

THE GOSPEL OF MARK: STRAIGHT TALK ABOUT JESUS CHRIST

6, The Gospel conflict in this sinful world against unbelief, disbelief, false belief, and weak belief, but saving faith in the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the victory that overcomes the world

Part 6E(3)

G.H. Elliott, Pastor

Our Lord's Day, Sunday, May 6, 2018

Introduction: Two of the most generally known stories about Jesus are His feeding of the multitude with a few pieces of bread and fish and His walking on water. These two stories are connected in the Gospel narratives as here in Mark 6, cf. Matthew 14, John 6. Of all Jesus' recorded signs and wonders, why these two are so popularly recognized is puzzling.

Jesus' first miraculous feeding of a multitude is the only miracle recorded in all Four Gospels other than His Resurrection. It is commonly reported that this was a big crowd of 5,000 men plus women and children,

(Mark uses the specific, not generic, word [Gk. $\alpha' \nu \eta \rho$ /an'-ayr, A primary word --a man (properly as an individual male): - fellow, husband, man, sir.] and Matthew adds also women and children, John notes the time of year was near to the Feast of Passover so some of the multitude may have been groups of family and friends on their way...)

What impresses us more from this story, the size of the crowd or the miracle of multiplying the little bit of food? And what do we take away from this story about the Gospel ministry?

**Then and now it seems there are confused and false Messianic expectations from focusing on the external, material human-centered priorities, i.e. popularity and felt-needs.*

Mark's record of Jesus' miracle feeding the multitude of 5,000 plus is a faith-story about God's way of salvation.

Chapter 6, The Gospel conflict in this sinful world is against unbelief, disbelief, false beliefs, and weak belief, but saving faith in the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the victory that overcomes the world.

vv. 30-52, Weak belief from not keeping Christ-centered Scripture testimonies and teachings:

v. 37, What was Jesus' intent telling the Apostles to give the vast multitude of people food to eat? I don't think He was telling them to do a miracle! Rather He was testing their faith over Gospel ministry proprieties.

So what could the Apostles have done differently?...

- When it comes to caring and providing for people's needs, there is never enough money or food...
ill., The amount of money estimated to feed the multitude is not an exaggeration, it represents approximately 8 months of average income for that time. Consider if the crowd of men, women, and children numbered 10,000, by a contemporary comparison to feed each of them with a \$3.00 fish taco meal would cost \$30,000!
- Jesus' response to the Apostles' concerns was intentionally provocative as the events and teaching on the following day made clear... (cf. John 6:22,ff.)
**Jesus provided the multitude of people with food for a satisfying meal but did not offer them the surplus of left-overs or continue to feed them, by doing this He revealed misguided ministry emphases and false Messianic expectations both of which continue causing confusion about the mission and priorities of the visible Church today, (cf. John 6)...*

vv. 38-43, Jesus intentionally uses Scriptural symbolism revealing Gospel truths for a purpose greater than momentary miracles!

- 5 pieces of flat bread and 2 little dried or pickled fish were very common, unrefined basic food of that time, e.g. fish tacos, but the Biblical significance of the number 7 should not be overlooked about what God uses to perfect/complete His purposes...
- This miracle feeding of over 5,000 people was a demonstration of God's greater presence and power identifying Jesus as greater than the prophets Elijah or Elisha, cf. 1 Kgs. 17:8-16; 2 Kgs. 4:42-44...
**Symbols are powerful representations of ideas, but must be interpreted and limited by Scripturally revealed truth as the prohibitions against idolatry prove; some of the greatest temptations corrupting the Gospel ministry are idolizing crowds/numbers and claiming miracles, (cf. John 6:26-33)...*
- Jesus having the 12 Apostles arrange and serve the people in ordered groups symbolizes and previews the New Covenant Church fulfillment of Old Covenant Israel:
 - ✓ think of the 12 Tribes of Israel arranged around the Tabernacle (Nu. 2)...
 - ✓ remember the 12 loaves of Showbread/Presence collected and consecrated each Sabbath in the Holy Place of the Tabernacle of greater meaning than the manna and quail provided in the wilderness (Lev. 24:8, Ex. 16, Jn. 6:30-40)...
 - ✓ notice the 12 lunch-baskets of leftovers—as the prophet and law giver greater than Moses (cf. Ex. 18:21), Jesus commissions His Apostles to be servant-leaders...
**Keeping the Christian Gospel more or less pure is directly related to faithfully keeping Christ-centered testimonies and teachings and none is greater than the fulfillment of the New Covenant in the Church as the Kingdom of God, (John 6:15, 26ff).*

