

Stage IV. The Great Galilean Ministry

I. Jesus' Third Tour of Galilee and its Aftermath

The DAILY JESUS NEWS #111

4. Jesus Feeds the 5000 (Miracle #19)

MK 6.35-44 (Parallel Texts: MT 14.15-21; LK 9.12-17; JN 6.3-15)

3 ^JThen Jesus went up on a mountainside and sat down with his disciples. 4 The Jewish Passover Festival was near.

5 When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, "*Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?*"

6 He asked this just to test him, for he had already decided what he was going to do.

7 Philip answered him, "It would take more than half a year's pay to buy enough bread for each one to have even a little!" (JN 6.3-7)

35 ^MBy this time it was late in the day, so his disciples came to him. "This is a remote place," they said, "and it's already very late. 36 Send the people away so that they can go to the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat."

37 But he answered, ^{MT}"*They don't need to go away. ^MI command you to give them something to eat.*"

They said to him, "That would take more than half a year's wages! Are we to go and spend that much on bread and give it to them to eat?"

38 "*How many loaves do you have?*" he asked. Then he commanded them: "*Go and see.*"

^JAnother of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, spoke up: "Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?"

^{MT}Jesus commanded: "*Bring them here to me.*"

39 ^MThen Jesus directed them to have all the people sit down in groups ^Lof about fifty each ^Mon the green grass. 40 So they sat down in groups of hundreds and fifties.

41 Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to his disciples to distribute to the people. He also divided the two fish among them all. 42 They all ate and were satisfied.

^JWhen they had all had enough to eat, he commanded his disciples, "*Gather the pieces that are left over. Let nothing be wasted.*"

43 ^MThe disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces of bread and fish.

44 The number of the men, ^{MT}besides women and children, ^Mwho had eaten was five thousand. ^JAfter the people saw the miraculous sign that Jesus had performed, they began to say, "Surely this is the prophet who is to come into the world."

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NOTE: We use superscript identification of the source gospel in "blended texts" as follows: Matthew = ^{MT}, Mark = ^M, Luke = ^L, John = ^J, Acts = ^A. This "superscript ID" is inserted at the beginning of the quoted text, identifying that Bible book until a different superscript appears. In addition, *the words of Jesus are italicized in red*. Old Testament quotations are CAPITALIZED.

CONTEXT DIGEST	
Location	Near Bethsaida
Timeline	Late March/Early April (Month 26)
Jesus' Life Context	Stage IV: The Great Galilean Ministry
	I. Jesus' Third Tour of Galilee and its Aftermath
Title	4. Jesus Feeds the 5000 (Miracle #19)

COMMENT:

This, his 19th miracle, is probably the most famous of all Jesus' miracles. It is the only one (other than Jesus' death and resurrection) that is recorded in all four gospels. It was also the basis of an entire sermon of Jesus, which we will be looking at over the next few days. It furnished a shocking climax to Jesus' third tour of Galilee.

The text highlights the colossal difference in attitude between Jesus and the apostles. From a practical point of view, they wanted to dismiss the huge crowd so they could walk back to Bethsaida, or Capernaum to get something to eat for the evening meal. Jesus, on the other hand, saw that the people were already weary from hunger and needed to eat immediately. He was also concerned that the towns in the area would not have enough extra food on hand for such a massive crowd. Since there were about 5000 men present, the number would at least double when the uncounted women and children were added.

The apostles had been ministering with miraculous power in their tour through Galilee already, for Jesus had commanded them to go, preach, and heal according to the gifts he had given them. The same principle applied in this situation, but they had not realized it yet. So Jesus saw this as a teaching opportunity for the apostles. He tested them, for *"already knew what he was going to do."* (JN 6.6)

By commanding the twelve to feed the multitude (MK 6.37), Jesus was empowering them to accomplish it. He wanted them to rely upon him to do the impossible--just because he commanded it. Peter partially learned the lesson, for he would apply it later that night in another storm on the Sea of Galilee, but neither he, nor any of the other apostles fully understood the point of what Jesus was teaching them in this miracle.

Since this miracle is recorded in all four gospels, we will point out some of the unique contributions of each writer as we move through the narrative. The base text came from Mark. The three other authors followed his wording very closely in writing their gospels. John alone added a lot of additional content to Mark's account. He gave us the key information that Jesus performed the miracle to teach the twelve an invaluable lesson.

After commanding the apostles to feed the people, Jesus next told them to check out their resources. The apostles counted the available food, and the amount of money they had on hand, but they failed to reckon on their most important resource--Jesus himself! No one counted on him to solve the problem. This was the crucial lesson they failed to learn. When we do not have enough resources in ourselves, we are facing a God-given opportunity to rely upon the power of God to accomplish his will through us. This is the secret of the Christian life.

Matthew added only a couple of brief phrases to Mark's account, but one of them was crucial to this lesson. He quoted Jesus' command: *"bring them (the five barley loaves and two small fish) to me."* The secret to obeying every command from Jesus is to bring all of our resources to him, for him to empower and bless according to his will. That was his lesson for the twelve, and it is his unending lesson for us as well.

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All four gospels state that Jesus gave thanks before breaking the loaves and fish. John was deeply impressed by the way Jesus gave thanks. He mentions it later on in his narrative in 6.23 like this: **"Then some boats from Tiberias landed near the place where the people had eaten the bread, after the Lord had given thanks."**

For John, the fact that Jesus gave thanks was much more than merely saying grace before a meal. John had noted that Jesus already knew what he was going to do-- a miracle, that is--before he asked the apostles to check out their resources. That meant Jesus broke the bread by faith, believing that his Father was going to answer his prayer. Jesus gave thanks in advance by faith for the miracle that was about to occur.

The Lord did the same thing at the raising of Lazarus from the dead. (JN 11.41-42) In both cases, Jesus had already prayed about the situation before hand, and received his answer from the Father in advance of the actual miracle. It was already a done deal in Jesus' mind because of his prior prayer. Therefore, he was giving thanks for the answer that he already knew was coming. THAT is a powerful example of faith, and it was what Jesus was looking for in his disciples.

APPLICATION:

Jesus will later say about prayer: **"I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have already received it, and it will be yours."** MK 11.24. Jesus practiced what he preached. Therefore, he gave thanks in advance of a massive miracle, because he believed that he had already received what he had asked for. Miracle #19 wonderful example of this principle from Jesus' life, that applies directly to each of us.

What are you currently asking God for in prayer? Has he commanded it in his Word? Then you know it is his will for you.

What do you need to thank him for today, because you believe his answer has already been granted to you?