

## Feeding the 5000 – John 6:1-15

### Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand

**6** Some time after this, Jesus crossed to the far shore of the Sea of Galilee (that is, the Sea of Tiberias), <sup>2</sup> and a great crowd of people followed him because they saw the signs he had performed by healing the sick. <sup>3</sup> Then Jesus went up on a mountainside and sat down with his disciples. <sup>4</sup> The Jewish Passover Festival was near.

<sup>5</sup> 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?” <sup>6</sup> He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do.

<sup>7</sup> Philip answered him, “It would take more than half a year’s wages<sup>[a]</sup> to buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!”

<sup>8</sup> Another of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, spoke up, <sup>9</sup> “Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?”

<sup>10</sup> Jesus said, “Have the people sit down.” There was plenty of grass in that place, and they sat down (about five thousand men were there). <sup>11</sup> Jesus then took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed to those who were seated as much as they wanted. He did the same with the fish.

<sup>12</sup> When they had all had enough to eat, he said to his disciples, “Gather the pieces that are left over. Let nothing be wasted.” <sup>13</sup> So they gathered them and filled twelve baskets with the pieces of the five barley loaves left over by those who had eaten.

<sup>14</sup> After the people saw the sign Jesus performed, they began to say, “Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world.” <sup>15</sup> Jesus, knowing that they intended to come and make him king by force, withdrew again to a mountain by himself.

### Sermon precis

Poor began by talking about bread and about its universal appeal, the fact that it's a staple across pretty much the whole world. Bread satisfies. Bread nourishes and it sustains life. Paul talked about the fact that the smell of baking bread promotes desire, even when we are full. Bread is used and referenced throughout the Bible. From the Bread of Presence in the temple of the Lord, to the manna from heaven in the wilderness and when Satan encouraged Jesus to turn stones into bread and Jesus replied, “Man shall not live on bread alone.”

Paul delved into the account of Jesus feeding the 5000. He explained that the 5000 was likely to be actually between 15,000 and 20,000 due to the counting methods of the day where only men were counted.

This was an enormous amount of people. And they descended upon Jesus and the disciples as they came around the lake looking for him.

In Mark's Gospel, we are told that Jesus took compassion on the people as he saw them as sheep without a shepherd. They needed feeding both physically and spiritually.

A conversation unfolds between Jesus and the disciples, and here in John we read that it was Philip (a local to the area) that was asked about providing food. Phillip is quite incredulous at Jesus' question, asking where we can get food to feed the people. Yet Jesus knew what was going to happen.

An incredible miracle occurs as Jesus tells the people to sit down on the grass. He takes the boy's lunch of five barley loaves and two fish, gives thanks and then distributes it throughout the crowd, with everybody having enough, even full, with many baskets for food, in fact 12, left over.

This was an incredible miracle. But in John's Gospel he refers to these miracles and acts of Jesus as signs. Paul referred to [John 20:30](#) where John tells us why these miracles happen, and he calls them *signs* and they are employed by Jesus to point to him as the Son of God, the Messiah. Paul referenced other scriptures in [John 6:14](#), [John 2:23-25](#) and [John 6:26](#) highlighting the references to *signs*.

Paul referred to [John 6:14](#) where we see the people were considering making Jesus king by force. Jesus could see people's hearts, and he could see that they wanted his power. They wanted him to free them from the oppression of the Romans, but they weren't ready to accept him as Lord.

Jesus is looking on, thinking "You see the miracle and you are excited by it and the power, but you miss the fact that I am the miracle."

Jesus could have removed the Romans from the lives of the Jews through his miraculous power. But Jesus knew that very quickly the Jews would return to their former way of life. This is a challenge for us today - We don't always want Jesus to change our life completely. But we're happy for him to change our circumstances. Give me the power Jesus, then let me be.

What the people couldn't see was that Jesus had not come to be king by force, but instead he came to be a servant-king. All the power he had displayed and all the miracles that he had performed, the signs, John called them, they were all out of kindness, grace and mercy. There is transformation, restoration, healing, grace and mercy and provision. None of the miracles brought harm or employed force.

Jesus came to bring freedom to all people. God so loved the *world* that he gave his only Son. Jesus says, "Give your life to me and you will be free." Paul quoted [John 10:10](#) where Jesus says that he had come to give us life, but not just life, life to the full.

Paul talked about the boy's lunch, the cheap barley loaves and the two fish. He made three appeals.

1. To those who don't think they're worthy to be accepted or used by Jesus. Jesus can take the smallest thing, even nothing, and turn it into something amazing. He wants you, and he wants your heart.

2. The boy gave over **all** of his lunch. He didn't hold anything back. To those of you who are not seeing the change or growth in your life that you would like, ask yourself, "What is it that you are holding back from Jesus? What areas of your life do you need to submit to him to see the change and growth that he has promised?"
3. And lastly, an appeal to those who do not know Jesus. If you give him your life, like the boy gave Jesus his lunch, He will take what you see as your life, He will bless it and He will transform it, and He will multiply it. It will look like nothing you have ever seen. If you trust in him with your life, it will never be the same again.

## Community Group Questions.

1. What is your favourite bread and why?
2. Read **John 6:1-15** together.
3. Why were the crowds following Jesus wherever he went, even around a large lake? (Signs)
4. What do you find amazing about the feeding of the '5000'? Take time to imagine yourselves there in the crowd. Discuss what you think/see.
5. Put yourself in the place of the boy with the lunch. What do you feel? What do you have to offer Jesus?
6. Philip said to Jesus, "It would take more than half a year's wages to buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!" Essentially, what Philip is saying is that what you ask is impossible. We can't do it. What does this say about how we come to Jesus? (Empty handed, asking for help)
7. The signs that John talks of in **John 20:30**, **John 6:14**, **John 2:23-25** and **John 6:26** are all talking of signs that point to Jesus. How good are we at being signs that point to Jesus?
8. What is the difference between the king that the Jews expected and the King that we have? (**John 6:14&15**)
9. Look at the 3 appeals Paul made on Sunday morning. Do any of these points strike a chord with you? Discuss these 3 points as you pray for one another.