

You Give Them Something to Eat

Jeff Rogers / Empty Nesters Bible Study

Mark 6:30-44

The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food in due season. You open your hand; you satisfy the desire of every living thing.

Psalm 145:15-16

Each of the four Gospel accounts contains a snapshot of Jesus's many miracles. However, the total number of miracles is incalculable (**John 21:25**, *Now there are also many other things that Jesus did. Were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.*) Of interesting note, only two miracles are found in all four Gospels, and they are the resurrection and the feeding of the five thousand (Matthew 14:13-22; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-15)

The "Feeding of the 5,000" happened at the end of His Galilean ministry and shortly before He left the northern coast of the sea of Galilee and headed to Jerusalem time, [the Passover was approaching, **John 6:4**, *Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand.*] Jesus began to spend more time privately with His disciples, preparing them for the post-resurrection mission, and less time teaching in public. The shadow of the cross loomed over the final year of His ministry.

Matthew 14:21 explains to us that there were about 5,000 men who ate, besides women and children. If you assumed there was an equal number of women and the number of children was equal to the adults, this crowd could have easily approached or exceeded 20,000.

Other miracles of food and sustenance:

- **Manna from Heaven** (Exodus 16:1-36). To know that God has delivered Israel (**Exodus 16:6**, *So Moses and Aaron said to all the people of Israel, "At evening you shall know that it was the Lord who brought you out of the land of Egypt."*) To see God's glory, **Exodus 16:7**, *And in the morning you shall see the glory of the Lord. . . .*
- **Water from Rock** (**Exodus 17:5-6**, *And the Lord said to Moses, "Pass on before the people, taking with you some of the elders of Israel, and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. 6 Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb, and you shall strike the rock, and water shall come out of it, and the people will drink." And Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel.*
- **Elijah and the widow of Zarephath** (**1 Kings 17:14-15**, *For thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, 'The jar of flour shall not be spent, and the jug of oil shall not be empty, until the day that the Lord sends rain upon the earth.'* " **15** *And she went and did as Elijah said. And she and he and her household ate for many days.*
- **Elisha and the 20 loaves** (**2 Kings 4:42-44**, *A man came from Baal-shalishah, bringing the man of God bread of the firstfruits, twenty loaves of barley and fresh ears of grain in his sack. [this was an unknown-unnamed man in the Bible] And Elisha said, "Give to the men, that they may eat." 43 But his servant [Gehazi] said, "How can I set this before a hundred men?" So he [Elisha] repeated, "Give them to the men, that they may eat, for thus says the Lord, 'They shall eat and have some left.' " 44 So he set it before them. And they ate and had some left, according to the word of the Lord. [foreshadowing the feeding of the 5,000]*

I. The Fatigued Need Rest (Mark 6:30-32)

- A. The excursion of the disciples (Mark 6:7-13; **Mark 6:12-13**, *So they went out and proclaimed that people should repent. 13 And they cast out many demons and anointed with oil many who were sick and healed them.*
 - 1. Fellowship Renewed – they gathered in the presence of Jesus (Mark 6:30a).
 - 2. Report of rejoicing – they reported on all things accomplished (Mark 6:30b).
 - a) Jesus mentored them by teaching.
 - b) Jesus empowered them by sending them out.
 - c) Jesus strengthened them by receiving them.
 - d) Jesus encouraged them through reporting and receiving.
- B. The execution of John the Baptist (Mark 6:14-29)

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- C. The disciples need to “Come away.” (Mark 6:31-32)
1. Vance Havner said, “If we don’t come apart, we will come apart.”

II. The Wandering Need Truth (Mark 6:33-34)

- A. Who made up this crowd?
1. Thrill seekers who desired to witness or perhaps experience a miracle.
 2. The sick and diseased who desired to be healed.
 3. The healthy who wanted to be entertained.
 4. The politically ambitious (**John 6:14–15**, *When the people saw the sign that he had done, they said, “This is indeed the Prophet who is to come into the world!” 15 Perceiving then that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by himself.*)
- B. What was the Lord’s view of this crowd?
1. **Luke 9:11**, *When the crowds learned it, they followed him, and he welcomed them and spoke to them of the kingdom of God and cured those who had need of healing.*
 2. He compassionately welcomed them (to be moved in one’s bowels [deepest emotions]).
 3. He saw them as sheep with no shepherd.
 - a) The shepherd-less sheep.
 - (1) No help or guidance.
 - (2) Defenseless.
 - (3) Unable to clean themselves.
 - (4) Prone to getting lost.
 - b) The people’s leaders
 - (1) **John 10:12–13**, *He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. 13 He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.*
 - (2) **Ezekiel 34:1-24**
 - c) The true shepherd’s teaching (Psalm 23)
 - (1) The rejoicing shepherd (Luke 15:4-6) (He seeks his lost sheep)
 - (2) The good shepherd (John 10:11) (He lays down His life for the Sheep)
 - (3) The chief shepherd (1 Peter 5:4) (He honors His servants)
 - (4) The Great Shepherd (Hebrews 13:20)
 - (5) The Shepherd Lamb (Revelation 7:17)

III. The Wanting Need Food (Mark 6:35-44)

- A. A reasonable concern **Mark 6:35**, *And when it grew late, his disciples came to him and said, “This is a desolate place, and the hour is now late.*
- B. A distant location **Mark 6:36**, *Send them away to go into the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat.”*
- C. A problematic command
1. **John 6:5–7**, *Lifting up his eyes, then, and seeing that a large crowd was coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, “Where are we to buy bread, so that these people may eat?” 6 He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he would do. 7 Philip answered him, “Two hundred denarii worth of bread would not be enough for each of them to get a little.”*
 2. **Mark 6:37**, *But he answered them, “You give them something to eat.” And they said to him, “Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii [200 denarii = 8 mos. of wages] worth of bread and give it to them to eat?”*
- D. A purposeful generosity (Mark 6:38-44, John 6:8-9)
1. We tend to focus on needs with only a human solution in mind
 2. The generous heart of a child. 5 loaves “bread-cakes”; 2 small fishes; poor man’s lunch
 - a) Obedience – unto the Lord.
 - b) Innocence – as a child trusts implicitly.
 - c) Faith – as a grain of mustard seed.
 - d) Generosity – following the example of Christ.

James 2:14–17, *What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and filled,” without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? 17 So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.*

The feeding of the 5000 is inexplicable. We are not told the “how.” We are left with no alternative but to give glory and thanks to God for His unspeakable grace.

1. Resist the inclination to solve problems with human wisdom; instead look for the divine.
2. Compassion that is not moved into action is only emotion.