

STORY

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

8/4/03

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 that 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)



STORY

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

8/20/2002

TEACHER PREPARATION FOR THE LESSON

Before Sunday:

1. Pray for understanding of the lesson, and for the God-given wisdom that will enable you to teach it to your students in a manner well-pleasing to the Lord, and edifying to the pupils (James 1:5: "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him").
2. Read through the passages listed above. Since each of the evangelists records portions of the miracle pertinent to a particular audience and purpose in writing, the "whole picture" can only be obtained by reading all four accounts.
3. Carefully read over the *Background* section below. If you have questions (whether about content or methods of presentation), consult with your pastor.

An effective technique for mentally retaining the information, so that you can teach the lesson proficiently on Sunday, is to pause after you have read each paragraph or so, and (without looking back) paraphrase the content of that paragraph. Re-read the notes as necessary, until you are confident that you understand the material, and can explain it to your students.

The material in the *Background* section is written for an adult level of understanding, and contains much more material than what you will present to your class on Sunday. However, it is important that your understanding of the material goes well beyond just what you will present on Sunday. This additional information enables you to respond to questions that may come from the students, and also strengthens you in your own understanding of God's Word.

4. Review the *Students' Materials*, considering how to present this content to your particular class. Different groups of students (*e.g.*, a Sunday School class composed entirely of Christian Day School students as contrasted to one of all public school children) will require somewhat different presentations.
5. For this particular lesson, decide whether you will prepare samples of barley loaves like the ones Jesus used in this miracle. There is a recipe included with the lesson materials, at the end of the *Teacher's Notes*. If you do decide to prepare these loaves, allow time to do so Saturday night or very early Sunday morning. Making these barley loaves probably will not give the students any greater understanding of the point of the lesson; but it will most certainly make it more memorable for them.

Sunday Morning:

1. Offer thanks to the Lord that you have been granted the blessing of being able to be a co-worker with Him in this ministry, as well as a prayer of petition for His blessings upon your students as you proclaim His Word. Remember in this prayer not only the students as a group, but also any individual students with particular needs or difficulties. Remember also James 1:5.
2. Review the lesson materials.
3. Get to church in time to set up your classroom as needed, and to greet the students as they arrive.

Vocabulary:

Note below any words from the story that you think your students might need to have explained. Define these words, and also give any other preparatory concept explanation you feel might be beneficial to your class, before presenting the lesson.

Words/Concepts to be explained:

- A. v. 7, “Two hundred denarii” One denarius equals approximately 17¢ in today’s American money, so the 200 denarii mentioned by Philip would be equal to about \$34. Read the notes under verse 7 for the significance of this statement by Philip.
- B. v. 9, “five barley loaves” These were flat, thin, slightly crispy, round sheets of barley bread. See the footnote on this in the **Background** section in connection with vv. 8&9. Note also that there is a recipe for these barley loaves included at the end of these Teacher’s Notes, in case you wish to bake some for use with this lesson.
- C. Other words or concepts to be explained:

OUTER AIM

Jesus multiplies five loaves of barley bread, and two fish, to abundantly feed 5,000 people.

INNER AIM

The deeds Jesus performed in His earthly ministry reveal and confirm that He is the Messiah, the promised Savior of the world, Whose righteous life and atoning death have accomplished our eternal salvation.

BACKGROUND

Review the following commentary (the verse numbers refer to the 6th chapter of *The Gospel According to John*) as part of your personal preparation for the teaching of this lesson.

vv. 1-4

This miracle¹ occurred near the end of the second year of Jesus’ public ministry, shortly before the third Passover of that ministry. Thus, this miracle was performed in the spring of the year, which accords exactly with the description of the location as being an area of lush grass (Mt. 14:19, Mk. 6:39, Jn. 6:10).

At this time, Jesus was well-known and extremely popular in Galilee. Indeed, He found it difficult to avoid drawing large crowds wherever He went. Unfortunately, as John notes (6:2), the motive of the people in thronging to Jesus was “...because they saw His signs which He performed on those who were diseased.” Tragically, the popularity of Jesus with most of the people was due to the material blessings incidental to His ministry, rather than having to do with matters of forgiveness of sins, righteousness before God, and true religion. In other words, The interest of most people who came to Jesus was not in the Kingdom of God, but in earthly benefits. They were ready (especially after this miracle) to **proclaim** Jesus as the Messiah—indeed, they would be willing to do so by force, if

¹ Of the thirty-three miracles of the Lord, this is the only one which is reported in all four Gospel accounts.

necessary (Jn. 6:15)—but they did not understand the true nature and ministry of the Messiah.

Jesus, along with the twelve apostles, crossed the Sea of Galilee from west to east, to a “desert place”;² there to withdraw from the crowds and the pressures of His public ministry for a short time. In his commentary on St. John’s Gospel, R.C.H. Lenski says, “St. Mark, indeed, gives another as the immediate motive, namely, that the Apostles, who were just returned from their mission, might have time at once for bodily and spiritual refreshment, might not be always in a crowd, always ministering to others, never to themselves.” Also, John the Baptist had just been murdered, and this additional stress added to the need for quietude and calm in the lives of Jesus and the apostles.

Many people of Galilee saw Jesus and His disciples leave, and—anticipating their destination—spread the word. When Jesus and the disciples arrived on the other side of the lake, multitudes of people were already there, waiting for Him. Although the presence of this crowd entirely defeated the purposes for which Jesus and the disciples had traveled to the area, Jesus nonetheless graciously received the multitudes, taught them, and healed the sick.

vv. 5&6

Although the masses of people came to Jesus primarily to benefit from miracles of healing such as they knew He had previously performed, the Lord ministered to more than just their bodily needs. Matthew records that Jesus healed them, Mark notes that Jesus taught them, and Luke gives the complete account, recording that Jesus “...spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and healed those who had need of healing.” John, assuming his readers’ familiarity with the other accounts, doesn’t mention the teaching and healing at all. He, instead, records the question Jesus asked Philip,³ and then mentions that the question was asked as a test, since “...He Himself knew what He would do.”

This incident concerning Philip is found only in the Gospel of St. John, even though the miracle itself is found in all four gospels. It is included, perhaps, to keep us from concluding that the disciples, rather than Jesus, were the ones who took the initiative in addressing the approaching need. Here in John, we learn that Jesus thought about this need already when the crowds first began to form.

Seeing the large number of people coming to Him, Jesus asked Philip (who would, of course, repeat the question to the others), “Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?” As already noted, Jesus knew how He was going to supply the need. His purpose in asking this question was to test the apostles, by getting them to consider the situation, and then apply to it what they knew of Him. They failed the test.

What should Philip (and the others) have answered? Here was Jesus, performing miracles of healing. They knew also of His other miracles, including the miracle at Cana, where Jesus changed water to wine—a very large quantity of wine. Should not the application of this knowledge have been for the disciples to have had complete confidence in the Lord’s ability and willingness to meet also this need?

There’s an even more important reason why the apostles should have had confidence that Jesus would

² Luke records (9:10) that this place belonged to the city called Bethsaida, but this Bethsaida is not the same one as Bethsaida of Galilee, the city from which Peter, Andrew, and Philip hailed. Bethsaida of Galilee was on the western side of the Sea of Galilee, and this place where Jesus performed the miracle of the Feeding of the 5,000 was a desert area on the northeast side of the sea, near a different city which was also called Bethsaida. At this time of year (spring, near the Passover), this uncultivated plain near the mouth of the Jordan would have had tall, green grass, exactly as described in the Biblical narration.

³ Jesus probably asked Philip this question before starting to minister to the people, so that while Jesus was ministering (*i.e.*, healing and teaching), Philip and the other apostles could consider what they knew of the Messiah, and apply this knowledge to Jesus in the present situation

meet all their needs, including the feeding of this large crowd of people. **Philip had previously (John 1:45) confessed that Jesus was the Messiah foretold by Moses and the prophets.** Indeed, it very well may have been this recognition by Philip that explains why Jesus posed the question to him. Recognizing that Jesus was the promised Messiah, and realizing that the Messiah was greater than Moses and the prophets, Philip and the others should have applied this to their present situation in answer to the question posed by Jesus to come to the conclusion that the Messiah can do more than Moses and the prophets did.⁴

In connection with this impending need and how it might be met, Philip should have remembered that Moses had given the people bread from heaven in the wilderness, the prophet Elijah had caused the jar of flour of the widow in Zarephath to remain full (I Kings 17:10-16), and the prophet Elisha had also fed many with little (II Kings 4:42-44). The application is clear: Jesus, the Messiah, could certainly do more than Moses, Elijah, and Elisha. He could meet the need of feeding these people in Galilee.

Philip and the others did not make this application. They did not recognize that Jesus, the Son of God, the same One about Whom the Psalmist says, “The eyes of all wait upon thee; and thou givest them their meat in due season. Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing,” the One Who has sustained all things from the creation of the world, could certainly this day feed these few thousand people.

v. 7 Rather than exercising and applying their faith to arrive at this conclusion, the disciples thought of nothing beyond their natural human (in)ability in connection with the need. Their response was to repeat Philip’s earlier observation, “Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give them something to eat?” (Mark 6:37) There is, in this reply, a faithlessness bordering on sarcasm.⁵ Note how this doubt of the Lord’s ability to do what His Word implies sounds so much like the wavering Moses in the wilderness, who—in spite of the many miracles he had seen—still had vestiges of human doubtfulness and lack of confidence in the Lord’s promises. Moses, doubting how God could possibly fulfill His promise to provide food for Israel in the wilderness, asked, “Shall flocks and herds be slaughtered for them, to provide enough for them? Or shall all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them, to provide enough for them?” (Numbers 11:22) The disciples asked, “Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give them something to eat?” (Mark 6:37) The parallel is striking.

Philip estimates the lowest possible cost—only enough that would give each person “a little something” rather than to actually feed them or satisfy their hunger. Yet even this minimum amount, approximately 200 denarii, was much more than Jesus and the disciples had. Philip is responding to the Lord’s question by stating that the need greatly exceeded their ability to meet it.⁶ The point, of course, is to emphasize that even if there had been some place nearby where a large quantity of food

⁴ This is what is known as an “argument from the lesser to the greater.” For example, if Jim is known to be much stronger than Fred, and if Fred can bench press a 150-pound weight, then certainly Jim can be expected to be able to bench press a heavier weight. In this case, the argument is that since the Messiah (Jesus) is greater than Moses and the prophets, and since Moses and the prophets performed works of miraculous feeding, so the Messiah could do all this and more.

⁵ This response, by the way, seems to be quite common when the weakness of our faith keeps us from acting in a manner consistent with our confession. *e.g.*, “Right. I’ll tithe, and we’ll simply live on air instead of food.”

⁶ One denarius equals approximately 17¢, so the entire amount was about \$34. However, one denarius was a day’s pay for a laborer, so this was equivalent to about 9 months’ worth of pay, using our average of 22½ working days per month.

could be bought, they wouldn't have had enough money to do so anyway. Meeting the need was impossible, humanly speaking, for two reasons: (1) there was no place nearby where such a quantity of food could be purchased, and (2) even if there were such a place, the disciples did not have anywhere near as much money as doing so would have cost.

Jesus' purpose in asking Philip where bread might be obtained for so many was to make them realize that meeting this need in the way they were thinking was impossible, and so they should turn their thoughts in a different direction.

vv. 8&9 Jesus had told the disciples to find out how much food was there among the people (Mark 6:38). Here in John 6:8f, Andrew reports the answer. There was a boy who had five loaves and two fish (presumably to sell).⁷ However, Andrew also adds the expression of hopelessness: "...but what are they among so many?" In effect, he is saying, "That won't work, there's not enough." The disciples apparently thought that Jesus had in mind to pool the available food, and all share.

What would Jesus make of such a small supply of food, when the need was so great and the possibility of obtaining more nonexistent? In connection with his commentary on this miracle, noting the weakness of the disciples' faith, Chrysostom quotes Psalm 78:19: "Yes, they spoke against God: They said, 'Can God prepare a table in the wilderness?'" Chrysostom suggests that this Psalm is a Messianic prophecy, fulfilled in this event, and also notes how fittingly this wilderness location, and the lush early spring grass, fit the Psalmist's picture. It is also worth noting that the failure of the apostles to apply their faith to their actions (that is, although they knew Jesus to be the promised Messiah, they still did not act in this situation according to that knowledge) did not prevent Jesus from nonetheless abundantly supplying the need. Such is the grace of our Savior.

Five loaves and two fish was not much food, and it was the type of food eaten by the poorest classes of people. Barley was of significantly less value than wheat. At the time of Elisha, barley was worth only half the value of wheat (II Kings 7:1), and in the New Testament era, it was worth approximately one third the value of wheat (Revelation 6:6). However, the faithful know that God can do much with little. In fact, these five barley loaves cannot help but remind us of the dream of the Midianites and the Amalekites that was overheard by Gideon and Purah. (Judges 7:9-15) This dream signified how the Lord would use the seemingly inadequate force of Gideon's 300 soldiers—represented by a lowly loaf of **barley bread**—to meet and overcome what seemed to be an overwhelming need. Here in the wilderness of Bethsaida, Jesus would use the seemingly inadequate supply of five barley loaves and two fish to meet and overcome the hunger of over 5,000 people.

v. 10 The Matthew account records that Jesus told the disciples to bring the bread and fish to Him, which

⁷ These were cooked fish, ὠψαρια, such as the cooked salt fish most commonly used in this region as a condiment of bread. Raw fish—such as those caught by a fisherman, or those for sale in a market—would have required the use of the word ἰχθυεῖς. The boy with the bread and fish was apparently a vendor, who had brought this small supply (although more than one person would have brought, if it had been only for himself) of fish and loaves for the purpose of selling them.

Note: This "bread" was not loaves such as we use. The artoi were flat, thin (about 1½"), round sheets of barley bread that were baked until almost crisp. They were used by the poorer classes of people. Pieces were broken off, and often used in lieu of plates, sort of like a thick cracker, for food such as broiled fish.

means they were to buy them from the boy. Jesus then told them to have the people⁸ sit down. Mark's account hints how the estimate of 5,000 could be made with a degree of accuracy: the men were grouped in ranks of 100's and 50's. This orderly seating, with rows between, also facilitated the serving of so many. Even in the performance of a miracle, God is a God of order, not confusion.

v. 11

Notice the utter simplicity of the inspired account. There was no long, pretentious, Pharasaical ceremony. Jesus took the fish and loaves, gave thanks, and distributed the food.

Note well the contrast between Philip's estimate that a minimum amount of food might be purchased for 200 denarii; compared to what Jesus did in giving to everyone "as much as they wanted." Jesus does not skimp. This reminds us of the verse from Hymn 459, "Thou art coming to a king, / Large petitions with thee bring; / For His grace and power are such / None can ever ask too much." We might also remember the first miracle Jesus performed, where in changing the water into wine at the wedding in Cana, the ruler of the feast pronounced that wine to be in every way superior, and expressed surprise that the "best wine" wasn't served first. A false asceticism⁹ has no part in genuine, Biblical Christianity.

v. 12

Note the use of the aorist verb "were filled." Each person ate all he could. Note also that even with all this abundance, nothing is to be wasted. This careful avoidance of waste is not the point of the story; but it does incidentally offer us a glimpse into one facet of the Biblical principle of stewardship: a profusion of material blessings is not something that should lead to careless disregard in connection with the proper use of those blessings.

This gathering up of the extra food has additional significance: the purpose of Jesus' ministry is not to provide an endless supply of material needs. If it were, there would have been no point in saving the "leftovers," since Jesus could have merely continued to miraculously provide whatever additional food was needed, whenever it was needed. We should avoid the trap of trivializing this miracle of our Lord by thinking of its primary application in terms of the *Fourth Petition* of the Lord's Prayer ("Give us this day our daily bread"). Jesus is not to be viewed (as the people who were fed on this day saw Him) as a "bread king."

The miracle has significance beyond just the meeting of a fleeting, temporal need. The "point" of the miracle was not that we can trust Jesus to supply our material needs (we can do so, of course; but that is not the point of the event). This was much more; it was a sign (not just a supernatural work; but one which signifies some particular truth), by means of which the Savior was revealing and confirming His identity and mission as the Messiah. Trench¹⁰ says, "Thus He, all whose works were 'signs,' embodied and visible words, did in this miracle proclaim Himself the true bread of the world, the unexhausted and inexhaustible upholder of all life, in whom there should be enough and to spare for the spiritual needs of all hungering souls in all ages."

⁸ The NKJV is an especially good translation here. Most English translations fail to observe the different words used in the Greek to distinguish between *people* (including women and children) and *men*. The NKJV accurately notes that Jesus had the disciples make *the people* (τοὺς ἀνθρώπους) sit down, and that *the men* (οἱ ἄνδρες) numbered about 5,000.

⁹ Errorists are always trying to make Christianity either libertine or pietistic. These are opposite errors, addressed also by Jesus against the whining errorists of His day (Matthew 11:17-20, Luke 7:32-34).

¹⁰ Richard Chenevix Trench, *Notes on the Miracles and the Parables of Our Lord* (Westwood, NJ.: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1953)

After the crowd had eaten all it wished, twelve baskets (one for each Apostle) of fragments were gathered up.¹¹ St. John records that it was the Lord Himself Who commanded that these pieces be gathered up, and he also records the reason: “...so that nothing is lost.” “He who had but now shown Himself God, again submits Himself to the laws and conditions of his life upon earth, so that, as in the miracle itself his power, in this command his humility, shines eminently forth.” (Trench) In His earthly ministry, Jesus was in His State of Humiliation (exinanition). After using His divine power in the performance of this sign, He once again sets aside the use of His almighty power, in order to fulfill His office as our Redeemer, taking our place under the Law.¹² This miracle was performed to signify that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of the everlasting God, with power and majesty. It was **not** performed for the trifling purpose of meeting a fleeting, temporal need; nor would Jesus continue to provide physical food in this miraculous manner. Therefore, Jesus told His disciples to gather up the remaining pieces, which would be used to meet future needs.

These remaining pieces greatly exceeded the original stock from which Jesus performed the miracle, thus being a visible symbol of that Christian giving which increases, rather than diminishes, the wealth of the giver (cf. Prov. 11:24 & 25). There is, perhaps, another reason why the Scriptures record the fact that twelve baskets of bread and fish pieces remained after everyone had eaten his fill: the existence of these “leftovers” removed any possible objection from doubters who had not been present at the event that something akin to “mass hysteria” had caused the people to be deluded into falsely thinking a miracle had taken place. The “leftovers” formed tangible evidence, observable and undeniable to anyone who cared to investigate the matter, that the reported event had, in fact, occurred.

v. 13 In this one verse, John juxtaposes the twelve baskets of “leftovers” with the five loaves from which they were produced. This underscores the fact that the amount remaining after all the people had eaten their fill was much more than the amount with which they started.

V 14 John adds this (“Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, ‘This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world’”), which the synoptists leave out. Matthew, Mark, and Luke record that after gathering the leftovers, Jesus had His disciples return by boat back across the Sea of Galilee, while He remained and dismissed the people, and then went up on a mountain to pray. John’s Gospel, alone, reveals the thoughts of the people about Jesus, because John’s inspired purpose is to show how opposition to the true ministry of Jesus developed also now in Galilee.

These people were like many today who try to make Christ and Christianity serve their own

¹¹ St. Mark is the only evangelist who mentions that these “leftover” fragments included fish as well as the bread.

¹² “Accordingly, the humiliation of Christ consists in this, that He refrained, during His earthly life, from the full use (χρησιζ) of the divine glory communicated to His human nature.” (Pieper)

“This majesty He always had according to the personal union, and yet He abstained from it in the state of His humiliation, and on this account truly increased in all wisdom and favor with God and men; therefore He exercised His majesty, not always, but when it pleased Him, until after His resurrection He entirely laid aside the form of a servant, but not the nature, and was established in the full use, manifestation, and declaration of the divine majesty.” (Formula of Concord, *Trigl.* 821, Epit., VIII, 16)

purposes¹³ rather than recognizing His true nature and ministry. These people were ready—even extremely eager—to embrace and follow Jesus, so long as He led them on the path of their own choosing! So it is also with many today. Jesus, however, both then and now, will have nothing to do with that kind of “discipleship.”

Take special note of the use of the word σημειον (sign). A sign is a deed that signifies something more than its own performance. A sign points beyond itself to something to which it attests. This is more than just “miracle,” a deed that produces wonder. A sign goes beyond that. It has ethical force. This sign points to Who Jesus is; but the people didn’t look beyond the miracle of bread and fish. At most, they saw it as indicating that Jesus could meet their earthly needs. They wanted a king to overthrow the Romans, and to restore Israel to prominence and prosperity.

The Greek uses the imperfect tense, “...they were saying” in verse 14, rather than the simple past (“said”) chosen by the NKJV translators. The imperfect tense of the Greek suggests an ongoing condition, rather than a completed action.

“The prophet who is to come into the world.” (compare John 1:21 and Deut. 18:15) This is a Messianic designation, but the people misperceived the nature and work of the promised Messiah. After this miracle, the people planned to take Jesus—against His will, if necessary—to Jerusalem, and there proclaim Him their king. Jesus therefore withdrew from them before they made this attempt.

STUDENT PRAYER

After the presentation of the lesson, lead the students in prayer. Include petitions that we might at all times remember that Jesus proved through His miraculous works that He is the promised Messiah, Who has delivered us from sin, death, and the devil. Include also petitions that we may, with the help of God, confidently apply this truth in all areas of our lives (unlike the disciples, who recognized that Jesus is the Messiah, but who sometimes did not apply that truth in the “difficult” situations in their lives).

PRESENTATION

Tell the story in your own words, tailoring the vocabulary, concept presentation, and background information to the level of your particular class. Levels 3 and 4 could read the story from the student folder; but if you choose this method, it is recommended that you have **volunteers** read the material aloud, for the entire class to hear.

APPLICATIONS

1. The apostles, in this instance, failed to apply what they knew about Jesus (that He is the promised Messiah, the almighty Son of God, gracious and merciful to His people) to the difficulty that confronted them (feeding the hungry crowd). So also, we sometimes may fail to rely on the Savior, and to confidently follow the principles of His Word, when we are confronted with problems to which we do not see an obvious solution.

¹³ For example, there are some who fashion Jesus as a revolutionary, others as a pacifist, yet others as an antinomian, and many who portray Him as merely an example for us to follow. All of these opinions are chosen in preference to believing the truth: that Jesus is the Son of God, Whose perfect righteousness is imputed to us, and Whose sacrificial death has washed away our sins, redeeming us from sin, death, and the devil.

This lesson should remind us that at all times and in all circumstances, the Lord will cause all things to “...work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.” (Romans 8:28) We, therefore, need never fear to apply in our daily lives that faith which we profess with our mouths.

2. The Name of Jesus is often mis-used. There are those (like the crowds who came to Jesus only because they wanted to benefit from His miracles of healing, or who were willing to follow Him only because they thought that He would be an earthly, political leader of Israel) who claim to be His followers, but whose perception of His person and work is entirely wrong. They often speak in what sounds like favorable terms about Jesus, but they see Him only as a moral example, or no more than another prophet, or as a fighter for human rights and dignity. We must remember that Jesus is the Son of God, and that the primary focus of His ministry was spiritual: He came to save sinners, that we might have eternal life.
3. Jesus not only supplies all our needs, His providence is abundant (*cf.* v. 11 commentary). Nonetheless, part of proper stewardship of the Lord’s gifts involves not wasting what He provides (*cf.* commentary on vv. 12 & 13).
4. The miracles of Jesus (as also the fulfilled prophecies of Scripture) provide “signs” that reveal and confirm His Person and Word. Our faith is not a product of human speculation; the content of that faith is revealed by God, and confirmed by the works Jesus performed.

PASSAGES

These passages can be assigned as memory work, or simply worked in to the lesson presentation.

We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote—Jesus of Nazareth.... John 1:45

“If You are the Christ, tell us plainly.” Jesus answered them, “I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in My Father’s name, they bear witness of Me.” John 10:24f

You alone are the Lord; You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and everything on it, the seas and all that is in them, and you preserve them all. Nehemiah 9:6

...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

Yours, O Lord, is the greatness, the power and the glory, the victory and the majesty; For all that is in heaven and in earth is Yours; Yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and You are exalted as head over all. Both riches and honor come from You, and You reign over all. In Your hand is power and might; in Your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all. I Chronicles 29:11&12

Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good; Blessed is the man who trusts in Him! Oh, fear the Lord, you His saints! There is no want to those who fear Him. The young lions lack and suffer hunger; but those who seek the Lord shall not lack any good thing. Psalm 34:8-10

HYMN CHOICES

“Come, My Soul, Thy Suit Prepare” (TLH 459:1-3)

“Thou Art the Way; to Thee Alone” (TLH 355:1-4)

“The Lord My Pasture Shall Prepare” (TLH 368:1-4)

RECIPE FOR BARLEY BREAD

- 1 cup barley flour (if your local market does not carry barley flour, you can probably find it at health food stores; especially those that carry “organic” food products)
- 6 tablespoons of sesame oil
- 2 tablespoons of water
- a dash of coarse kosher salt
- sesame seeds (optional, for topping; probably not authentic)

Combine all ingredients, and knead constantly for five to ten minutes, until the dough is somewhat “stretchy.” Add a little more oil or water if necessary, remembering that the dough should be somewhat oily.

Roll out the dough on a well-floured (remember, barley flour) board. For our purposes, it should be approximately ½" to 1" thick, although you may want to experiment with this. If you do not have a rolling pin, simply form small blobs of dough into ½" to 1" thick cakes. If you wish to make the cakes as uniform as possible (after all, you don’t want the Sunday School children to get into a fight about who gets the biggest cake), use the rim of a water tumbler to cut out individual cakes.

If you wish to have sesame seeds on the cakes, oil the tops of the loaves and sprinkle them with the sesame seeds before baking. Bake the cakes on an oiled baking tray in a 400° oven. How long this will take depends on the thickness, so keep an eye on the loaves. Bake until they are lightly browned around the edges.

Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand

Matthew 14:13-21; Mark 6:30-44; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-15

The Story

Parents: Review this lesson with your child.

One day, Jesus and His disciples needed rest, so they traveled in a boat across the Sea of Galilee to a place where not many people lived. They hoped that by doing this they would be able—at least for a little while—to avoid the large crowds of people who always gathered around Jesus in other parts of Galilee.

When Jesus and His disciples got to where they were going, they found that many people had followed them there, too. Jesus and the disciples would not be able to rest, as they had hoped; but instead of becoming angry, Jesus taught the people about the Kingdom of God, and He healed those who were sick.

Jesus knew that soon the crowds of people would be very hungry, so He tested the faith of His twelve disciples by asking them where they could get food, so that all these crowds of people could eat. The disciples knew that they couldn't buy food for that many people, but they should have remembered that Jesus is the Son of God, and then turned to Him in faith to meet whatever the needs might be. Instead, their faith was weak, and they thought there was no way to solve the problem.

Jesus knew all along what He would do. He performed a miracle. He took five loaves of bread, and two broiled fish, and had the disciples pass them out to the people. Jesus caused the bread and fish to increase, so that when they were all finished, 5,000 men had eaten all they wanted, and there were still twelve baskets full of fish and bread left over.

By performing this miracle, Jesus not only gave His disciples a lesson about faith, He

also proved that He is the Son of God, the Messiah promised in the Bible, who would save us from our sins.

Jesus fed five thousand men.

We can trust Jesus to provide food for us.

Passage

"Give us this day our daily bread." Matthew 6:11

Hymn & Prayer - TLH #644

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heav'nly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.



Classroom Activity - *Who Remembers the Story?* Teacher, read the following questions and answers to the class and have the students put their thumb up if the answer you read is correct; put their thumbs down if incorrect; or they could stand up for the correct answers.

1. Jesus and His disciples needed rest, so they went to
 - A. Disneyland.
 - B. bed.
 - C. a place where not many people lived.
 - D. Jerusalem.

2. When Jesus and the disciples got to where they were going,
 - A. they spent the day resting.
 - B. many people were already there.
 - C. they became lost.
 - D. they went for a hike.

3. Which of the following things did Jesus do?
 - A. teach the people about the Kingdom of God
 - B. heal those who were sick
 - C. perform a miracle to feed all the people
 - D. tell the crowds to go away, so that He could rest

4. What mistake did the disciples make?
 - A. they couldn't catch any fish
 - B. they tried to sneak away, to get some rest
 - C. they brought too much food
 - D. they didn't trust Jesus to be able feed the people.

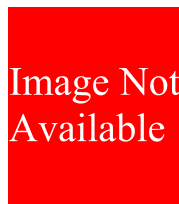
5. What great truth should we remember from this lesson?
 - A. The works Jesus did prove that He is the Son of God.
 - B. Always take extra food when you go on a trip.
 - C. The disciples always applied their faith in the right way.
 - D. Jesus was not popular with the people of Galilee.

Classroom Art Activity- Teacher, help the students color and decorate the magnet below. Print their name in the blank side. Put a strip of magnetic tape behind it after it is decorated.



*Alternate Activity: Cut out pictures of food, clothing and shelter from magazines. Have the children glue stick the pictures onto a paper plate. Print the Bible passage on each plate and decorate as needed.

*Alternate Activity: Use a square of art foam about 3" x 3" (any color), glue the passage, 2 Goldfish or Whales brand crackers; 5 General Mills French Toast Crunch Cereal squares. Eat the extras for your snack.





Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand

Matthew 14:13-21; Mark 6:30-44; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-15



The Story

One day, Jesus and His disciples needed rest, so they traveled in a boat across the Sea of Galilee to a place where not many people lived. They hoped that by doing this they would be able—at least for a little while—to avoid the large crowds of people who always gathered around Jesus in other parts of Galilee.

When Jesus and His disciples got to where they were going, they found that many people had followed them there, too. Jesus and the disciples would not be able to rest, as they had hoped; but instead of becoming angry, Jesus taught the people about the Kingdom of God, and He healed those who were sick.

Jesus knew that soon the crowds of people would be very hungry, so He tested the faith of His twelve disciples by asking them where they could get food, so that all these crowds of people could eat. The disciples

knew that they couldn't buy food for that many people, but they should have remembered that Jesus is the Son of God, and then turned to Him in faith to meet whatever the needs might be. Instead, their faith was weak, and they thought there was no way to solve the problem.

Jesus knew all along what He would do. He performed a miracle. He took five loaves of bread, and two broiled fish, and had the disciples pass them out to the people. Jesus caused the bread and fish to increase, so that when they were all finished, 5,000 men had eaten all they wanted, and there were still twelve baskets full of fish and bread left over.

By performing this miracle, Jesus not only gave His disciples a lesson about faith, He also proved that He is the Son of God, the Messiah promised in the Bible, who would save us from our sins.

Jesus feeds five thousand men.

We can trust Jesus to provide food for us.

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.

1. Jesus and His disciples needed rest, so they went to
 - A. Disneyland.
 - B. bed.
 - C. a place where not many people lived.
 - D. Jerusalem.

2. When Jesus and the disciples got to where they were going,
 - A. they spent the day resting.
 - B. many people were already there.
 - C. they became lost.
 - D. they went for a hike.

3. Which of the following things did Jesus **NOT** do?
 - A. teach the people about the Kingdom of God
 - B. heal those who were sick
 - C. perform a miracle to feed all the people
 - D. tell the crowds to go away, so that He could rest

4. What mistake did the disciples make?
 - A. they couldn't catch any fish
 - B. they tried to sneak away, to get some rest
 - C. they brought too much food
 - D. they didn't simply trust Jesus to be able take care of any need, including this one (feeding the people)

5. What great truth should we remember from this lesson?
 - A. The works Jesus did prove that He is the Son of God.
 - B. Always take extra food when you go on a trip.
 - C. The disciples always applied their faith in the right way.
 - D. Jesus was not popular with the people of Galilee.

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):

1. Jesus miraculously fed 5,000 people, using only five barley loaves and two fish.
2. Jesus and His disciples crossed the Sea of Galilee in a boat.
3. The disciples didn't know how to solve the problem of feeding so many people.
4. (Not a “theme”) Draw loaves and fish, showing how many of each Jesus used to feed 5,000 people.

Passage - Teacher, 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.

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

Hymn & Prayer - TLH #644

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heav'nly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.
Amen.

Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand

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



The Story

One day, Jesus and His disciples needed rest, so they traveled in a boat across the Sea of Galilee to a place where not many people lived. They hoped that by doing this they would be able—at least for a little while—to avoid the large crowds of people who always gathered around Jesus in other parts of Galilee.

Jesus had become very popular with many of the people of Galilee, but His popularity was mostly because of the miracles He performed. This was not what Jesus wanted. He wanted the people to understand about the Kingdom of God, and about how He would suffer and die to pay for the sins of all people. Most of the people, though, were much more interested in what Jesus would do for their physical needs than in what He would do for their spiritual needs.

When Jesus and His disciples arrived at where they were going, they found that many people had followed them there, too. Jesus and the disciples would not be able to rest, as they had hoped; but instead of becoming angry, Jesus taught the people about the Kingdom of God, and He healed those who were sick.

Jesus knew that soon the crowds of people would be very hungry, so He tested the faith of His twelve disciples by asking them where they could get food, so that all these crowds of people

could eat. The disciples knew that they couldn't buy food for that many people, but they should have remembered that Jesus is the Son of God, and then turned to Him in faith to meet whatever the needs might be. Instead, their faith was weak, and they thought there was no way to solve the problem.

Jesus knew all along what He would do. He performed a miracle. He took five loaves of bread, and two broiled fish, and had the disciples pass them out to the people. Jesus caused the bread and fish to increase, so that when they were all finished, 5,000 men had eaten all they wanted, and there were still twelve baskets full of fish and bread left over.

By performing this miracle, Jesus not only gave His disciples a lesson about faith, He also proved that He is the Son of God, the Messiah promised in the Bible, who would save us from our sins. This is what Jesus Himself says about the purpose of His miracles: ***The works that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me. John 10:25***

Because the works done by Jesus prove that He is the Messiah (the Son of God, promised as the Savior of the World), we can believe His Word, and trust Him to forgive our sins, and to also meet all our true needs.

Jesus feeds five thousand men.

We can trust Jesus to provide food for us.

Activity One - Who remembers the story? - Read the following questions and answers.
Circle the letter of the right answer.

1. Jesus and His disciples needed rest, so they went to
 - A. Disneyland.
 - B. bed.
 - C. a place where not many people lived.
 - D. Jerusalem.
2. When Jesus and the disciples got to where they were going,
 - A. they spent the day resting.
 - B. many people were already there.
 - C. they became lost.
 - D. they went for a hike.
3. Which of the following things did Jesus **NOT** do?
 - A. teach the people about the Kingdom of God
 - B. heal those who were sick
 - C. perform a miracle to feed all the people
 - D. tell the crowds to go away, so that He could rest
4. What mistake did the disciples make?
 - A. they couldn't catch any fish
 - B. they tried to sneak away, to get some rest
 - C. they brought too much food
 - D. they didn't simply trust Jesus to be able take care of any need, including this one (feeding the people)
5. What great truth should we remember from this lesson?
 - A. The works Jesus did prove that He is the Son of God.
 - B. Always take extra food when you go on a trip.
 - C. The disciples always applied their faith in the right way.
 - D. Jesus was not popular with the people of Galilee.

Passage - Fill in the blanks in the Bible passage, using the words in the box.

Father's

Me

works

witness

The _____ that I do in My _____ name, they bear
_____ of _____. *John 10:25*

Activity Two - Art work; draw a picture showing one of the following.

1. Jesus miraculously fed 5,000 people, using only five barley loaves and two fish.
2. Jesus and His disciples crossed the Sea of Galilee in a boat.
3. The disciples didn't know how to solve the problem of feeding so many people.
4. In feeding 5,000 people, Jesus used two fish and five loaves of bread.

Hymn - TLH #644

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heav'nly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

Prayer

Dear Lord Jesus, help us always to remember that You are the promised Messiah, Who has saved us from our sins, as Your miracles prove. We pray that You will send to us the Holy Spirit, to make us strong in the faith as we study Your Holy Word, so that we will always trust in You to meet all our needs, no matter what the situation may be. Amen.

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?

Prayer

We thank You, Heavenly Father, for sending Jesus, Your Son, to be our Savior. We praise You that both the Person and teachings of Jesus have been confirmed for us 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

(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 - 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?

What God Tells Us - *Discuss* the following questions in class, based on the Bible story for today.

1. According to verse 2, what was the reason for the popularity of Jesus in Galilee?
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.
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?

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.

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?