

“Jesus Feeds a Multitude”

March 1, 2026

John 6:1-15

I. Introduction

With the opening words: “**some time after this**” or, as other translations say, “**after these things,**” John once again made a big jump in time. Depending on which “**feast of the Jews**” is meant in [John 5:1](#) when John wrote in [John 6:4](#), “**The Jewish Passover Feast was near,**” the time between the healing at the pool of Bethesda in Jerusalem in John 5 and the feeding of the multitude in Galilee in John 6 is anywhere between 6 months to a year. During this time, many other events took place, some which are recorded in [Mark 3:7-6:30](#) and [Luke 6:12-9:10](#). This time also included Jesus’ preaching “The Sermon on the Mount” in [Matthew 5-7](#) as well as Jairus’ daughter being raised from the dead in [Matthew 9:18-26](#). John was selective in what he included in his gospel; in [John 20:30-31](#) he wrote, “**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 Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.**”

The 4 Gospels record over 30 different miracles that Jesus did during His 3-year ministry in Galilee and Judah. But only 2 are recorded in all 4 Gospels. One is the feeding of the 5000; the other is Jesus’ resurrection. All of Jesus’ miracles were astonishing but this one of feeding the 5000 men plus women and children demonstrated Jesus’ power over nature more impressively than any other miracle. In terms of the number of people affected, it was, also, the largest of His miracles.

II. The Miracle

A. The background

Although John included more about this miracle than the other Gospels, he didn’t explain why Jesus and the 12 disciples went to the far shore of the Sea of Galilee. Turn to Mark’s account, [turn to Mark 6:30-32](#). The disciples had just returned from a preaching mission. Jesus knew that they needed a time of rest and teaching—sort of a debriefing at the end of this mission trip. So, Jesus said to them, “**Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.**” Matthew added that they had just heard about the

beheading of John the Baptist; [Matthew 14:13](#) says that “when Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place.” Jesus went into the wilderness to be alone with His disciples.

The Lord wanted some time alone with His disciples in the mountains, but they weren’t going to have the luxury of peace and quiet for long; a crowd was gathering. While Jesus and His disciples were alone, a multitude (made up of mostly thrill seekers—people who wanted to be entertained by watching Jesus do more miraculous signs) continued to gather and grow in the flat plain at the foot of the mountains. [Luke 9:11](#) says that after a while, Jesus “welcomed them and spoke to them about the kingdom of God and healed those who needed healing.”

B. The Problem

But a problem soon developed; [Matthew 14:15](#) explains, “As evening approached, the disciples came to 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.’” This was the problem: “How to feed the people.”

The disciples wanted to send the people away to forage for food by themselves, but Jesus had a different plan in mind. So, Jesus said to Philip, “Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?” Philip was from this area (Bethsaida-[John 1:4](#)). Philip was also the 1st disciple chosen; he had been there when Jesus turned water into wine ([John 2:1-11](#)); he had seen the other miracles that Jesus had done. But Philip’s faith (and the faith of the other 11, to be fair) was found lacking and he answered hopelessly, “200 denarii — 8 month’s wages—wouldn’t be enough bread for each one to have a bite!” let alone a meal. Too often, we think, like the disciples, that money is the answer to every need. Jesus was simply testing the strength of Philip’s faith.

Unlike Philip, Andrew at least tried to find a solution. He reported to Jesus that he had a little boy with 5 barley loaves and 2 fish. [Mark 6:38](#) records that Jesus commanded them, “How many loaves do you have? Go and see.” Maybe Andrew was reporting the results of his search. Or, perhaps, the search took place after his report and further confirmed the dismal reality of the problem—there just wasn’t any food. After telling what he had found, Andrew added somewhat skeptically, “But what are they among so many?”

Andrew's response showed that he, like Philip and the rest of the Twelve, failed the test of faith. After all they had seen, they didn't have faith in the power of Jesus to provide.

C. The Solution

Jesus had the solution—He had it from the beginning. Jesus would feed all the people. He didn't rebuke the disciples for their lack of faith; instead, He put them to work. He said, "Have the people sit down." Even though their faith was small to nonexistent, the disciples could still obey. Matthew 14:21 says, "The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children." So, allowing for a reasonable number of women and children, the total number of people was probably somewhere between fifteen and twenty thousand.

John wrote, "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." Jesus multiplied the food but the other Gospels record that the disciples had the joy and the privilege of passing it out to the astonished crowd. Jesus could have miraculously passed out the food to everyone, but He wanted the disciples' faith to grow.

Jesus/God doesn't do things in a small way. Instead of the "little taste of food—a bite" that Philip mentioned, everyone ate as much as they wanted. The disciples then gathered the leftover food and filled 12 baskets with the leftovers of the barley loaves. Christ not only supplied enough food for the hungry crowd, He also provided the next day's meal for the disciples.

D. The Result

The result was an amazed group of people, Astonished by the miracle which Jesus had just performed, the people said, "Surely, this is the Prophet who is come into the world." With "the Passover Feast near," the people remembered Moses' prophesy. Turn to Deuteronomy 18:15-19. The people had seen Jesus create the food. He had fed them like Moses had fed the Children of Israel manna in the Wilderness. They had seen Jesus heal those who were sick. They were ready to make Him their Deliverer—their Messiah—their Benefactor. John wrote, "They intended to make him king by force." With Him as their

provider, they would never want for food and would have the potential to be healed of every illness. With Jesus as King and Messiah, they would be free from the Roman oppressors.

But Jesus hadn't come to be that kind of Messiah or King. He didn't come to just feed them and heal them, let alone give them victory over the Romans. Jesus came to die for them. So, "knowing that they intended to come and make him king by force," Mark 6:45-46 says, "Immediately Jesus made his disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. After leaving them, he went up on a mountainside to pray."

III. Application

A. We need to trust Jesus Christ. So, what can we learn from this miracle? First, we need to trust Jesus Christ. It is so easy to look at Philip and the rest of the disciples and wonder "*Where was their faith?*" They had seen Jesus do so many miracles—healing the sick (Matthew 8:14-15), casting out demons (Matthew 8:28-34), even raising Jairus's daughter the widow of Nain's son (Luke 5:11-16) back from the dead. So, when a different type of problem came their way, they should have looked to Jesus and said, "*We don't know how, but we know You can take care of this problem.*" Instead, they would have driven the people away or tried to feed them in their own strength.

Don't we fall into the same trap? Something unforeseen comes our way and the first thing we do is try to fix it ourselves. We don't go to God and ask Him to intervene or give us wisdom in what we should do. James 1:5 says, "If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him." Later, James 4:2 says, "You do not have because you do not ask God." Rather than getting all stressed out over how to solve a problem, we need to turn to God. Peter eventually learned this lesson; in 1 Peter 5:7 he wrote, "Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you." Let's learn from Philip and the Apostles and go to our Lord and Savior in faith. We, like the disciples, need to learn to trust Jesus. Writing from experience, Paul wrote in Ephesians 3:20, that "*God can do anything—far more than you could ever imagine or guess or request in your wildest dreams.*"

B. We need to give Jesus all we have. As well as trusting God, we need to give Him all we have. The little boy didn't have much to offer but look at what Jesus was able to do with one little lunch—He fed over 15,000 people! We may not have much to bring to Jesus, but He can use what we have. If that little boy had refused to share his lunch, there would have been one shining deed fewer in history. It may well be that the world is denied miracle after miracle because we will not bring to Christ what we have and what we are.

Little is always much in the hands of Christ. We aren't the movers and shakers of the world; we don't have a lot to offer God. We are like the little boy and his lunch or the widow and her “two very small copper coins” from [Mark 12:41-44](#). But all God wants from us is that we allow ourselves to be used by Him. [2 Corinthians 8:12](#) says, “If the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what he does not have.” God can do great things with each one of you and with this church if we will only trust Him and give Him all we have and are.

C. Finally, Jesus will not be manipulated or used. The crowd wanted Jesus on their terms, so He left them. You cannot come to Jesus Christ on your terms, so that He can heal your relationships or make you successful in life or help you feel good about yourself. You must come to Him on His terms—humble, repentant of your sins. [1 Peter 5:6](#) puts it this way, “Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.” Don't come to Jesus trying to “snow” Him or put one over on Him. As He said in [Jeremiah 17:10](#), “I the LORD search the heart and examine the mind, to reward a man according to his conduct, according to what his deeds deserve.” Don't try to play games with Him; He knows what is inside your heart. He will not be manipulated.

Turn to Phil. 2:5-11. Lent is a time when people are encouraged to give up things that draw their hearts and minds away from God. But rather than giving up chocolates or a favorite meal or a podcast, I would challenge you to give up yourself. “Humble yourself before God.” Trust Him, give Him all you have and are and you will be amazed at what He will do in and through you. Jesus said, “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.” ([Matt.11:28-29](#)).

Communion Devotion – March, 2026

Mark 14:12-26

Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper as a memorial for a people with a very short memory—us—He ought to know, He made us. That is why in **1 Corinthians 11:24** He said several times, “Do this in remembrance of me.” Later He said, “Whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.” So, as we come to this table, there is a question I need to ask each one of you—a question you really must ask yourself: “*What is your reaction, your response to Jesus?*”

In **1 Corinthians 15:3-4** the Apostle Paul wrote, “For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.” **Romans 6:23** reminds all of us, “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Peter said in **Acts 4:12**, “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.” If your response to all this is like that of the tax collector in **Luke 18:13**, “God, have mercy on me, a sinner;” then whether or not you are a member of TBC, we invite you to join us as a true disciple of Jesus as we celebrate God's gift of eternal life.

On the other hand, if you find that the words of Jesus—of God—are too hard to accept; if you feel that you can earn your own way into heaven in your own strength and that God will understand, then Jesus says you don't have eternal life. **John 3:36** says, “Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him.” If you reject Jesus and what He did for you; if you reject His offer of the gift of eternal life, then eating this bread and drinking this juice is of no value. It isn't a memorial of what Jesus did for you. Before you leave this sanctuary, I would urge you to consider Jesus' words from **John 14:6**, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” As Paul wrote in **Romans 10:9** choose today to make Jesus your Lord and Savior.

As well as being a memorial, the Lord's Table is a time for each Christian to take inventory of his or her life. When troubles come your way is your first response to go to God and ask for His guidance and help? Considering what Jesus has done for you, have you given Him all you are and have? During the quiet time while the elements are being passed, take time to thank God for the gift of His Son to die in your place. And then take time to inventory your heart, your actions, confess anything that is keeping you from being all you can be in Christ.