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Lessons from Loaves and Fish; Matt 14:13-21

GPBC

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Introduction – The miracle of feeding the 5,000+ is recorded in all 4 gospels. This miracle account communicates the person and work of Christ so adequately and vastly that of all the miracles of Jesus, all four gospel writers ensured that this miracle was included in their account. There is much to learn here about Christ, about the gospel, about living by faith, and about gospel ministry. This miracle account is not only packed with people, 5,000+, it is not only packed with bread and fish, 12 baskets of leftovers, it is packed with lessons – lessons for our faith. The disciples learned so much being there that day, and we as Christ's disciples, can learn much too by taking in this most wonderful miracle of provision.

- I. Jesus is Enough (vv13-15)
  - a. Jesus is enough; He is sufficient; He is adequate, able, and capable for every obstacle, hardship, or difficulty we may face in this life. Jesus is enough to sustain us through this life, and He is enough to lead us into life eternal. Jesus is enough.
  - b. First, note the impulse of compassion in Jesus. He saw the crowd and immediately He had compassion. We serve a merciful, gracious, compassionate Savior. He sees us in our daily circumstances, and He has compassion toward us. He moves toward us.
    - i. Jesus is not distant. We may be practicing social distancing today, but Jesus is never distant. Coronavirus may keep us from meeting together but it doesn't keep Jesus from us! He's never apathetic to our plight. He's never unattached or unconcerned. He is rather filled with compassion. He is filled with a love and concern for us that drives Him to action on our behalf.
  - c. Second, He sees, He has compassion, and then He heals the sick. He moves. He not only moves toward us, He moves for us! He acts on our behalf. He intercedes on our behalf. He divinely intervenes in our lives. His compassion moved Him to display His power.
  - d. Third, notice the disciples presented Jesus with a reasonable, logical alternative. They devised a rational plan, another option. They knew

they didn't have the resources to care for this large crowd, so they went to work to convince Jesus of the best course of action!

- i. If Jesus would have went along with their plan, we would not have this great miracle account. You see, they had a plan, but Jesus had a better, bigger plan.
  - ii. Many times we react in the same way. We face a situation and instantly we devise a good plan and then we take our plan to the Lord and ask Him to act on our plan, to give His approval.
  - iii. When Jesus says no to our plan we can be assured its because He has a better, bigger plan!
- e. Sending the people away was the easy route. Having them stay and provide for them was the impossible route. That plan never even entered their minds. Oftentimes we operate in the same way. As if God is not present and active in our lives and in the world!
- f. Jesus, however, knew what the disciples didn't even entertain. Jesus was going to teach them – He is enough.

## II. Jesus will Call Us to do the Impossible to Demonstrate His Sufficiency (vv16-17)

- a. Jesus called them to do the impossible. They only had 5 loaves and 2 fish. One sack lunch is not going to cut it. That's not enough for them, much less everyone else. This is an impossible task.
- b. But that's exactly the point. Jesus called them to do the impossible to demonstrate His sufficiency. They can't feed this crowd, but He can. They can't multiply this meal, but He can.
- c. However, He calls them to do it so that His power will be made known through their weakness; His ability through their inability.
- d. Someone has said Jesus will never call you to do more than you are able to do. I don't think that's true. In fact, when Jesus calls us, He often calls us to do what we can't do so that we will rely on Him and see His power and faithfulness and give Him the glory!
- e. He calls us to repent and believe and obey – and we can't do that apart from His grace. He calls us to give and serve and love beyond our capacity so that we lean on His strength. He calls us to live by faith and then puts us in situations where all we have is faith, so that we continually learn of our insufficiency and of His sufficiency!

- f. In 2 Cor 12:9 Jesus tells Paul, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.”
- III. Jesus Requires All that We Have to Demonstrate All that He Gives (v18)
- a. Bring them here to me. No matter how small and insignificant your all may be. Give me everything you have.
  - b. What a glorious picture of gospel salvation. Give me your life and I will give you life abundant and life eternal. Give me your desires and plans and future, and I will give you a new life, a new destiny, a new hope, a peace that passes all understanding.
  - c. Bring what you have to me and see what you get in return.
  - d. Remember the story of the rich young ruler in Luke 18. Jesus promised Him if e would sell all that he had and give to the poor and come follow Him, Jesus would give him treasure in heaven! And he walked away. Peter said, “Lord we have left our homes and followed you.” Peter was saying, “we have given you everything.” And Jesus replied, “Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who will not receive many times more in this time, and in the age to come eternal life.”
  - e. Give all that you have to Christ. Surrender all that you have to Christ, and He will demonstrate that all He gives in return far outweighs and far outlasts anything we give Him. He gives more! It was just one meal in their hands but when they put it all in Jesus’ hands, He made it all they needed. Little is much when God is in it.
- IV. Blessing and Breaking (v19)
- a. First, note that Jesus did not perform this miracle apart from the disciples, but rather He involved them in the miraculous ministry.
    - i. Jesus often works this way, not apart from His people but through and with and by His people.
    - ii. Jesus often works as His people pray. James says you have not because you ask not.
    - iii. Jesus often works as His people give. God often provides for His people through the giving of His people.
    - iv. Jesus works to spread His glorious gospel as His people go. As the people of God go to the ends of the earth, so does the gospel.

- v. Jesus saves as His people share. Just like these disciples handed out the bread from Jesus and the people were satisfied, so we go and deliver the gospel and those who receive are satisfied. Romans asks how will they believe unless they hear?
    - b. But also note the way the miracle occurred. Jesus blessed the meal, that is, He gave thanks to God, then He broke the meal, then He gave the meal, and finally the disciples shared the meal.
      - i. My friends that is a wondrous illustration of how the Lord so often works in life and in ministry. He blesses, and then He breaks, and then He gives, and at that point we have all we need to share.
      - ii. It's after Jesus blesses us and then breaks us, that we are ready for Him to use us in mighty and wonderful ways.
      - iii. 2 Cor 1:3-7
      - iv. Ill. I thought when I graduated from seminary I was ready to pastor, but God had some more lessons for me. After I studied theology, God had me study humility. He blessed me by equipping me with the Word, and then time and time again He has broken me as a pastor that He might ready me to pastor.
- V. Jesus is More than Enough (vv20-21)
- a. They not only ate, they were satisfied. He is not only enough; He is more than enough.
  - b. The bread and loaves did not last until the last bite; they lasted until 12 baskets of broken pieces were left over. Don't let this slip by us – when all was said and done, there were 12xs more leftovers than when the meal began. Jesus is not just enough. He is more than enough!
  - c. If you would let go of your sin and turn to Jesus, you will find Him more than enough. If you will let go of your worry and turn to Jesus, you will find Him more than enough. If you will let go of your way and turn to Jesus, you will find Him more than enough.
  - d. Phil 3:8 – Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord!

Conclusion