to Jesus, and left it to Him to do what was best. The disciples failed this test of faith.

What application of this lesson about trusting in Jesus to meet all our needs can we make in our own lives?

4. Although Jesus had only two fish and five loaves of barley bread, He was able to provide more than enough to satisfy 5,000 men. Afterwards, twelve baskets full of leftovers were gathered up. Why do you suppose these details are included in the inspired account? (hint: one possibility has to do with the principle of good stewardship of gifts, and another with the fact that some people claim that miracles are simply the result of people thinking something had happened, when it really didn't)
  
5. In verse 14, the people said of Jesus, "This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world." This term showed that they saw Jesus as the Messiah. They even wanted to make Jesus their leader. However, there was a BIG problem with this. What was it?

---

**Inner Aim** God provides for our physical and spiritual needs

---

**Think It Through** - (You may wish to do this exercise in small groups, and then have each group report its findings to the whole class after five minutes of work) Look up the following passages, and apply what they say to answer the questions.

1. John 1:45, I Kings 17:10-16, and II Kings 4:42-44 - Based on these passages, what conclusion should Philip (and the other apostles) have come to, in answer to Jesus' question, "Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?" Note: Jesus was not asking about the location of a bakery, He was asking how this need for food might possibly be met.
2. Mark 6:37 and Numbers 11:22 - How are these passages similar, and what do they reveal about the people speaking?

**Review** Supply short answers to the following questions.

1. Where did Jesus and His disciples go, in order to have a period of rest?

---

---

2. When Jesus and the disciples arrived there, what kept them from being able to rest?

---

---

3. How did Jesus test the faith of the disciples?

---

---

4. What miracle did Jesus perform in this place?

---

---

## Passages

Jesus answered them, "... The works that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me."  
John 10:25

"...the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." Matthew 20:28

Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good; Blessed is the man who trusts in Him! Psalm 34:8

## Hymn - TLH#355

Thou art the Way; to Thee alone  
From sin and death we flee;  
And he who would the Father seek  
Must seek Him, Lord, by Thee.

Thou art the Life; the rending tomb  
Proclaims Thy conqu'ring arm;  
And those who put their trust in Thee  
Nor death nor hell shall harm.

Thou art the Truth; Thy Word alone  
True wisdom can impart;  
Thou only canst inform the mind  
And purify the heart.

Thou art the Way, the Truth, the Life;  
Grant us that Way to know,  
That Truth to keep, that Life to win,  
Whose joys eternal flow. Amen.

**Prayer** - Think of what this story reveals about Jesus, and compose a prayer that includes thanks for something, and a request for something, based on this lesson. This may be a group exercise.

1. Where did Jesus and His disciples go, in order to have a period of rest?
2. When Jesus and the disciples arrived there, what kept them from being able to rest?
3. How did Jesus test the faith of the disciples?
4. What miracle did Jesus perform in this place?