

Doing the Impossible With What You Don't Have

John 6.1-15

Jesus' feeding of the 5000 is the only miracle recorded in all four Gospels. This isn't just because it was spectacular. Jesus did something different: He told His disciples to do it! They needed to learn to trust Jesus more, enough to do what they couldn't do on their own. Can we learn this?

The Miracle (Mt. 14.14-21; Mk. 6.34-44; Lk. 9.12-17; Jn. 6.1-15)

- Circumstances are orchestrated by Jesus as a test
- Disciples look for a human solution to the problem
- Feeding the crowd is impossible with what they have
- Jesus has crowd sit; provides food for all (with leftovers!)

The Message

- Ministry for Christ is always beyond ordinary human resources.
- Jesus gives His *adequacy* when we are *inadequate* for the task.
- It's not what God does *for* you, but what He'll do *through* you.
- Ministry is doing what we can't do, with what we don't have!



1. We often think of the disciples as a fearless group of studs who had unshakable faith in Jesus. Nothing could be further from the truth! The feeding of the 5000 is the fourth miracle recorded in John, and we know Jesus performed many more. Review the other miracles in John (water to wine, healing the royal official's son, and healing the paralytic at the pool of Bethesda). How would you characterize what people expected from Jesus versus what He did? Put yourself in the disciples' shoes: What could they have learned from watching Jesus perform miracles? Did they?
2. The feeding of the 5000 is the only miracle that is recorded in all four Gospels. This gives us a 'quadrasonic' record of this event. Read the four accounts (Matthew 14.14-21, Mark 6.34-44, Luke 9.12-17, and John 6.1-15). How are they the same? How are they different? What unique insights does John tell us?
3. As John makes clear (v6), this was a set-up! Jesus orchestrated this event for a purpose, to test the disciples – and teach them something. Looking at all four Gospel accounts, what was the problem? What was the disciples' first "solution"? What did Jesus tell them to do? What was the disciples' reaction to this? What did they say? What did they think their 'resources' were? What did they miss?
4. The contrast between what they needed and what was provided is notable. How much money did the disciples say it would take to buy bread for everyone to have just a bite? How long would a person have to work to make this much money? Contrast this with the amount of food in the boy's lunch! What message is Jesus giving the disciples (and us) with this stark contrast in resources?
5. It is common, when we think about doing some ministry for Jesus, to reply, "I've never done that before," or "I could never do that!!" This is what we say when we focus on our own resources instead of on God's! What are you limiting God doing through your life by not relying on His resources? Are you doing what you can on your own, or what you couldn't do without God? Which do you want to do?