

Greetings:

The study that Pastor Pat brings on Sunday mornings is a reflection of the study for that week. It represents a lot of research. Not all of what he has prepared is communicated. In an attempt to continue the learning process, he is making available his study notes to the congregation.

These notes are edited, but not “book” ready. To the critical eye, mistakes can possibly be found. Therefore, he asks that you take the material with humility, teach-ability, and charity.

Enjoy and if you should have any questions or corrections, please do not hesitate to email him at pastorpat@waukeshabible.org.

Date: January 20, 2019

Sermon Title: The “Magic” of Feeding Thousands

Sermon Series: Matthew

Text: Matt. 14:13-21; 15:32-39; 16:5-12

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Text: Matt. 14:13-21; 15:32-39; 16:5-12

Introduction:

How do we go from 5 loaves / 2 small fish to 12 baskets of overflow AFTER feeding 15-20K people?

PERSPECTIVE

- Muskego 24k
- Mukwonago 7K
- Oconomowoc 16K

VIEWS

- Feeding 5K and 4K the same. Didn't really happen.
- Just a story. The "miracle" is meeting the needs of the downtrodden.
- No matter how much or how little you have, God can use it.

OUTLINE

- I. The Context or Occasion of the Miracle (vv. 13-15a)
 - A. John's death
 - B. Great crowd
 - C. His Compassion
 - D. His Healing
 - E. Long day
- II. The Condition or Preparation of the Disciples (vv. 15b)
 - A. Overwhelmed (vv. 15, 20)
 - B. Undersupplied [5 loaves / 2 fish]
 - C. Incredible (vv. 19, 20a)
 - D. Awe-inspiring (v. 20)
 1. They were all satisfied
 2. There were left overs

CONTRAST

EMPERORS feeding the people bread.

"In a political context, the phrase means to generate public approval, not by excellence in public service or public policy, but by diversion, distraction or by satisfying the most immediate or base requirements of a populace^[1] — by offering a palliative: for example food (bread) or entertainment (circuses). Roman politicians passed laws in 140 B.C. to keep the votes of poorer citizens, by introducing a grain dole: giving out cheap food and entertainment, "bread and circuses", became the most effective way to rise to power.

In ancient Rome, the political elite frequently distributed food (such as wheat) and funded lavish spectacles for the inhabitants. The provision of what Juvenal called "bread and circuses" is thought to have been an important element in placating the masses. The elite also seemed to have considered this to be an important part of their civic duty."¹

FEEDING THOUSANDS

Aside from the resurrection, the story of Jesus feeding the 5,000 is the only miracle recorded in all four Gospels. Obviously, the Gospel writers considered this a significant miracle. All four gospels record the miracle, but do not follow the same sequence and inclusion of events [Matt. 14:13-21; Mark 6:30-44; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-15]. Matt, Mark, and John have the feeding of 5,000 followed by Him walking on water. Luke excludes this from sequence.

“The Greek term used in Matthew 14:21 specifies males, and Matthew further emphasizes the point by adding, ‘Besides women and children.’ Many Bible scholars believe the actual number fed that day could have been **15,000 – 20,000 people.**”²

THESE three stories are to be intentionally tied together. They are not stand-alone stories, but accumulative pieces of one whole.

THE INTENT of the feedings are to show JESUS as MESSIAH.

The LEAVEN/Teaching of the Pharisees is the rejection of Jesus as Messiah.

The Gospel of John gives us the theology of this moment. Jesus is, “The Bread from Heaven.”

WITHDRAW

“There were three perfectly simple and natural reasons why Jesus should seek to be alone. He was human and he needed rest. He never recklessly ran into danger, and it was well to withdraw, lest too early he should share the fate of John. And, most of all, with the Cross coming nearer and nearer, Jesus knew that he must meet with God before he met with men. He was seeking rest for his body and strength for his soul in the lonely places.”³

Why do we in our current culture see “withdrawing” as some sign of weakness rather than an intentional time of refreshment? Why is withdrawing looked upon as unhealthy or some kind of privileged act only certain people can enjoy? The old adage holds true, “You will either come apart or you will come apart.” Being able to “take it,” isn’t a sign of strength or healthy. Emotional and physical health requires [demands] we learn what healthy withdrawing might look like.

Anachoreo WITHDRAW/DEPART 14xNT 2xinActs; 1x in John; 1x in Mark; 10xinMatthew
Herod incident - Mt 2:12, 13, 14, 22

- “Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, **he departed into Galilee**” (Matt. 4:12).
- “But when Jesus knew it, **he withdrew himself from thence**: and great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all” (Matt. 12:15).
- “**When Jesus heard of it, he departed thence by ship into a desert place apart**: and when the people had heard thereof, they followed him on foot out of the cities” (Matt. 14:13).
- ²² “Immediately He made the disciples get into the boat and go ahead of Him to the other side, while He sent the crowds away. ²³ After He had sent the crowds away, **He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray; and when it was evening, He was there alone**” (Matt. 14:22, 23).

- **“Then Jesus went thence, and departed** into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon” (Matt. 15:21).
- **“But Jesus withdrew himself with his disciples to the sea:** and a great multitude from Galilee followed him, and from Judaea” (Mark 3:7).
- “When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, **he departed again into a mountain himself alone**” (John 6:15).

CROWDS

It is difficult for us to comprehend the massive amount of people that followed Jesus regularly. When He fed 5,000 people and then 4,000 people, the crowds were upwards of 15-20,000 people. This swarming mass of humanity came hungry for something. They did not consider His privacy or convenience. They were not polite or kind. A mob this big becomes overpowering by sheer size. They were driven and rude. Yet, Jesus never tired of them. He looked on them with compassion and saw them as sheep without a shepherd. Jesus came for them and He came not to be served but to serve and to give His life a ransom for many (Matt. 20:28).

JUST A THOUGHT

Pastors and people are not JESUS. We [humans] tire and get put out by insensitivity and fatigue. We often ask others to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves. We cannot be our own savior nor the savior for others. Only Jesus can do what He did.

We will read of the disciples and their response to the crowd. It is often different from Jesus’ response. Why? Because they are not Him.

So as it relates to pastors, staff, and people, lower your expectations and demands. No matter how much we might care, we cannot care enough. We are not built to bear the overwhelming burden of others let alone our own. We are in it together. Let us not look for false Messiah’s on the horizontal. There is only one Messiah and His name is JESUS.

GREAT CROWDS

- **“And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judaea, and from beyond Jordan”** (Matt. 4:25).
- “When he was come down from the mountain, **great multitudes followed him**” (Matt. 8:1).
- **“Now when Jesus saw great multitudes about him,** he gave commandment to depart unto the other side” (Matt. 8:18).
- “Then saith he unto his disciples, **The harvest truly is plenteous,** but the labourers are few” (Matt. 9:37).
- “But when Jesus knew it, he withdrew himself from thence: and **great multitudes followed him,** and he healed them all” (Matt. 12:15).
- **“And great multitudes were gathered together unto him,** so that he went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore” (Matt. 13:2).
- **“And Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and he healed their sick”** (Matt. 14:14).

- **“And great multitudes came unto him, having with them those that were lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and cast them down at Jesus' feet; and he healed them”** (Matt. 15:30).
- **“And as they departed from Jericho, a great multitude followed him”** (Matt. 20:29).
- **“And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strawed them in the way”** (Matt. 21:8).
- **“And while he yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders of the people”** (Matt. 26:47).

THE TEACHING

²⁶ “Jesus answered them and said, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. ²⁷ 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.’ ²⁸ Therefore they said to Him, ‘What shall we do, so that we may work the works of God?’ ²⁹ Jesus answered and said to them, **‘This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent.’** ³⁰ So they said to Him, ‘What then do You do for a sign, so that we may see, and believe You? What work do You perform?’ ³¹ Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, ‘HE GAVE THEM BREAD OUT OF HEAVEN TO EAT.’ ³² Jesus then said to them, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread out of heaven, but it is My Father who gives you the true bread out of heaven. ³³ For the bread of God is that which comes down out of heaven, and gives life to the world.’ ³⁴ Then they said to Him, ‘Lord, always give us this bread.’ ³⁵ Jesus said to them, **‘I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst. ³⁶ But I said to you that you have seen Me, and yet do not believe’**” (John 6:26-36).

JOHN

John’s Gospel [6] is more informative than the other three accounts. John identifies this with the Passover (v. 4) while at Capernaum (v. 59) and OT prophecy (v. 14). John also has the elaborate tie into the Manna (vv. 22-59).

It is in John’s account we have “I am the bread of life (vv. 35, 48, 51). John also speaks of “eating His flesh and drinking His blood” (vv. 52-59). Some of His disciples found this scandalous (vv. 60-62) and turned away (v. 66).

THE TEACHING

The Pharisees are teaching “you can.” They are telling you that you can make yourself clean or unclean by what you do or do not eat. Jesus responds by saying “that’s garbage.” The Pharisees reject the threat of having to believe Jesus is the Messiah and thus their hope from sin and death. They reject the idea that Jesus is the answer to their unclean problem. The idea that “you can” is leaven. It is evil and will destroy the whole. Jesus is the fulfillment of all the OT promises, pictures, and prophecies.

THE SHADOW

There is an OT parallel in the experience of the Nation of Israel in the wilderness and what we see with this great crowd in the wilderness.

“God fed his people in the wilderness (Ex. 16:1-17:7), and did so mercifully despite their ungrateful and complaining attitude (Ex. 16:3, 7, 12; 17:2-3, 7).”⁴

“There is a foreshadowing of Christ’s miracle in the life of Elisha in 2 Kings. Elisha told his servant to feed the people gathered there, although there was not enough food for the hundred men. One of the men said, “How can I set this before a hundred men?” (2 Kings 4:42–43).

In the end, however, the men not only had enough to eat, but “they ate and had some left” (2 Kings 4:44). Isn’t that just like God? He says He will do more than provide for His people; He will give an abundance (Psalm 132:15).”⁵

MANNA

¹⁰ “While the sons of Israel camped at Gilgal they observed the Passover on the evening of the fourteenth day of the month on the desert plains of Jericho. ¹¹ On the day after the Passover, on that very day, they ate some of the produce of the land, unleavened cakes and parched grain. ¹² The manna ceased on the day after they had eaten some of the produce of the land, so that the sons of Israel no longer had manna, but they ate some of the yield of the land of Canaan during that year” (Joshua 5:10-12).

MANNA

Jesus is going to meet the need while His people exist in the wilderness and He will take them all the way into the Promised Land. Just as God met the needs of His people in the wilderness in the Old Testament, so also does He meet the needs of His people in the wilderness in the New Testament.

JESUS | MOSES

Jesus is the new and better Moses, who supplies the needs of his people.

YOU CAN’T

When Jesus says, “You give them something to eat,” He wasn’t implying that **they** could. He was implying that **He** could. What they could not do, God can, and Jesus would. Their weakness is a platform for God’s strength.

Whatever you and I might accomplish for God; it isn’t us doing it. It is God doing it in us and through us to those around us. That inability is to be our daily prayer (Matt. 6:15). Whatever you and I might have to offer [i.e. a little or a lot] is all woefully inadequate to meet whatever need we might have. The *Story* isn’t about you and me offering up anything to God to use. The *Story* is who God is and what He can do.

Everything the Old Testament told us is coming true in Jesus.

- ¹⁵ “When it was evening, the disciples came to Him and said, ‘This place is desolate and the hour is already late; so send the crowds away, that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves.’ ¹⁶ But Jesus said to them, ‘They do not need to go away; you give them something to eat!’ ¹⁷ They said to Him, ‘We have here only five loaves and two fish.’ ¹⁸ And He said, ‘Bring them here to Me’” (Matt. 14:15-18).
- ³² “And Jesus called His disciples to Him, and said, ‘I feel compassion for the people, because they have remained with Me now three days and have nothing to eat; and I do not want to send them away hungry, for they might faint on the way.’ ³³ The disciples said to Him, ‘Where would we get so many loaves in this

desolate place to satisfy such a large crowd?' ³⁴ And Jesus said to them, 'How many loaves do you have?' And they said, 'Seven, and a few small fish'" (Matt. 15:32-34).

- ³⁵ "When it was already quite late, His disciples came to Him and said, 'This place is desolate and it is already quite late; ³⁶ send them away so that they may go into the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat.' ³⁷ But He answered them, 'You give them something to eat!' And they said to Him, 'Shall we go and spend two hundred denarii on bread and give them something to eat?' ³⁸ And He said to them, 'How many loaves do you have? Go look!' And when they found out, they said, 'Five, and two fish'" (Mark 6:35-38).
- ¹² "Now the day was ending, and the twelve came and said to Him, 'Send the crowd away, that they may go into the surrounding villages and countryside and find lodging and get something to eat; for here we are in a desolate place.' ¹³ But He said to them, 'You give them something to eat!' And they said, 'We have no more than five loaves and two fish, unless perhaps we go and buy food for all these people'" (Luke 9:12, 13).
- ² "A large crowd followed Him, because they saw the signs which He was performing on those who were sick. ³ Then Jesus went up on the mountain, and there He sat down with His disciples. ⁴ Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was near. ⁵ Therefore Jesus, lifting up His eyes and seeing that a large crowd was coming to Him, said to Philip, 'Where are we to buy bread, so that these may eat?' ⁶ This He was saying to test him, for He Himself knew what He was intending to do. ⁷ Philip answered Him, 'Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, for everyone to receive a little.' ⁸ One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to Him, ⁹ 'There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are these for so many people?'" (John 6:2-9).

YOU CAN'T

Humanity's problems appear inopportune to God's purpose or plan (Matt. 14:13, 14; Mark 6:30-34; Luke 9:10, 11). Humanity's power cannot solve humanity's problem. What we offer is always too little too late. You and I cannot solve world hunger, social injustice, war, etc. What you and I cannot do, God can, and Jesus will. It doesn't mean you do not prepare the horse for the day of battle, but it does mean that only God can give the victory.

God's provision always addresses and exceeds humanity's problem. Everyone was "satisfied/filled." No one was left wanting more and looking at the last piece. It was a buffet table that exceeded their ability to consume. There was more than enough left over ["twelve baskets"].

GOD CAN

What is the intent of this text?

First, just like Israel, you cannot solve your most basic human needs.

Second, what you cannot do, God can.

AND JESUS DID

Third, what you cannot do, God can, and JESUS does.

Fourth, In John's Gospel, the feeding of the multitude is taken as a further sign that Jesus is the Messiah, the prophet who is to come into the world" (Deut. 18:15; John 6:14).

THE PROPHET

¹⁵ "The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him. ¹⁶ This is according to all that you asked of the LORD your God in Horeb on the day of the assembly, saying, 'Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, let me not see this great fire anymore, or I will die.' ¹⁷ The LORD said to me, 'They have spoken well. ¹⁸ I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. ¹⁹ It shall come about that whoever will not listen to My words which he shall speak in My name, I Myself will require it of him. ²⁰ But the prophet who speaks a word presumptuously in My name which I have not commanded him to speak, or which he speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die. ²¹ You may say in your heart, 'How will we know the word which the LORD has not spoken?' ²² When a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the LORD has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him" (Deut. 18:15-22).

THE PROPHET

Listen to HIM

(Matt. 17:1ff)

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bread_and_circuses

² <https://www.gotquestions.org/feeding-the-5000.html>

³ <https://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/dsb/matthew-14.html>

⁴ [Gospel Transformation Bible on Matt. 14:1-36.]

⁵ <https://www.gotquestions.org/feeding-the-5000.html>