

The Gospel of John

6:1-14

Welcome back to this week's study in the book of John.
As with this study and all bible studies, remember to pray before you start.

✠ **John 6:1-2** *After these things Jesus went over the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias. Then a great multitude followed Him, because they saw His signs which He performed on those who were diseased.*

After these things, after what things?

Remember all that happened in chapter 5, with Jesus healing the man and Jesus speaking with the Jews? Also if you read the other three gospels, it speaks of Jesus sending out the disciples to minister to others.

Reading verse 2, I see two things:

First is that Jesus healed more than just this one man on this day, because John says: **they saw His signs which He performed on those who were diseased** the key word is "those" meaning more than one.

Second we also know that a lot of people were around when Jesus healed the man, because John once again says: **Then a great multitude followed Him, because they saw His signs** the key words again being "great multitude" and "they".

The Jews confronted Jesus because they accused Him of breaking the Sabbath by telling the man who was healed to take up his bed and walk and Jesus also making Himself equal with God.

Jesus answered all these accusations against Him as we read the last two weeks, but did you notice that the multitude of people followed Jesus not because of the words that He spoke, but rather because of the signs He performed.

Our world today is so ready for the antichrist; the world is continually seeking after signs and wonders before they will believe in something. The bible is very clear that the antichrist will perform signs and wonders to deceive the world.

✠ **Rev 13:2-3** *Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority. And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast.*

The antichrist will be killed by some sort of head wound and then come back to life. But that's not all.

✠ **Rev 13:11-14** *Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon. And he exercises all the*

authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived.

Today, it's sad to say, that even Christians seek after signs and wonders. If they don't see them then they doubt God. They go to healing crusades to see God at work, revival meetings to witness all the things the people do there, like speaking in tongues, barking like dogs, having gold dust appear on them, running around and laughing uncontrollably, or waving their banners around like they are in a parade. All sort of weird things that go on in some churches everyday here in the USA, and it's all supposedly in the name of God. But all of these weird things are not taught anywhere in the bible, but people don't care, they assume that if some sort of so called miracle is happening then God must be there and is accepting all this stuff. That is the furthest thing from the truth. God tells us to seek Him in His word, not in signs and wonders.

† **John 6:26-27** *Jesus answered them and said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him."*

I know we are getting ahead of the study here and we will look at these verses more next week, but I think it's very important that we stop looking for signs and wonders in the church and get back to God's word and what He says in His word. God wants us to help and minister to others, not feed our lust for miracles and sideshows in the church. Jesus says:

† **John 20:28-29** *And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."*

When you accepted Jesus as your Lord and Savior, was it because of a sign or wonder that caused you to believe, or was it because of His word? If it was His word, then why do you seek signs and wonders now? Is God's word no longer good enough for you? I know that's an "ouch" for some of you, but some need to hear this.

✠ **John 6:3-4** *And Jesus went up on the mountain, and there He sat with His disciples. Now the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was near.*

To get a better understanding of what's going on here, we need to look at the other three gospels.

† **Mark 6:30-31** *Then the apostles gathered to Jesus and told Him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught. And He said to them, "**Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while.**" For there were many coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.*

† **Matt 14:13-14** *When Jesus heard it, He departed from there by boat to a deserted place by Himself. But when the multitudes heard it, they followed Him on foot from the cities. And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick.*

† **Luke 9:12** *When the day began to wear away, the twelve came and said to Him, "Send the multitude away, that they may go into the surrounding towns and country, and lodge and get provisions; for we are in a deserted place here."*

I purposely took a little from each gospel (even though they all say pretty much the same thing) to show you that this account of the feeding of the 5,000 is one of few that are recorded in all four gospels. Either it had a big impact upon the disciples lives or God has a very important message here for all who read His word. I think it's both.

To get the picture of what's happening here, the disciples had just returned from their first missionary journey without Jesus being with them.

† **Mark 6:7-13** *And He called the twelve to Himself, and began to send them out two by two, and gave them power over unclean spirits. He commanded them to take nothing for the journey except a staff--no bag, no bread, no copper in their money belts-- but to wear sandals, and not to put on two tunics. Also He said to them, "**In whatever place you enter a house, stay there till you depart from that place. And whoever will not receive you nor hear you, when you depart from there, shake off the dust under your feet as a testimony against them. Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city!**" So they went out and preached that people should repent. And they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick, and healed them.*

And as they returned from the things that God was doing through them, many would have followed. So here are all these people who followed the disciples back along with the ones who had followed Jesus because of the healings and signs that He did.

And as we read in the other gospels, Jesus both healed and taught them throughout the day. So here it is in the evening, probably around dinner time, or even past it, but the people hadn't started to leave yet. They may have followed the signs, but many had now heard Jesus teach and were drawn to his words and others were still there for the signs as well.

✠ *Now the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was near.*

Remember back in chapter five:

✠ **John 5:1** *After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.*

So it's very possible that the feast mentioned in 5:1 was Passover as mentioned here in verse 4 of chapter 6.

✠ **John 6:5-6** *Then Jesus lifted up His eyes, and seeing a great multitude coming toward Him, He said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?" But this He said to test him, for He Himself knew what He would do.*

It's very interesting that Jesus saw the multitude coming towards them but there was no indication that they were coming to Him for a miracle or food. But Jesus knew what these people needed. After all, they had spent the entire day traveling and listening to Jesus teach, and most, if not all of them had not eaten all day. You must also understand that even though it says that there were five thousand men, this number did not include the women and children who were there to. So when we are talking about this miracle we are probably talking in excess of fifteen thousand (15,000) people.

So now you can see the need to feed these people, especially the children.

But this whole teaching will show us that Jesus not only wanted to feed the people, but also minister to the disciples and us today.

Also notice that Jesus knew what He was going to do before He even asked Philip, *"Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?"*

We tend to forget that God is in control of everything, and we talked last week about trusting in God and what He asks us to do.

Here is another example of this very thing. Philip says that this is an impossibility, or only a possibility by man's means (a lot of money), but Philip would see something more awesome than he could ever imagine.

Jesus told me to follow Him, and I have. But I have seen things done on my life that I never imagined I would. I have seen changes in myself that I never thought would ever happen. I have seen me, a guy who never even graduated from high school, teaching God's word over the Internet. I am still in awe that God would use me in such a way as this.

What about you, Jesus said to Follow Him and you said yes. Just look back and see all the things He has done in your life. And the cool thing is that He is not done with any of us yet!

So Philip can only see the physical way of handling this situation.

✠ **John 6:7-9** *Philip answered Him, "Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may have a little." One of His*

disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to Him, "There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish, but what are they among so many?"

We must realize that in all churches, there are the Philips and the Andrews and the young lads. Neither is a bad thing to be, it just shows how the Holy Spirit will give different gifts to every one.

Philip could only see the world's way to fix the problem, whereas Andrew saw an opportunity for the Lord to be glorified and offered what was available to the Lord and decided to let Him take care of the rest. The lad only had little to offer but gave it willingly.

It's called faith!

Philip saw that the only way to feed all these people was with six months' salary, that's what two hundred denarii would come out to be.

But Andrew looks around to see what is available right then and there. Maybe he was hoping that everyone had a little food and enough to share with each other. But all Andrew could find was a little boy with five barley loaves and two small fish. You may think that is a lot of food for a little boy to be caring around, but barley loaves were the cheapest form of bread that could be had in this day and were about the size of a hamburger bun. Only the very poor would have or eat barley loaves, and the fish were about the size of sardines, which were pickled because they had no other means of keeping food fresh.

"What can God do with this little bit that I have? Nobody would want this. God deserves better and I want to give better."

We all feel like that sometimes, thinking that what we have is no use to God, or that He would reject what little we have to give. God is not concerned with what you have to offer, because if you think about it, what you have is what He gave you.

This little boy was from a poor family, but he wasn't starving because God supplied what he needed. Steak and lobster is nice, but it's not what we need to sustain life.

God knows what we all need, and sometimes He does spoil us with steak and lobster, but not very often, but that should be ok. We shouldn't desire the finer things this world has to offer because "things" is all this world has to offer and these things only lead to emptiness.

Also as we read through the gospels we notice that Andrew is known for bringing people to Jesus. Here he brings this little boy to Jesus. We also read of another time in the first chapter of John.

† ***John 1:40-42 One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus.***

This is a gift that some have, all they want to do is bring people to Jesus. What a great gift to have!

✠ **John 6:10-11** *Then Jesus said, "**Make the people sit down.**" Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. And Jesus took the loaves, and when He had given thanks He distributed them to the disciples, and the disciples to those sitting down; and likewise of the fish, as much as they wanted.*

As I said earlier, there were also women and children here so the number was much greater than five thousand.

So here is Jesus with at least 15,000 people sitting down, hungry and waiting to see what Jesus would do. Once the disciples started to tell them to sit down and they saw only a couple of sardines in Jesus' hands as well as five little hamburger size loaves of barley bread, I bet the all were fixing their eyes on Jesus wondering what He was going to do.

Also when Jesus told the disciples to have them sit we need to look in the book of Mark to see how they were to sit.

✠ **Mark 6:40** *So they sat down in ranks, in hundreds and in fifties.*

The word "**ranks**" signifies a bed in a garden. So they were all grouped together in smaller groups sitting in rows.

Another interesting thing here is that all these people had been spending the day with Jesus, listening to His teachings and seeing the miracles. Jesus speaks to Philip who has his idea of how to handle the situation, and Andrew also comes along with all he can do. But what about the other ten disciples and what about those five thousand men sitting around?

Seems like the church today where only a handful will do the work while the rest just sit around wanting to be ministered to.

But as we read, Jesus still blesses the people and provides and ministers to everyone. Isn't that interesting, Jesus ministered to everyone there. Some believed in Him, while others may still have doubted, yet He still provided for all of them.

But as we read on, we will see that those who did the work were rewarded.

So Jesus prays and thanks the Father for His provisions, then Jesus takes what little was given to Him and distributes to the twelve disciples who in turn distributes to the people.

✠ **John 6:12-14** *So when they were filled, He said to His disciples, "**Gather up the fragments that remain, so that nothing is lost.**" Therefore they gathered them up, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves which were left over by those who had eaten. Then those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said, "**This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world.**"*

At Jewish feasts, the regular practice was to leave something for the servants. That which was left was called the Peah; and no doubt the people left their usual part for those who had served them with the meal. Out of the fragments twelve baskets were taken up. That would be one basket for each disciple.

Throughout this whole teaching we see an example of the church.

It all started out with three people, Philip, Andrew and the young boy. From these three they offered to Jesus what they had so they could minister to over 15,000 people, 5,000 of which were men.

Churches usually start out as a small home group with a few people meeting together and studying the word of God, what they are doing is giving up their time to give to the Lord so they can receive from Him and give or minister to others.

Jesus then took this small amount and blessed it and gave it to the twelve to distribute to others.

Jesus will take what we give in the church willingly from our hearts and bless it and multiply it so we can minister to others. The church now starts to grow from this small home group to a regular church (or at least as we think of a church).

In this church there are now believers and non-believers, and as I mentioned before, it seems few people will serve in the church and others will just sit there and take it.

Out of those 5,000 men I wonder how many went and told others what had happened that day, and how many just blew it off.

It's the same in the church where people will receive God's word and go tell others, whereas others will just forget it and not even mention it to others.

Jesus told a parable about this.

† **Matt 13:3-9** *Then He spoke many things to them in parables, saying: "Behold, a sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them. Some fell on stony places, where they did not have much earth; and they immediately sprang up because they had no depth of earth. But when the sun was up they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them. But others fell on good ground and yielded a crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"*

Then Jesus later explained it to the disciples.

† **Matt 13:18-23** *"Therefore hear the parable of the sower: When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside. But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles. Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the*

deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful. But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."

Some of these 5,000 men told others what Jesus had done, but not only that, they told them of what Jesus had said as they listened and Jesus' words sank deep into their hearts. Others just told about the food they received, but the cares of this world and the joy of the moment had faded away, so soon they even forgot what Jesus had said. Others just went away and told no one.

Once again this is the church as people go there each Sunday. Some will just feel like they did their duty by going to church and tell no one. Others may like the music, or a story or just the people and get all excited about it, but by mid Monday afternoon they are back to their old ways. Finally, others will take God's word and allow it to sink deep within their hearts and go out and tell others about Jesus and invite others to church, because they want others to have what they just received.

Jesus had the disciples take up the fragments and they were blessed abundantly through their ministering to others. So it is with those who do in the church. We may not see the rewards right now, but in heaven is where we will receive our rewards, and they will be abundant, because God gives out more than a gold watch for our service.

So where do you fit in the church, are you a Philip, or an Andrew, or maybe a little boy giving what little you have? Maybe you are like one of the disciples serving others, or are you just someone who sits there and takes it all? If you do take it, what are you doing with it? Keeping it to yourself or sharing with others?

As I have taught before on the gifts of the Holy Spirit, we learned that we all have gift(s) that the Holy Spirit gives to us. I say this because God doesn't want you to do, because you think you have to, but rather because you want to. The Holy Spirit has gifted you with one or more gifts; start using this/these gift(s) in the church as you are supposed to be doing. If you don't know what your gift(s) are, then I would encourage you to go through the study on the Holy Spirit and His gifts to find out. Or I would recommend a very good book called "Living Water" by Chuck Smith, which was what the Lord used to inspire me to start teaching in the first place.

✠ Then those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said, "This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world."

We heard this before in the beginning of John, where John the Baptist was asked if he was this Prophet, and as we studied this we learned that this was the Prophet spoken of by Moses.

† **Deut 18:18-19** *I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him. And it shall be that whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require it of him.*

Yes, Jesus is this Prophet, which they also know as the Messiah and more than just a prophet, but they will soon forget it and treat Jesus like they did to the other prophets.

Well that's it for this week. Next week we will read of Jesus walking on water and read the response of the people the next day after this all happened.

May God richly bless you in His love, grace and mercy and may you use your gifts to minister to others.