

**Jesus is Provider – John 6:1-15**  
**Crossroads Christian Church**  
**April 25&26, 2020**

- Today as we continue our discovery of how to live and love like Jesus, we come to one of the more famous moments in the life of Jesus, a miraculous feeding of a multitude
- This miracle is recorded in all 4 Gospels, the only event other than Jesus' death and resurrection that is captured in all four accounts of his life. Each author gives a unique perspective that fills in the full picture of what took place in this moment.
- I liken the 4 Gospels like the report 4 people would give who all went to the same movie or sporting event...they all experience the same thing but have a unique way of sharing about it
- We are going to read from John 6:1-15 if you will turn there with me, but I'll sprinkle in some of the details found in the other 3 Gospels

**JOHN 6:1-4**

- John's purpose in writing is much more theological than chronological so he doesn't really organize the events in sequential order or give the same clues about the timing of this moment
- Matthew and Mark share that right before this moment, John the Baptist has been executed by Herod Antipas. John was Jesus' cousin and the forerunner to Him as Messiah and Matthew says Jesus withdrew to a solitary place I assume to grieve and to process
- John says Jesus crossed to the "far side of the Sea of Galilee" which was barren/wilderness
- Mark and Luke place this moment after Jesus had sent out 12 disciples on their first missionary efforts preaching the Good News, healing and performing miracles, healing many
- They had just returned and were excited to tell Jesus what they had experienced so He took them away from the crowds so they could share what happened with him and rest (Luke)
- All 4 gospel accounts mention that a large crowd who had witnessed the miracles Jesus and his disciples had been performing, followed him there. Luke names the place Bethsaida
- Ever tried to just have some peace and quiet, or need some, and you can't get away?  
[moms locking themselves in the bathroom for a few moments, respite care, mental health]
- Jesus' reaction in this moment is one of the first takeaways on how to live and love like him
- Despite his plans for rest, his need to process, and his desire to be lone with his friends...
- "He had compassion on them" Matthew 14:14
- "He had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd" Mark 6:34
- "He welcomed them and spoke to them about the Kingdom of God, and healed those who needed healing" Luke 9:11
- What a picture of Jesus' heart. It's a picture of Him fulfilling the role of Good Shepherd
- Most of us are familiar with the picture David draws of this shepherd in Psalm 23, but listen to the words of the prophet Ezekiel who contrasts the leaders of Israel with God himself

**EZEKIEL 34:1-6, 11-16**

- Many saw this moment as a fulfillment of this prophecy by Jesus: on a mountain, plenty of grass (Matthew, Mark, John), and all being fed. Near the Passover feast = connected dots

- How do you respond when your plans are interrupted? When your quest for peace and quiet is thwarted? When you need a break from people and can't get one?
- Those needs and desires are not wrong. Jesus practiced solitude regularly and was successful at avoiding crowds at other times. But His compassion and care always superseded
- Which is what we see kick in next
- Jesus compassion on the people led him to be concerned about their need for food
- The other 3 Gospels states the disciples came to Jesus with this concern first. They recognized they were in a deserted area with no place for lodging, food, or gas for their donkey (wonder if it was a cheap then in the Middle East as it is right now?)
- The disciple's solution was to "send them away" so they could care for themselves
- But John records Jesus had a different solution. He is the only one who records Jesus taking the initiative. But all 4 record Jesus asking his followers to care for the people

### JOHN 6:5-5

- Much to my chagrin in this moment, I got my name from this person in the Bible, Philip
- Jesus asked Philip first to help in this moment because he was from Bethsaida and would have been familiar of places where they could have gotten food.
- Whether or not he knew a good caterer or a place for take out to feed the masses, Philip quickly calculated the financial impact feeding this many people would have and protested
- It's never a good idea to do math in public, but his calculations were most likely accurate [8 months wages = 200 denarii (denary = 1 day's wages) ~ 2 dollars, \$72.50/day = \$14,000]
- Notice what John captured about this moment:

He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do. John 6:6

- I stopped here for a moment in my study this week to think about why Jesus tested Philip
- I had to revisit the difference between testing and tempting. James 1 reminds us that God does not tempt us, but does allow trials of all kinds to test our faith, so that perseverance is developed and we may become mature and complete. And that if we lack wisdom in these moments, to ask God who gives generously without finding fault!

DISCUSSION QUESTION: How do you sense your faith being strengthened by this season of testing due to COVID 19? How have other testing(s) produced a stronger faith in your life?

- This was a growing moment for Philip, but not just for him. Look what happens next

### JOHN 6:8-9

- Andrew, which is where I get my middle name, had a solution but recognized it was more than likely insufficient to solve the crisis at hand
- John is the only one who mentions it was a boy's lunch as the source of the 5 loaves and 2 fish
- Andrew, since he was also from this area, may have known this boy personally
- John tells us this boy had barley loaves. Barley loaves were food of the poor, it was cheap.
- This small meal was a common meal packed for a day of travel into the hills. It was an afternoon meal, small break cakes and fish either dried or pickled for flavor, daily staple.
- It was obviously insufficient to feed anyone other than this boy, except when Jesus is involved
- Just like water was turned to wine, lame legs were restored, the sick had been healed, Jesus

was about to demonstrate His power again and it would be another sign of his deity!

-The focus is not on the miracle itself but on the one who worked it!

### **JOHN 6:10-13**

-Without knowing how or what was going to happen, the disciples obeyed. The people followed instructions, and Jesus performed a miracle...whether they even realized it, or not

-His instructions have all kinds of OT hyperlinks and Messianic fulfillment all over them...

- People on a mountain, in the “desert” providing food (manna from Heaven)
- We’ve already mentioned the strong Good Shepherd theme
- People sat in groups (of 50 and 100) = recalls the order of the Mosaic camp in the desert and reminds us of social distancing 😊
- “Gave thanks” traditional Jewish prayer before AND after meals: “Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who brings forth bread from the earth”
  - Reminds us of “give us today our daily bread” from the Lord’s Prayer
  - Notice Jesus thanks God and blesses God, not the food. “He can do miracles, but it would take a lot to turn a Big Mac, Super-Size Fry, and a Large chocolate milkshake into a nourishing meal!” Praying before we eat teaches gratitude and dependence on God.
- Some see the Passover meal and the institution of the Lord’s Supper with Jesus taking bread, blessing it, breaking it, giving it to people to eat.
- The people were “satisfied” “as much as they wanted/had enough to eat”
  - Isaiah 31 draws a picture of the restoration and kingdom Messiah would bring as a bountiful banquet. Jesus used the picture of a banquet where all are invited to come and eat and be filled as a picture of the Kingdom of God.
  - Psalm 103:5 “he satisfies your desires with good things”
- 12 baskets left over could resemble the 12 tribes of Israel.
  - Leftovers...every child’s least favorite words
  - Collecting what was left over after a meal was a common Jewish custom
  - Daily attire included a small wicker basket where scraps from a meal, especially portions of bread, were stored and enjoyed throughout the day or journey.
  - This again speaks of the lavishness of God in providing for the needs of people. There was more at the end than available at the beginning.

Those present were numbered by all 4 gospels as “5,000 men” and didn’t include women or children. Most scholars estimate that there could have been as many as 10,000 to 20,000 present. That might be a “preacher count”, but everyone who was there noticed the miracle

### **JOHN 6:14-15**

-They were amazed at what happened and began to proclaim, “This is the Prophet promised”

-Deuteronomy 18 had promised a prophet like Moses would come. Remember in John 1 people asked John the Baptist if he was the Prophet, and the woman at the well wondered he same about Jesus. I’m sure you can see why from the similarities we’ve already discussed.

-There are other similarities as well:

- Elijah and the never empty oil and flour miracle recorded in 1 Kings 16
- Elisha feeding 100 people with 20 loaves in 2 Kings 4 (sorely inadequate)

-But the people also made associations with the Messiah and an conquering king who would bring deliverance from their enemies, and their greatest enemy at this moment was Rome

-The devil had tempted Jesus to use his power for his own needs to make bread from stones, to become powerful in the eyes of people and gather a large following, and to take a shortcut to having a Kingdom without the cross.

-The crowd felt like the voice of satan tempting Jesus again

-When Jesus began sharing the mission God had given him with this disciples and that it included dying, Peter confronted Jesus and vowed to prevent it.

-Jesus responded, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns." Matthew 16:23

-He tells Pilate right before being crucified, "My Kingdom is not of this world!" John 18:36

-These people did not have the "things of God" in mind either, they wanted more bread and a king who would deliver them from the thumb of Rome. Jesus will address this later in chp 6.

-Jesus' identity, power, and purpose was much more focused on the things of God and so He slipped away up the mountain to be by himself.

-At the height of Jesus' public ministry, the largest crowd witnessing his power, Jesus again remained focused on God and his mission.

**-Jesus is Provider. He cares about our physical needs. He is capable to meet our needs, even when we feel like the resources our limited or we are unsure of how He will do it. Through faith we can find true life in Jesus and be satisfied in Him.**

**DISCUSSION QUESTION: Who do you relate to the most: Philip, Andrew, the boy, or a person in the crowd? Why?**

-Philip, Andrew, and the other disciples had the right heart just lacked faith.

-They had been taught by Jesus to care for others. They had just returned from teaching & healing like Jesus and were learning how to live and love like Him.

-Jesus had even instructed them not to worry about what they would eat or where they would sleep on their journey and they had experienced God's provisions.

-They needed to keep trusting and exercising their faith muscle. Jesus had a plan!

-Jesus said in Matthew 17:20, "If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.

-Jesus wanted his followers and those in the crowd to know he cares, capable, & is trustworthy

-Paul prayed the same thing for the Ephesians

**EPHESIANS 3:16-21**

-If you are facing financial challenges due to job loss, God cares and is capable

-If you are facing anxiety and fear due to the stress of all this, Jesus cares and is capable

- If you are facing physical illness, Jesus cares and is capable
- Trust Him as Provider even if you feel like you have just a little faith.
- And if you feel like the boy in the crowd who seems to only have enough for himself, when he gave it all to Jesus, many were filled and satisfied. He trusted Jesus for His lunch as well.
- Philip, Andrew, and the boy all uncomfortable and realizing their inadequacies, let Jesus help.
- Jesus thanked God for what they could contribute, and multiplied it. He's good at doing that!

[STORY ABOUT RESPONSE FUND/encouragement to give to meet goal]

- refrigerator, baby supplies met by 16 different young parents, meeting felt needs

Tim Keller, "The Gospel is the might of God, through Christ, connected with our helplessness so we become both the objects of and the channels for, the power of God!"

- Jesus is Provider. He promises to meet our needs and has proven his care and capability through his miracles. These are signs of his love, his compassion, his power, and his mission.
- As Provider, he not only has committed to meeting our physical needs, but our spiritual need of a Savior as well.

Romans 8:32, He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?

- We are all poor, helpless, woefully inadequate. Jesus, the Provider, takes whatever little we offer out of faith, and turns it into a feat ushering in the Kingdom of God, both in us and through us.

PRAY