

Series: Making Much of the Master

FEEDING OF THE FIVE THOUSAND

MATTHEW 14, MARK 6, JOHN 6, LUKE 9

Text:

Introduction:

This miracle of our Lord is the only one recorded in each of the four Gospels, and the key verse for our study will be found in Matt. 14:16. All our Lord's miracles were illustrations of His power, His grace and His mercy. He wrought miracles in the natural realm to show us what He is able and willing to do in the spiritual realm, so this miracle is a parable of spiritual truth.

Here was a large crowd of people in great physical need, and Jesus, by His mighty power and with the cooperation of His disciples, met that need. In the world today we see a vast multitude of men and women who are in desperate spiritual need, which the Lord waits and wants to meet; but His plan is to do it with the cooperation of His disciples. See this in the incident before us, and notice:

1. THE CROWD THAT HE SAW

Matthew 14:14-15

¹⁴ *And Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and he healed their sick.* ¹⁵ *And when it was evening, his disciples came to him, saying, This is a desert place, and the time is now past; send the multitude away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves victuals.*

Note two things:

The size – “a great multitude”

Their condition – “it was evening and they were hungry”

Here is a picture of humanity without God, of men and women who are in desperate need of the Bread of life. As to the size of the crowd, there are millions of people today who are in this state of need; as to its condition, they are spiritually hungry, in a desert place, and they are perishing.

This is what our Lord saw when He faced that crowd. Do we see the Christless crowds around us in this way?

Oh, the desperate need of the multitudes . . . Perishing . . . and in a desert place!

Notice not only “The Crowd That He Saw” but also:

2. THE COMPASSION THAT HE DEMONSTRATED

Matthew 14:14

¹⁴ And Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and he healed their sick.

Matthew 14:16

¹⁶ But Jesus said unto them, They need not depart; give ye them to eat.

The disciples wanted the Lord to send the multitudes away, but He said, "No They need not depart; give ye them to eat!"

The disciples felt powerless to help in this situation, and they had no deep concern for those around them.

The Lord on the other hand was moved with compassion towards them.

How guilty the Church has been in her attitude to the spiritual condition of the those around them. They have often been sent away empty and unsatisfied simply because the Church has been so preoccupied with other things.

We oftentimes have been so busy and so content to feed on Christ ourselves that we have ignored the need of the perishing millions around us.

We have said, "Send them away!"

But our Lord, filled with compassion, still says, "They need not go away!" If we had compassion like His for the souls of men, women, boys and girls we would obey His command.

Notice not only "The Crowd That He Saw" and the "Compassion That He Demonstrated" but also:

3. THE COMMAND THAT HE GAVE

Matthew 14:16

¹⁶ *But Jesus said unto them, They need not depart; **give ye them to eat.***

We see in this command many lessons.

Note:

A. The Lad

John 6:9

⁹ ***There is a lad here,*** which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?

This lad is not named. We're not told where he is from, who his parents were, how old he was, or what he looked like.

We're just told of this lad.

The lesson to be learned here is that you don't have to be well known to be used by the Lord, just be available.

B. The Lunch

This lunch is a very insignificant lunch compared the size of the crowd.

This lunch was a very humble lunch – five loaves of bread and two small fish.

Again the lunch itself was not much but was made available to be used.

Another lesson in this – you may not have much to offer, but offer what you have to be used by the Lord and the results will be a great blessing.

C. The Lord

The key to this entire miracle was the Lord.

Without the Lord the people would have been sent away by the disciples.

Without the Lord the lad's lunch would have not fed this group of people.

There are three other very important things that we see about the Lord in this as well.

- He was willing to help people
- He was working with and for the people, in multiplying the lad's food and distributing to the disciples to feed the people.
- He demonstrated what He will do when we give Him our small lunch for Him to use.

There is one other thing that I think is important to see in this

D. The Lesson

John 6:6

⁶ And ***this he said to prove him***: for he himself knew what he would do.

The Lord wanted to prove or teach Phillip one of the disciples that He was able to do what was needed to meet his needs as well as the needs of others.

It seems that maybe Philip was one that needed to see things to learn or believe them.

Note:

John 14:8-9

⁸ Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. ⁹ Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?

The Lord wants us to know this as well.

How often do we fret over the size of a need all the while the Lord wants us to trust Him.

Close:

Do you see the people around you as the Lord sees them?

What is our attitude to those around us – that of the disciples or of the Lord?

What do you have that the Lord can use?

Have you made that available to Him?

Are we like Philp in need to learn that He is able to meet not only your need but also the needs of others?