

- 1 **In His Steps: Providing Our Daily Bread**
Mark 6:32-42 NLT
- 2 **Did you know that this story, the feeding of the five thousand, is the only miracle Jesus performed that is recorded in all four Gospels?**
 - Therefore we can conclude that this was considered by the early church to be a very important event.
 - It occurred during the Passover season about one year before Christ's death (John 6:4).
 - This was a time when large crowds gathered wherever Jesus went.
- 3 **Now, according to the parallel gospel accounts, at this time several things had happened.**
 - For one, Jesus had just been rejected by the people in His hometown of Nazareth.
 - As a matter of fact; He departed the area as they were attempting to push Him off a cliff.
 - His disciples had just returned from a mission trip to surrounding areas, a trip He had sent them on to spread the good news of his kingdom (Mark 6:30; Luke 9:10).
 - Also, word had just come to Him that Herod had beheaded His forerunner, John the Baptist.
 - Not only was John His friend and partner in the ministry but also he was Jesus' cousin, His own flesh and blood.
- 4 **Some might say Jesus was fleeing for His life, but not so.**
 - He wasn't afraid of Herod; He knew His time had not yet come.
 - No, Jesus needed time to get away, time to get alone, to grieve, to pray, to rest, to be with the disciples and hear about their experiences on the mission field and to teach them.
 - He knew his disciples also needed time to recharge their batteries.
- 5 **So Jesus and the disciples got into a boat and crossed the Sea of Galilee to a deserted place to be alone.**
 - But when the people heard that Jesus had departed they followed on foot.
 - When Jesus saw that the crowds had followed them, how did He react?
 - Did He get back into the boat and go further away?
 - Did He get upset that He wouldn't get any rest or time alone with the disciples?
- 6 **No, far from being irritated by this intrusion, He had compassion for them and began to cure them from any and all afflictions they had.**
 - Just like He'll have compassion for each of us when we seek him.
 - All we have to do is turn to Him and put our trust in Him.
 - He'll take care of our needs.
 - Now notice I didn't say that He'll take care of all our wants, but He will provide the necessities of life.
- 7 **But back to our story. There were two distinguishable evenings recognized in the Jewish culture in Jesus' time, the first being around 3:00 pm and the second being at sundown.**
 - Now when the first evening came, the disciples knew the crowds would soon grow hungry, as their own stomachs were probably starting to growl.
 - So they came to Jesus and said, "Send these people away, Lord."
 - "It is getting late and time for dinner and we have no way to feed them, so send them on their way now."
 - "Let them go to the villages and fend for themselves!"
- 8 **Now this would not have been an unusual request to make of the crowds.**
 - The people probably wouldn't be surprised if the disciples sent them on their way to find

supper.

- Think about it. These people, like the rest of us, had been seeking their daily bread every day of their lives.
- They had had to be feed themselves yesterday, and they'd have to feed themselves tomorrow.
- But like so many of Jesus' miracles, the main purpose was to reveal the heart of God.
- He is not callous to our struggle for "daily bread". He taught his disciples to pray "give us this day our daily bread".
- Jesus wanted to show through this incredible miracle what God is doing in even the most ordinary time – providing our daily bread – what we need for today.
- Jesus is revealing the heart of God who sympathizes with us in our needs, and seeks to meet even the most basic – our daily bread.

9 **Just ponder this miracle: Here is the Christ, the Son of God.**

- He is the one who had provided manna and water in the desert for the children of Israel (Exodus 16:2-3 and Numbers 20:1-6).
- He is the one who provided when Elijah and the widow lacked food (1 Kings 17:1-8).
- He provided when Hezekiah lacked health (2 Kings 20:1), and when Job was sick with boils (Job 2:7).

10 **But you see the disciples still didn't get it.**

- Jesus assured them there was no need to send the crowd away.
- Why should the people leave when the One who opens His hand and supplies the needs of every living thing is present?
- Jesus, in fact, catches the disciples off guard by saying, "You give them something to eat."
- Can you imagine the look on the disciple's faces; they must have been floored?
- "Give them something to eat!? We have nothing but five loaves and two fish."
- They however have forgotten, just like we do, they also had the Christ, Jesus the Son of Living God!

11 **Patiently, Jesus says, "Bring them here to me."**

- Then, can you picture Jesus having the crowds to sit?
- Now, if you haven't already figured out there was more than five thousand people present.
- The title feeding of the five thousand is very misleading but Matthew tells us it was five thousand men plus women and children.
- For all we know if each man had a wife, and just one or two children the numbers could have been more like 10,000, 15,000 or 20,000 or more people present.

12 **Now, Jesus takes the five loaves and two fish, stands looking to the heavens, probably with His arms raised, blesses (giving thanks) and breaks the loaves and gives it to the disciples and tells them to feed the people.**

- And that is exactly what they did and there was plenty for all.
- No, they didn't have their choice of the buffet bar at Ryan's Steak house, or a Quarter Pounder with cheese, fries and a chocolate shake but they were all satisfied.
- When they were full the disciples gathered what was left and there was twelve baskets full left over.
- There was more left over when Jesus finished than when He began.
- There is an old saying; you can't out give God – just try! Ironically enough, there was a basket for each unbelieving disciple.

13 **The miracle is a spiritual lesson for disciples of every generation.**

- The hungry multitude is always present.
- There is always a little band of disciples with seemingly pitiful resources.

- And always there is the compassionate Savior.
- When disciples are willing to give Him their little all, He multiplies it to feed thousands.
- The notable difference is that the thousands who were fed by the Sea of Galilee had their hunger satisfied only for a short time;
- Those today that feed upon the living Christ are satisfied forever (see John 6:35).

14  **And so Jesus turns to us, his disciples and says, "You give them something to eat."**

- What? Impossible! How can we meet such a great need?
- Yet often this reveals more about ourselves than anything else.
- We are complacent, passive, and far too easily satisfied.
- We nonchalantly accept the status quo.
- But just accepting the fact of those caught in the cycle of hunger - -almost 49 million Americans – and those caught in poverty, along with the accompanying spiritual despair – mostly reveals our callous, passive, hearts.
- Jesus turns to us and says, "Give them something to eat." If we will provide our little bread – if we will stir ourselves to caring effort – God will provide the miracle.
- It's widely acknowledged that hunger in our world is more a matter of our willingness to address the problem than a problem of supply.

15  **There was once a missionary in the Philippines who worked where we served in Baguio.**

- He led many worship services in little huts that had been put up on stilts because of the monsoon rains that last from May to November.
- One Sunday he went up into a little hut only to find it packed with people.
- It was communion Sunday.
- In the front was a little table covered to the floor with white cloth.
- On it were a little piece of bread and a tiny Dixie cup filled with grape juice.
- He wondered whether these elements would be enough for this large group huddled together.
- But he forged ahead. He said the words over the bread and passed it around. Somehow, miraculously, a small corner of it came back.

16  **Then he took the little cup in his hand just as he had held that silver chalice many times back in the States and said, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Drink ye all of it."**

- He passed it around. It made it through the first two rows and came back. It was set on the table in front of him, empty.
- They looked at him smiling as if to say, "Produce some more now."
- He looked about frantically for a bottle of grape juice.
- There was none in sight.
- He prayed, "Lord, help me" and suddenly a little brown arm came up from under the table and snatched the cup off.
- The missionary smiled at the people nervously and then pulled up the cloth only to see a little Filipino man with a pitcher of water and four packages of grape fizzies!
- Dropping the cloth quickly, the missionary looked back at the crowd smiling confidently.
- Pretty soon a little brown arm came up and placed a full cup of grape juice on top of the table.
- And off they went with the rest of the service. "You provide the bread; let me take care of the miracle."

17  **What little thing can you do – a word of hope? A helping hand?**

- Though it may seem useless to you against the vast needs of the world, do it.
- Whatever the deed, God will bless it and spread it.

- You and I are called to bring our tiny field to God's great sky, "our filament of wire to God's electric power.
- Thus the scientist brings his labored search, and God gives the flash that leads to new discovery.
- Thus the composer brings his pen and seeming poverty of thought and – suddenly the inspiration.
- Thus the saint brings" his or her own humble life and the world is somehow changed.

18 **Worry not about what little you have to give.**

- Whatever it is, God will bless it and spread it to the glory of God's kingdom.
- Don't worry about the result.
- You provide the bread. Let God take care of the miracle.
- In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

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