

Lighthouse Bible Church

February 10th, 2013

John 6: 1 – 15 *Scripture Reading Luke 9: 12 - 17*

The Preparation for the Miracle Meal Pt.#1

Stand – Read – Pray

As we look at this passage we need to understand that in the chronology of things Chapter 6 takes place about 6 months to a year after chapter 5. What has happened between chapters 5 and 6 is that: Mt. 4 – 15, Mark 1 – 7, Luke 4 - 9

John the Baptist was imprisoned and killed.

Jesus had send out the 12 two by two to preach the gospel

He had raised Jairus' daughter from the dead and maybe others

He is in a boat with His disciples and calms a storm with His voice

He heals 2 blind men and probably others

He heals one deaf and demon possessed man and probably others

He heals a leaper and probably others.

He has gained incredible **popularity** among the people because of the miracles He has been doing and He has also gained incredible **animosity** amongst the Jewish religious leaders because of His claims of being the Son of God.

This is really a turning point in the life of Christ because it is at this point that Jesus begins to be overtly rejected for His outrageous claims and violating their Sabbath laws and plans are already in the works to have Him killed.

As we have seen before, they hated Him and wanted Him dead because He constantly violated their man made Sabbath laws and more importantly, as **John 5: 18** said 'He made Himself equal with God with His claims'. So Jesus is either who He says He is or He is the most blatant blasphemmer ever. And in their eyes..

One of the ways that Jesus has shown Himself to be God the Son is by the **signs** and **works** and **miracles** that He has done. As a matter of fact, He said earlier in **John 5: 36** **that the works that I do bear witness of Me that the Father has sent Me.** He is going to say later in **John 10: 24** **the works that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me.**

In **Luke 7: 21 - 22** John the Baptist is in prison and wondering, because of all that is happening, if Jesus was truly the Messiah, the Coming One. And so you know what Jesus does, it says **and that very hour He cured many illnesses, afflictions and evil spirits and to many blind He gave sight.** He goes on to say **go tell John the things you have seen and heard; the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised and the poor have the gospel preached to them.**

Jesus is about to give His disciples and all of the people and incredible display of His creative power through this miraculous feeding of a great multitude of people that shows that He truly is God in human form.

By the way, this miracle is the only miracle that is recorded in all four N.T. accounts in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John and so when you look at them all together you get a good sense of this account. For this miracle to be documented in all four gospels means that it must have great importance, and it does as we shall see.

First of all, think about the fact that this miracle is a miracle of creation. He is creating something out of nothing. He starts with 5 loaves of bread and two small fish, enough to feed one or two people. Then from that He creates more loaves and more fish enough to feed the entire multitude.

And you want to know something else, he bypasses the process of growing the barley, harvesting the barley, grinding it into flour and molding and baking it into bread. He bypasses the process of catching the fish and cleaning and pickling the fish.

Second of all, think about this! Jesus is creating bread to satisfy their physical hunger. Later in this chapter He is going to tell them that He is the bread of life that can not only satisfy their physical hunger but more importantly, satisfy the spiritual hunger in their hearts. So let's look at this passage together starting in

Verse 1 After these things, Jesus went over the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias.

So, after these things, after John the Baptist imprisonment and death, and His sending out the 12 and performing countless miracles, after these things Jesus gets into a boat and crosses over the Sea of Galilee or the Sea of Tiberias and **Matthew 14: 13** says **He went to a deserted place** which **Luke 9** adds was **Bethsaida Julias** on the N/E side of the Sea of Galilee, and **Mark 6** adds they hadn't even had time to **eat** and they needed some **rest**. Then notice what happens in Verse 2

Verse Two Then a great multitude followed Him, because they saw His signs which He performed on those who were diseased.

Thinking there going to get some much needed rest and time alone to eat, the huge crowds just keep following Him and His disciples. It says **they followed Him**; but they didn't follow in boats they followed Him on foot. **Mark 6: 33** says **they ran on foot from all the cities.**

The boat trip from one side of the Sea of Galilee on the north to the other side to Bethsaida would have been about 5 miles. The trip on foot would have been at least 8 to 10 miles depending on which city you left from, and get this, Mark and Matthew add that many of the people arrived before Jesus and His disciples did.

Notice the reason why they followed Him; it wasn't because they wanted to give their life to Him, it wasn't because they loved Him, it wasn't because they would learn from Him, it wasn't because they thought He WAS the Son of God, they followed Him **because they saw His signs which He performed on those who were diseased.**

They were not seeking repentance or the kingdom of heaven, they were thrill seekers, they were watching the entertainment, they were selfishly wanting their own needs met by this miracle worker and they missed the true meaning of the signs and miracles He was doing that were pointing to Him as the Son of God.

Jesus will even tell them later in this chapter in **Verse 26 you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled.** They were saying, 'hey, lets follow this guy because we get free food'.

They followed Jesus to see His works but they refused to hear His words. They were following His popularity as the provider of their physical needs but would not listen when He told them of their spiritual need for salvation. Not so different than today.

And by the way, when He stopped providing for their physical needs they turned on Him and began yelling in the crowd with everyone else, 'crucify Him'. You see, **Verse 15 says they wanted to make Him a king.** They wanted this guy who could feed and heal them to be their king. They loved His miracles but they hated His words and they would eventually call for His crucifixion.

He begins in the rest of chapter 6 to tell them who He is and to listen to His words that the signs verify who He is and they didn't want to do that. As a matter of fact as we get to the end of Chapter 6 it says in **Verse 66 from that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more.**

I have to tell you, people today are no different. Someone tells someone to try Jesus, because He can help your addiction, He can heal your marriage, He can help you financially, He can give you good health and when they follow a Jesus for that reason and those things don't come to pass, they will stop following Him as well. *'I tried Jesus and it didn't work for Me'.*

Is it any wonder why the multitudes ran from every city to follow Him to the other shore? But they were following Him for their own selfish self-centered reasons. They gladly serve Him as their king as long as He does things for them. Much like people today as their motive for why they choose the government officials they do. Then look at Verse 3.

Verse 3 and Jesus went up on the mountain and there He sat with His disciples.

Jesus goes up to an area near the north shore of the Sea of Galilee that Matthew, Mark and Luke call **a deserted place** that Luke says is near the town of **Bethsaida**. As we saw earlier, Jesus wanted them to get away and have some rest and get something to eat. But that doesn't happen, look at Verses 4 and 5.

Verses 4 – 5 Now the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was near. Then Jesus lifted up His eyes, and seeing the multitude coming toward Him..

John mentions that the **Passover is near** and that is part of the reason for the incredible crowds that are coming to Jesus. You have all of the people following after Him that had seen His miracles, you have all the people heading toward Jerusalem for the Passover that are seeing these crowds going the opposite way and being told about this Jesus.

It would have been a frenzy of people **coming toward Jesus** that are described as **a great multitude**. Not just a multitude but a great multitude of people as they were described in Verse 2 as well. **Mark 6: 44** says that there were about **5000 men**. **Matthew 14: 21** adds that **those that had eaten were about 5000 men, besides women and children**. So this great multitude could have consisted of close to 20,000 people.

Then, what John here doesn't record, the other gospels do. As the people are coming to Jesus **Matthew 14: 14** says **He saw the great multitude and was moved with compassion for them and healed their sick**. **Mark 6: 34** adds **when He saw the great multitude He was moved with compassion for them because they were like sheep not having a shepherd so He began to teach them many things**. And **Luke 9: 11** adds **He received them and spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and healed those who had need of healing**.

And if you think about that, Jesus knew that their hearts were selfish, their motives for following were self-centered and yet **He still has compassion on them** and in His love and mercy, meets their needs, because that is the way Christ is. He came to seek and save the lost, He came to be the Great Shepherd and He was willing to spend time with them.

When someone comes to church today and says 'what would Jesus want with someone like me', how could He love someone like me? Listen, your motive for coming to church may be selfish, hypocritical, self-serving, self-fulfilling, or indifference, but the love that Jesus has for you can still meet that greatest need that you have. Because **Romans 5: 8** says **God demonstrated His own love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ loved you enough to die for you**.

Jesus is teaching and healing throughout the day and **Matthew, Mark and Luke** records that **it was evening and the hour is late** and the disciples say to Jesus **send the multitudes away that they may go into the villages and buy themselves food.** But Jesus says to them **you give them something to eat** and their response was ‘we don’t have enough money to feed this crowd and there is not enough food in this crowd to share with everyone.

Jesus has brought them to the place where it becomes an absolute impossibility, from their perspective, to feed all of those people that Jesus wants them to feed. And in that place, Jesus is now able to increase their faith in believing that with God all things are (what) possible.

So in our passage here Jesus, in Verse 4, asks Philip **where shall we buy bread that these may eat.** Jesus says to His disciples, we’re not going to let them go without feeding them first. So He asks Philip, maybe because he was from Bethsaida and would have known where to buy food. But Verse 6 tells us why He asked Him.

Verse 6: But this He said to Test him, for He Himself knew what he would do.

He wanted to put Philip to the test, maybe because he lacked faith more so than the rest we don’t know. Maybe because He wanted to test Philip to see if he believed Jesus’ power is pointing to Him as the Messiah, the Son of God, to see if he really believes that.

Did Philip believe that God, through Moses, provided food for millions of Israelites day after day in their wilderness wanderings? Did Philip believe that Jesus is God in human form and that He could do the same thing now?

Whatever the reason, He put Philip to the test. And by the way, God still does that with us today, does He not. That word **test** is *pirazma(s)* in the Greek and it is used in **Hebrews 11: 17** when it says **by faith, when Abraham was tested, *pirazma*, he offered up His Son Issac.**

Pirazma is the shortened form of the word *Pirazmos* which is used in **James 1: 2 - 4** that says **...count it all joy when you fall into various trial, knowing that the trying of your faith works patience but let patience have its perfect ...**

In **1st Peter 1: 6 – 7** says **in tis you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials (*perizmos*) that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ...**

You see there are times in our lives when God tests us. He takes us just past our point of trust to increase our faith and trust in Him. If He only took us to where we trust Him now, we would never grow. But when He takes us beyond our point of trust and then brings something in our lives to bring us to a new level of trust, we increase our faith and trust in Him.

He did it with Abraham, He did it with Gideon, He did it with Nahum, He does it with all of us as James 1 said and we are to count it all joy when it happens because we know what the outcome can be. *Finances, Missionaries, Workplace*

Well, look at Philips response in **Verse 7** **Philip answered Him ‘200 denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may have a little’.**

According to **Matthew 20: 2** a **denarii** is one days wages 200 = 6 days work = about a years wages. Wouldn't feed them even a little bit.

Well, Philip's response is much like what our response would be in the trials that come into our life, wouldn't it? We would end up saying 'it is an impossibility' 'we can't feed that many people', because we look at our own resources first and not to Christ.

Jesus **knows what He is going to do** and He wants to bring Philip and the other disciples to a greater faith so He takes them past their point of trust in Him. They are thinking, yes you can heal the sick and make the blind see and even raise someone from the dead, but this...feeding 20,000 people?

Verses 8 – 9 One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother said to Him, there is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish, but what are they among so many?

So it wasn't just Philip, it was Andrew and it was all of the disciples that had a lack of faith in the power of God in human form. In **Mark 6: 38** it records that Jesus told His disciples to **go out into the crowd and see how many loaves you have** and they returned and said **we have found 5 loaves and 2 fish.**

Their idea is that they went all throughout the crowd asking people if they had any food that could be shared amongst everyone and all they could come up with is 5 loaves and 2 fish from a young boy and Andrew reports that to Jesus.

Think about this; Jesus told the disciples to go out into the crowd and find food enough to, presumably share with all, and they could not find any more than 5 loaves and 2 fish. This adds to their understanding of the impossibility of feeding this great multitude and will soon add to the increasing of their faith when the miracle is performed.

By the way, they found a young man with **5 barley loaves and 2 fish**. Those loaves would be small cookie size pieces of bread and barley was a poor persons bread that was the cheapest of all and held in contempt, as one writer said.

William Barclay John pg202.

As a matter of fact, this writer goes on to say that in the Mishna, the Jewish law, when a woman was caught in the act of adultery and confessed it, she would offer a trespassing offering. Along with that she would have a meat offering that was mixed with flour, oil and wine. She could not use the flour of wheat in the offering but had to use the flour of barley because barley was the food of beasts. *IBID.*

This young man also had **two fish** with him. Again, we picture like trout in a creel or something like that but that is not what this is. These fish were very small fish from the Sea of Galilee that would be about the size of your ring finger. They were caught and pickled and used for spreading over the barley bread to help with the texture and the taste. The fish were like a spread for the bread.

Jesus is about to perform a miracle that will increase the disciples faith, show mercy on a selfish people and display His creative power as God the Son, and like all of His miracles, will have a direct application for us today.

Continued next week..

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Verse 1 Jesus went over the Sea of Galilee

Matthew 14: 13, Luke 9: 10, Mark 6: 31

Verse 2 A great multitude followed Him

Mark 6: 33, John 6: 26, 66

Verses 3 – 5 The multitudes coming toward Him

Mark 6: 44, Matthew 14: 21, Matthew 14: 14
Mark 6: 34, Luke 9: 11, Romans 5: 8

Verse 6 He Himself knew what He would do

Hebrews 11: 17, James 1: 2 – 4, 1st Peter 1: 6 – 7

Verse 7 200 denarii worth of bread is not sufficient

Matthew 20: 2

Verses 8 – 9 Five barley loaves and two fish

Mark 6: 38

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