

**JOHN'S GOSPEL: JESUS IS THE SON OF GOD**  
**XIX. "Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand"**  
**John 6:1 - 15**

**Introduction:**

As we begin our study this morning, let's remember that John has written His Gospel to show us who Jesus really is. He is the Son of God Almighty, the unique, one-of-a-kind Son of God, who came into the world to act on our behalf to redeem us. John wants us to see and understand the truth that Jesus did what was humanly impossible to demonstrate His true identity: **Jesus is both Son of Man and God the Son**, the Word made flesh, who moved into the neighborhood!

That is why when John talks about Jesus doing miracles he often calls them "signs." A sign delivers a message. It points us to the way to go. So when we come to Jesus doing miracles, with this understanding, John says the miracles Jesus performed were **Signs** to point us to His **True Identity!**

The lesson before us today is Jesus the Son of God feeding 5000 men with five small loaves and two fish. It should be clear to us all, but let's just make the point that according to human logic and understanding, five small barley loaves and two fish are not going to satisfy the hunger of five men let alone 5000 men plus their women and children. **So if we are facing circumstances for which we do not see any human answers, let's remember to take the time to get alone with Jesus to see what He might want to do in those circumstances.**

For those who have been here each week of this study the following truths are going to be old news. But, for those visiting this morning, here is what we have been learning as we've studied the Gospel of John. First, John's Gospel has as one of its major themes that in Jesus we get to see what the Father God is like. When we believe in Jesus and invite Him to be our Savior and Lord, we are given the incredible privilege of becoming the **Adopted Children** of God the Father.

John writes in John 1:11 - 13 *"He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God - children born not of natural descent, nor of a human decision, or a husband's will but born of God."*

John tells us in the text why he wrote this testimony to Jesus. Let's read together John 20:30, 31: *"Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."*

Third, John tells us a key truth by referring to belief in Jesus twice in his purpose for writing the book: **Believing in Jesus is crucial to John:** *"that by believing you may have life in his name."*

To John believing isn't merely giving mental assent to a list of facts. Believing is absolutely entrusting one's entire being to Jesus, to have eternal life. We believe the truth is that what Jesus came to do to give eternal life to people, was for me personally! In the Cross of Jesus, He died to bear my sins, my guilt and shame, my iniquities. In His resurrection life and power I get the sweet gift of His life living in my spirit making me alive to God!

This kind of believing; entrusting myself to Jesus results in eternal life now. There is a key component to living the Christian life that all of us need to know and understand. When we become Christians we experience the miracle of His life coming to live in our hearts making us alive to the things of God. What that means is that I get to live my life here on earth with the presence of the Spirit of Jesus Living in me, moving me to Think and Act differently!

Fourth, **John wants us to Know Something very important about Truth!** John teaches us what the Bible teaches us. To experience the life of Jesus is to become acquainted with, to know what truth is. It is to engage in the faithfulness and reliability of the very nature of God. The truth is characteristic of God and it is only as we know God personally that we engage in truth. For the followers of Jesus the truth doesn't shift according to cultural views and values. It is anchored in the bedrock of the nature of God!

Here is why this is so important for us to know and understand: If it is true that Jesus is the truth of God revealed to us, and He comes to live in our hearts by His Holy Spirit, then the **Truth of God actually takes up Residence in you and me.** That means that we get the privilege of walking through life in freedom from sin's power to enslave us to guilt, shame, and condemnation. That's why Jesus says, *"If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free."* John 8:31, 32

In the message today we'll study the story of the feeding of the 5000. The story that portrays Jesus as the Son of God, with authority to act on earth in keeping with the revealed will and purposes of His Father God. The truth is that this miracle was even more significant than John records for us because there were also women and children there that day. It is Matthew who records this fact for us, in Matthew 14:21: *"The number of those who ate was five thousand men, besides their women and children."* Let's look at some things that set the scene for us.

Remember that many scholars agree that the events of John 6 actually occur before the events of John 5 chronologically. That means this story occurs just before Jesus' second of three Passover observances in Jerusalem. That helps us to understand where Jesus was and why John tells us in verse 4, *"The Jewish Passover Feast was near."* Jesus wanted to spend some quality time alone with His most intimate followers before the sparks began to fly with the Jewish leaders, when He returned to Jerusalem.

This is one of the few things that is recorded in all four gospels. That means it's really important for us to know as we choose to follow Jesus. **The provisions that Jesus gives to us in the face what appears to be humanly impossible, will meet every situation that we face!**

## **I. The Lord Jesus has a Plan:**

John 6:5, 6 “When Jesus looked up and saw the crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, ‘Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?’ He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do.”

When Jesus finished teaching the people and healing their sick, the crowd began to swell even larger. The fact that Passover was near, they were close to a main road leading to Jerusalem, and there were lots of people traveling by them, meant that curiosity was swelling their ranks. Philip is the guy that Jesus looks to when He asks him, where can we go to buy bread for all of the people that were gathered there on the grassy hillside? Philip, we are told in John 1:44 was from this town of Bethsaida on the north shore of the Sea of Galilee. Jesus is setting up the fact that this is an **Impossibility according Human Logic**.

His compassion is kindled by all of these people who have nothing to eat, so Jesus turned to the guy who in His band of followers who has local knowledge of the town. Where, in this small town, “shall we buy bread for these people to eat?”

Philip is the guy that was convinced very early on that Jesus was the one that was to come that Moses wrote about. He went and found his friend Nathaniel and brought him to Jesus. So Philip, who loved and trusted Jesus deeply, turned to Him and gave Him the answer He was looking for. According to human logic and understanding Jesus, “Eight months wages wouldn’t be enough for each one to have a bite!” Philip’s answer has a note of despair and impossibility in it.

Then John breaks into the narrative with a comment that helps us to understand the truth that something very special is going to take place here. John tells us, “He asked this only **to Test him**, for he already had in mind what he was going to do.” Jesus doesn’t ask questions to get information. Jesus is the Son of God Almighty. He isn’t asking Philip this question to get the name of a food warehouse!

Similarly, in our spiritual walk with Jesus, when He comes to you and me and asks us questions, He isn’t looking for us to empty ourselves of our knowledge of our circumstances. **He is asking us to look at our circumstances differently: Through His Perspective, not our own Thoughts and Ways!** Let’s choose to look at the problems we are facing through the eyes of Jesus, not our human ways and answers that we can come up with from our perspective.

It is important to remember that Jesus is concerned about His kingdom of the heart living in us and growing in us. Philip is a good man who is already convinced that Jesus is the Messiah of God. So in this instance, Jesus is looking to expand Philip’s understanding of who He is and what He came to do. When Jesus asked Philip this question, He already had in mind what He was going to do. The same is true for you and me as we face situations that look impossible to us in the human arena. **Jesus Already has a Plan, so take time to Listen to Him!**

## **II. Trust Me and I Will Help You Feed Them:**

John 6:7 – 10 “Philip answered him, ‘Eight months wages would not be enough for each one to have a bite!’ Another 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?’ Jesus said, ‘Have

*the people sit down. There was plenty of grass in that place, and the men sat down, about five thousand.”*

Matthew 14:15b – 18 *“The disciples approached him and said, ‘This is a remote place, and it’s already getting late. Send the crowds away, so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food.’ Jesus replied, ‘You give them something to eat.’ We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish,’ they answered. ‘Bring them here to me.’ Jesus said.”*

It is interesting that the question Jesus asked Philip was a question that “tested” him. Jesus wasn’t testing Philip in order to make him look small or incapable in front of his brothers and sisters. Jesus was asking him the question that tested him because he wanted Philip to participate in something that was simply awesome, and He didn’t want him to miss a thing! Similarly, Jesus doesn’t test us in order to show us how shallow or human that we are.

The truth is that when Jesus permits us to walk in circumstances that are difficult He wants us to see Him and hear Him. He knows how we feel and He understands physical and emotional pain. He puts us through times or circumstances that test us in order to enable us to see how He is at work and He doesn’t want us to **Miss Him** or what He is **Doing In** and **With** us!

Jesus tells His followers that the crowd doesn’t have to go away from them in order for them to have something to eat. He tells His followers to do what is humanly impossible to do without His presence and power to change their circumstances. *‘You give them something to eat.’* The disciples would be responsible to walk with Jesus and to work with Jesus after He was no longer physically living on the earth. This was discipleship training class 303.

Here is **the life principle** Jesus was driving home to them and to us. **Don’t try to take care of people’s needs without my Help, Counsel, and Enabling!** When Jesus was preparing to leave them after His death and resurrection, He reinforced this principle to them when He told them not to leave Jerusalem to do any ministry work until they had been clothed with power from the Holy Spirit of God!

The closest followers of Jesus were in training class pretty much all of the time. There weren’t many situations that they watched Jesus face in which there were no lessons or that were pointless. Similarly, all of life is training class for you and me as we walk through life with Jesus. There aren’t big lessons and little lessons really. All of life is about learning what it means to **Know** and **Walk** with the **Spirit of Jesus** as He lives in our hearts!

### **III. What You Have Isn’t Enough, but Give it All to Me:**

John 6:8b – 10 *“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?’ Jesus said, ‘Have the people sit down. ‘There was plenty of grass in that place, and the men sat down, about five thousand.”*

Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother stepped forward and told Jesus there was a little boy in the crowd that had five barley loaves and two small pickled fish and that the little boy had volunteered his lunch to Jesus. Here is a selfless act by a small child, who doesn’t have much to

eat himself, but what he has he brought to Jesus through Andrew. What a wonderful picture of a childlike heart that **Loves and Gives to Jesus with sincere Intentions!**

Andrew's comment on the gift the boy brought was another statement about the hopelessness of their situation. The five barley loaves and two fish represent a lunch that would have been eaten by the poorest of the poor. Barley was the cheapest of the grains of the time and it made the coarsest of the breads that they made. It was all his mother could afford to give to him for the day. But he in turn, brought what he had to Jesus.

What percentage of the boy's lunch did Jesus use? Could Jesus have fed all of those people there with three loaves and one sardine? But the truth is that Jesus asked for it all. He wants all that we are and all that we have, to be given to Him to use!

This incredible act of love from a little boy is a picture for us to see a really important truth. What we are, what we have and bring to the table of serving human need is never going to be enough to meet the vast and different needs that we see in the lives of people in our sphere of influence. We must possess something, living in our hearts and souls that is not human in its origin, but divinely bestowed on us. We must have the **Presence and Power of the Spirit** of the risen Jesus living in us moving through us to touch the lives of others through us!

Jesus had the people sit down, took the five barley loaves and two sardines and gave thanks to His Father for them. Then Jesus handed out bread and fish to His followers and they in turn gave them to the people gathered there. Isn't this incredible? Jesus says, "You give them something to eat." Then He enabled them to do what He asked them to do. He enabled them to give all of the people gathered there something to eat. **Let's remember this truth: What Jesus asks you and me to do, He will Give us that Ability to Do if we dwell in Him and He dwells in us!**

#### **IV. Don't Waste Anything:**

*John 6:12, 13 "When they had all had enough to eat, he said to his disciples, 'Gather the pieces that are left over. Let nothing be wasted. So they gathered them and filled twelve baskets with the pieces of the five barley loaves left over by those who had eaten.'"*

Just so the disciples wouldn't miss a thing regarding what they had just seen happen, Jesus told them to gather up what was left over after 5000 men plus women and children had eaten all that they wanted of the five barley loaves and two small fish! When the disciples gathered up all of the fragments that were left over they found out that they each had an entire basket (kophinos) full of pieces of bread and small fish. Every Jewish man and woman had on their possession a kophinos, the place where they kept their daily food and wine stores. When each disciple filled his basket, what wasn't nearly enough in the human was more than enough with Jesus!

This miraculous thing probably gripped the disciple's hearts for sure. But another group of people were there and we must try to grasp what must have been going on in the hearts and minds of the onlookers who saw and then ate the food of this incredible miracle? The truth is that no traveler to Jerusalem would have ever started on the journey from northern Galilee to go to the Passover without taking food.

The percentage of the people traveling to the feast in Jerusalem, who were there that day, all would have had food in their Jewish basket (kophinos). But not one of them gave Jesus their provisions, which they had packed for their family. They were perhaps already eaten because they were in a remote place for three days listening to Jesus. The only one willing to give to Jesus was this little child. How this must have gripped them and **what a picture of their own lack or worse, selfishness in the face of a little boy's sheer generosity!**

Remember that the man who wrote this Gospel was one of the men picking up the pieces of food that were left over. He wants us to know the truth. What we have in our humanity is never going to be enough to meet the needs of people who are all around us, who need to see Jesus. But what Jesus asks us to do is **to Give all that we Have and all that we Are to Him.** He takes what humanly speaking is never going to be able to meet the needs of the people we love in our sphere of influence. **Then He makes it more than enough when we surrender it to Him!**

**A simple life that is utterly surrendered to Jesus can accomplish incredible things in His kingdom work on earth!**

#### **V. The Kingdom of Jesus Is Never Solely About the Human:**

John 6:14, 15 *“After the people saw the miraculous sign that Jesus did they began to say, ‘Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world.’ Jesus, knowing that they intended to come and make him king by force, withdrew again to a mountain by himself.”*

Jesus knew that the people were getting all fired up about Him. Jesus could clearly see that the miracle of feeding that many people with such a small amount of food was causing them to think of Him in the wrong way. He realized that they were talking of crowning Him a king in the human arena because they thought He was the Prophet, the Savior who was coming into the world to destroy Roman occupation and set up the Jewish nation in power and authority again!

On Palm Sunday they cried, “Blessed is the coming of our father David!” They saw David as the conquering hero, who smashed all Jewish opponents. They saw the coming of the Prophet similarly, as one who would come and act on earth in the spirit and power exhibited by King David!

Jesus knowing this to be what was in their humanly based thinking, made a clear statement to every person who had any ability to see. The kingdom that Jesus came to establish would dwell in the **Hearts and Souls of radically Changed men and women.** It would not be a humanly based kingdom in any sense of the word. Jesus' kingdom of the heart does not move forward by human force. It moves forward as men and women choose to surrender our will like this little boy did with his lunch!

So Jesus went to be alone with His Abba Father God, out on a mountainside. He went to spend time with His Father to make sure His heart was focused on what the Father God had in mind to do in and through His life and ministry! **For Jesus, the Cross He came to bear to take away our sins was always in the forefront of His thinking.** “I came down from heaven to do the will of my Father, and not what I want!”

I leave you with this life application from this incredible text: Knowing Jesus personally means that we are choosing to engage with Him every day, to experience His life in our lives, His love in our hearts, and that we may hear His whispers to us regarding His will for how we will choose to live our lives. In time alone with Jesus, we get to experience His Holy Spirit making the Word of God alive to us and the love of God, the holy, self-emptying, other-oriented love of God that moves us to live a life of **Surrender to Him and Service to Others!**

February 28, 2016

*John's Gospel, Jesus is the Son of God:*  
**XIX. "Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand"**  
**John 6:1–15**

**Introduction:**

Our series from John's Gospel looks at Jesus as John presents Him to us: His true identity is both Son of **M**\_\_\_\_\_ and Son of **G**\_\_\_\_\_. John tells us His miracles were **S**\_\_\_\_\_ that point us to see His true identity.

The lesson before us today is the feeding of the 5000.

One of John's themes is we are **A**\_\_\_\_\_ **C**\_\_\_\_\_ of God! John 1:11–13

John tells us why he wrote the Gospel message, John 20:30–31. The word **B**\_\_\_\_\_ is critical to John. This belief is entrusting myself to Jesus.

John wants us to **K**\_\_\_\_\_ something very important about the **T**\_\_\_\_\_. Truth is founded in the bedrock of the character and nature of God. When we invite the Holy Spirit to live in us, the truth actually takes up **R**\_\_\_\_\_ in us.

In the message today, we're studying something that happened just before the second Passover Jesus attended. The miracle of the loaves and fish is recorded in all four Gospels. Matthew 14:21 adds ...

The provisions of Jesus in the face of what appears to be humanly impossible are more than enough to meet every life situation!

**I. Jesus has a Plan:**

John 6:5–6

Jesus talks to Philip, the man with local knowledge of the town. He is setting up the fact that this is an **I**\_\_\_\_\_ according to human **L**\_\_\_\_\_.

Philip gave Jesus the answer He was looking for.

Jesus asked this only to **T**\_\_\_\_\_ Philip because he already knew what He was going to do.

Similarly, when Jesus asks us questions, He is asking us to look at our circumstances differently. Look at the things you are facing **T**\_\_\_\_\_. His **P**\_\_\_\_\_ not your best human **T**\_\_\_\_\_ and **W**\_\_\_\_\_.

As we face things that look impossible to us, Jesus **A**\_\_\_\_\_ has a **P**\_\_\_\_\_. Take time to **L**\_\_\_\_\_ to Him.

## **II. Trust Me and I Will Help You Feed Them:**

John 6:7–10; Matthew 14:15b–18

Jesus wanted Philip to participate with Him in something awesome and He didn't want him to miss a thing. Similarly, when we walk in hard circumstances in life, He doesn't want us to **M**\_\_\_\_\_ what He is **D**\_\_\_\_\_ **I**\_\_\_\_\_ and **W**\_\_\_\_\_ us!

The life principle is clear: Don't try to take care of people's needs without His **H**\_\_\_\_\_, **C**\_\_\_\_\_ and **E**\_\_\_\_\_! All of life is about learning to **K**\_\_\_\_\_ and **W**\_\_\_\_\_ with the Spirit of Jesus!

## **III. What You Have isn't Enough, but Give it All to Me:**

John 6:8b–10

Andrew brought a little boy with a poor person's lunch to Jesus. He gave Jesus all He had. What a picture of a **C**\_\_\_\_\_ **H**\_\_\_\_\_ that loves and gives to Jesus with sincerest of **I**\_\_\_\_\_!

Another clear life principle here: What we are and bring to the table will never be enough. We must possess something that is not of human origin at all, but is God-given: the **P**\_\_\_\_\_ and **P**\_\_\_\_\_ of the Spirit. What Jesus asks us to do, He will **G**\_\_\_\_\_ us the **A**\_\_\_\_\_ to do.

## **IV. Don't Waste Anything!**

John 6:12–13

Jesus instructed them to gather up the fragments left over and they had twelve (kophinoi) baskets when they were finished. What did this speak to the disciples ... and to those who had kophinoi of their own?

What we have and are will never be sufficient, but what Jesus asks us to do is **G**\_\_\_\_\_ Him all that we **H**\_\_\_\_\_ and all that we **A**\_\_\_\_\_!

## **V. The Kingdom of Jesus is Never Solely about the Human:**

John 6:14–15

Jesus knew they were about to crown Him king in the order of David, the conquering hero! Jesus also knew the kingdom He came to establish would dwell in the **H**\_\_\_\_\_ and **S**\_\_\_\_\_ of radically **C**\_\_\_\_\_ people!

Knowing Jesus personally means we get alone with Him regularly and we experience His love burning in our hearts, enabling us to live a life of **S**\_\_\_\_\_ to Him and **S**\_\_\_\_\_ to **O**\_\_\_\_\_.

## Discussion Starter Questions for Home Groups

1. John writes about spiritual adoption in all of his writings. Why is it important for us to know this truth personally?
2. John wants us to know that when we engage with the Truth of God in the Scriptures we are engaging in the nature of God. Why is it important for us to know this truth?
3. Jesus did what was humanly impossible to do. In your opinion, why did Jesus perform this miraculous feeding?
4. In the message, the point was made that when we face life situations that look impossible to us we should know that Jesus already has a plan. Why is this important and what are we encouraged to do with this truth?
5. There was a life-principle given in the message: Don't try to take care of people's needs without the Spirit of Jesus' help, counsel, and enabling. Why is this important for us to understand?
6. With this miraculous act of feeding people, Jesus taught His followers to act with Him in what He is doing and His provisions will be more than enough. What life applications can you think of regarding this truth?
7. Read together aloud John 20:19–23 and Luke 24:36–49. Discuss insights you have regarding Jesus asking His followers to wait for His Spirit's presence and power to live in them.
8. Read together aloud Acts 1:7–8, 2:1–4. Discuss insights you have regarding the Holy Spirit's work in the followers of Jesus.
9. What touched your heart as you heard the message on experiencing Jesus' provisions when we face difficult circumstances?
10. What do you think Jesus is doing when He permits hard things, painful experiences, or difficult relationships to come into our lives?