

THE FEEDING OF THE 5,000

Introduction

In John 6, Jesus performs the largest miracle that He ever did by taking the lunch of a little boy and feeding 5,000 men with it. The number is much larger if you add up all the women and children too but it did not deter Jesus. He proceeded to take care of all their needs in one great act of mercy which is what we are going to talk about this morning by look at “4 Insights into the Feeding of the 5,000.”

1. It Took Place Near the Time of Passover (verses 1-4).

The Apostle John begins this story by telling us where it occurred – on the other side of the Sea of Galilee. He also tells us when it occurred – near the time of the Passover when a large crowd was following Jesus in order to see the signs that He was performing on those who were sick. In other words, they were not following Him because they wanted to be saved from sin. On the contrary, they just wanted to see Jesus put on a show. However, the Lord helped them anyway because that is Who He is. He is a God of compassion.

(Discussion Question: Was this the only miracle Jesus did out of a heart of compassion? List some of the other miracles that Christ performed in the Gospels.)

2. It was Performed with the Lunch of a Little Boy (verses 5-9).

As the story continues, Jesus asked Philip “Where are we to buy bread, so that these [people] may eat” (verse 5)? In response to that, Andrew said, “There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are these for so many people” (verse 9)?

(Discussion Question: Describe the five barley loaves and the two fish that the little boy had. Was this a lot of food? Now describe the disciple’s outlook on the situation. Were they expecting Jesus to do a miracle? Why / why not?)

3. It Culminated in a Staggering Display of Power (verses 10-14).

The Gospel of John tells us that Jesus performed this miracle by doing three things. First, He took the loaves and the fish. Second, He gave thanks. Third, He distributed them to the people to such a degree that the disciples gathered up the fragments afterwards “and they filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves which were left over by those who had eaten” (verse 13).

(Discussion Question: How did the crowd respond to this miracle in verses 14-15? Why were they so eager to make Jesus king and why did He turn down their offer?)

4. It Led to a Rebuke from Jesus (verses 26-29).

After the miracle, Jesus departed from that place but the next day part of the crowd followed Him to Capernaum. There He told them that “Truly, truly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you, for on Him the Father, God has set His seal” (verses 26-27).

(Discussion Question: Put these verses into your own words. Now explain why Jesus was so blunt with them. What would He say today to someone who came to Him only for physical things?)