The Miracle Meal

John 6:1-14
10-6-2024

Introduction:

*** Jesus Christ is the God of the impossible**
(Jesus is limited by nothing and can do anything, anytime, for anyone, no matter how challenging their problem is)

I. There is <u>NO NEED TOO GREAT</u> for Jesus to meet it (v.5-7)
(A lesson on <u>Faith</u>)

II. There is <u>NO SUPPLY TOO SMALL</u> for Jesus to use it (v.8-9)
(A lesson on <u>Giving</u>)

III. There is <u>NO ASSIGNMENT TOO DIFFICULT</u> for Jesus to accomplish it (v.10-11)
(A lesson on <u>Delegation</u>)

IV. There are <u>NO FRAGMENTS TOO USELESS</u> for Jesus to waste them (v.12-13)
(A lesson on <u>Stewardship</u>)

Conclusion – v.14

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The fact that Christ's feeding of the 5,000 occurs in all four Gospels shows its unique importance and its relevance to all people.

On two occasions, the Lord Jesus produced a miraculous feast (here, 5,000 men are fed with 5 loaves and 2 fish; and in Matthew 15:34-38, 4,000 men are fed with 7 loaves and a few sardines).

Matthew 14:14 reveals that it was Christ's compassonate heart that led him to feed the multitude.

What Jesus saw with His eye affected His heart.
The needs of the people stirred the compassion of Christ (His compassion today remains the same).
When Jeremiah saw the plight of his own Jewish people, he said, *"Mine eye affecteth mine heart"* (Lam. 3:51).

There is something desperately wrong with us when our hearts are not moved at the plight of the multitudes around us. Jesus felt an intense compassion because of His perfect perception of hell and the torment those would face who did not receive Him (MacARthur, p. 428).

"Jesus and His disciples desperately needed rest (Mark 6:31); yet the needs of the multitude touched His heart" (Wiersbe, p. 50).

The disciples--perhaps weary because of the activities and ministry of the busy day-- recommend that Jesus dismiss the multitude so that they could have dinner and be on their way home.

The disciples give three reasons for such a request:

1) The location was inconvenient and incondusive.

   The area where they were gathered was a *"desert place"* (a deserted, remote, "out in the middle of nowhere"). There was no answer to the need at hand where they were located. . . I should say, there appeared to be no provision in sight! God specializes in turning barren deserts into banqueting tables!

2) The time was getting late.

"The time is now past"(Mt.14) - the hour was past for dismissal so that the men, women, and children could at a reasonable time make it to the villages for food and lodging.

Remember, God is not bound by the clock! He is not strapped by the timetable that straps us. His provision is always on time. God can do more in five minutes than we could do in a lifetime! No, make that a trillion lifetimes!

3) Their limited resources were inadequate to meet the needs of the multitude.

They looked at their limited earthly, human resources and saw no answer (five barley loaves and two fish).

"How easy it is for us to send people away, to make excuses, to plead a lack of resources" (Wiersbe, p. 51).

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I. There is NO NEED TOO GREAT for Jesus to meet it (v.5-7)
(A lesson on Faith)

Mark records the detail that Jesus had spent time teaching them many things (Mk.6:34)

"Give ye them to eat" (Mt.14:16) - Their eyes must have popped out as this statement came!
Can you imagine being put on the spot to produce a banquet (to become an instant caterer) for 10-20,000 people! And to have next to nothing to do it with?

When Jesus told His disciples to feed them, He knew they couldn't. He wanted them to learn a valuable lesson: What they could not do, He could. It was impossible for them to meet the needs of the multitudes, just like it is impossible for us. But He can! We are not adequate in ourselves, but He is!

"Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?"

No doubt as Jesus asked this question, He was testing their faith to see if they would say, "We don't have the resources, Lord, but You do! You can do it!"

"For he himself knew what he would do"

Two hundred pennyworth" – Lit. Two hundred denarii (the equivalent of 200 days wages) By today's standards this would be roughly $25,000 – $35,000

II. There is NO SUPPLY TOO SMALL for Jesus to use it (v.8-9)
(A lesson on Giving)

Five loaves and two fish is more than enough substance for the Master.

"But what are they among so many?"

God specializes in using small things, little things, insignificant things, or nothings! (I Cor. 1:27-29).

EXAMPLES:

--God had nothing, and from it he made the worlds (Heb. 11:3).

--From dust He made a man; from a rib He made a woman (Gen. 2).

--Abraham who had no children, God made the father of many nations.

--David was a little boy, God empowered him to slay a 9'9" giant Goliath.

--Jonathon said to his armor bearer, *"There is no restraint to the LORD to save by many or few"* (I Sam. 14:6), and God defeated multitudes.

When we are totally dependent upon Him, we don't have a lot. Jesus will take whatever you offer Him and use it.

God delights in taking a Sarah who could not bear children and making her the mother of one of the largest races on earth (Gen. 18:14, 32:12)

God delights in taking a humble slave like Joseph and elevating him second to Pharaoh over Egypt (Gen. 41:38-44).

God delights in enlisting 300 soldiers of Gideon to fight and conquer 120,000 Mideanites (Jud. 7:2, 7, 12; 8:10) (NOTE: 400 to 1 odds).

God delights in utilizing a Samson to destroy 1,000 wicked Philistines with a jawbone of a donkey (Jud. 15:16).

God delights in using a red-headed, freckle-faced, baby-faced (I Sam. 17:42) shepherd boy named David to wipe out a 9'9" fully armored Philistine named Goliath (I Sam. 17).

God delights in providing adequate food for a poor widow of Zarephath who only had a few drops of oil and a handful of grain (I Ki. 17:9ff) and make it multiply and last for 3 ½ years.

God delights in using three Hebrew youths to show up King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon (Dan. 3).

God delights in using as His mouthpiece a John the Baptist, "who had no formal education, no training in a trade or profession, no money, no military rank, no political position, no social pedigree, no impressive appearance (or diet!)" (MacArthur, p. 51). Yet Jesus said, *"Truly I say to you, among those born of women there has not arisen anyone greater than John the Baptist"* (Mt. 11:11).

God delights in taking unlearned, ignorant, dumb fishermen from Galilee and turning them into the most bold and influential mortals ever to spread the Gospel message (Acts 4:13).

And here is our text, God delights in taking a boy's lunch consisting of two sardines and five bite-size biscuits to feed 5,000 men besides women and children.

"Little is much when God is in it." -- Conversely, much is little, if God is not in it!

The short-sighted disciples, having walked with the Lord for two years, should have known that Jesus could feed the multitude. "But they were like a person who stands in front of Niagara Falls and asks where he can find a drink" (MacArthur, p. 429).

LITTLE BECOMES MUCH WHEN GIVEN TO JESUS

The presence of Jesus is the place of provision.

The miracle of multiplication is in His hands" (Wiersbe, p. 50).

"Little is much when God is in it."

"Little becomes much in the Master's hand."

However, much becomes little when it is stingily and selfishly kept from Christ (Hag. 1:6, 9).

III. There is NO ASSIGNMENT TOO DIFFICULT for Jesus to accomplish it (v.10-11)
(A lesson on Delegation)

What Jesus does for people, he often does through his Servants

v. 10 "Make the men sit down" –Mark 6:39-40 describes how Jesus had everyone sit down into manageable groups ("in ranks, by hundreds, and by fifties").

The multitude would have to do what Christ said (***"Sit down"***) in order to receive the blessing! There is blessing in obedience!

When ever anyone did what Jesus said, they were blessed!

"Given thanks" - So as to identify with God the Father, and to cause the people to recognize the source of the provision, Jesus looks up.

"He distributed" - the loaves and fish were broken (each of the 12 disciples having a basket, received perhaps 1/3 or 1/2 of a loaf of bread and 1/8 to 1/4 of a fish).

The disciples were the bridge between Jesus and the multitudes. Jesus gave to the disciples, and they gave to the multitudes.

We are the bridge to the lost and dying world! Jesus has chosen to not meet their needs independently. His program is to use His people.

We have nothing of real value to give to the multitudes in our city until we get it from Christ! Don't minister without His power! Don't witness without bathing it in prayer.

Like the disciples, all we amount to are channels. Channels through which Christ can pour out His provision to others.

Remember as servants of Christ we are "distributors" not "manufacturers." (Wiersbe, p. 51).

Just as Christ used His disciples to dispense this food to the multitude, He uses you and me to dispense His Gospel to the spiritually hungry world we live in.

"And the disciples to them that were set down" - Although they had less than enough food to start with to feed one person, they were able to feed a multitude. Each time they reached their hands into the basket, more food appeared. God gave in proportion to the need, and more!

IV. There are NO FRAGMENTS TOO USELESS for Jesus to waste them (v.12-13)
(A lesson on Stewardship)

"They did all eat" (Mt.14:20)

"as much as they would" – (They ate As much as they wanted) Not one went away hungry. Each enjoyed perhaps the best bread and fish dinner they ever had (just as Jesus turned water into the best unfermented wine ever tasted, so this food was no doubt top choice!

"They were filled" - They ate until they were fully satisfied. Each had enough to the point that they couldn't eat another bite. They had so much that they had 12 baskets full left over!

"Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost." The Lord does
not desire for us to waste or be bad stewards of what He gives to us.

"Twelve baskets" - each of the twelve disciples had more than enough food for themselves. *"The laborer is worthy of his hire".* God takes care of His servants.

Whatever we give to Jesus, He blesses and uses and gives back to us! (Prov. 3:9-10 - *"Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.")*

Mt. 14:21 "Five thousand men, beside women and children"

Together with the women and children there could have been perhaps 10-15,000 (maybe 25,000) people gathered.

What started out as perhaps 5 lbs. of food was multiplied to perhaps 10 thousand pounds of food to feed such a multitude!

Conclusion – v.14

Can this Jesus who satisfied that hungry crowd . . .

--satisfy your hungry soul?
(He is the *"bread of life"*)

Did you know that the next day after this miracle Jesus gave a sermon about how He was "*the bread of life"*? (Jn. 6:22 ff).

"A hungry world is feeding on empty substitutes while we deprive them of the bread of life" (Wiersbe, p. 51).

--meet your every need?
(*"My God shall supply all your need"*)

--use you and use what you give to Him to bless others?

Faith the size of a mustard seed can move mountains!

Not because of the "faith" but because of the object of the faith. . . Jesus Christ, the God of the impossible!