

Matthew 14:21

Now those who had eaten were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

When Jesus fed the 5,000 men (plus women and children), with only five loaves of bread and two fish, He met their spiritual needs, before He met their physical needs.

† **Matthew 14:19** *Then He commanded the multitudes to sit down on the grass. And He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke and gave the loaves to the disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitudes.*

Yet, what do we focus on most of the time when read this account? Yep, how Jesus fed the 5,000 men with a few loaves of bread and a couple of fish. And I will not belittle what Jesus did, because it truly was a miracle, and I do not want to take away from this account at all. Also, this is told in all four for the Gospels.

But if you read each account in the four Gospels, they all tell why these 5,000 men were there with their families.

† **Matthew 14:14** *And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick.*

† **Mark 6:34** *And Jesus, when He came out, saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them, because they were like sheep not having a shepherd. So He began to teach them many things.*

† **Luke 9:11** *But when the multitudes knew it, they followed Him; and He received them and spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and healed those who had need of healing.*

† **John 6:2** *Then a great multitude followed Him, because they saw His signs which He performed on those who were diseased.*

Matthew, Luke and John, all focus on the healings that Jesus did for the people before He fed them. But, if we read the account in the book of Mark, we find out that the people originally showed up because they were spiritually hungry (*So He began to teach them many things.*). All they knew was that Jesus was a great teacher, and that He would heal those who needed healing. But a free dinner, that was a bonus, and something none of them probably never thought about, or expected to get from Jesus.

Now we can go to church with our own expectations, usually of singing a few songs to the Lord (Worshipping) and getting a message from the Pastor (Bible teaching). But there are also times when Jesus just does something amazing that no one expected in the church on Sunday, or maybe even in a home bible study.

You see, we read of Jesus healing throughout the four Gospels, as well as teaching the people, but only in this account, and the account of Jesus feeding the 4,000, do we read of Jesus doing a miracle like this or even feeding those after He taught and/or healed them. So the people were not expecting this at all.

I have to wonder if there were actually more than 5000 men there, but some of them left before they could experience the miracle that Jesus did. The next day, their buddies may have told them, *“Dude, you missed it. After Jesus taught us and healed a bunch of people, He then fed us with these awesome fish sandwiches too.”* (Note this is not in scripture) and the response may have been, *“Oh man, I missed it. I wish I would had hung out longer.”* (Once again, not scriptural, just my thoughts for the purpose of this teaching)

Pretty much every church I have ever been to, I see people leaving as soon as the service is over, and some even leave during closing worship. When they do, they are really missing out on those awesome things that the Lord does after service.

You see, going to church is not only about singing songs to the Lord, and listening to the Pastor give a message (teach the bible), but it's what happens after that. It's those things that those who run, or sneak out early, miss out on. The fellowship, the praying together, the laughing and crying together. The healings and ministering to each others needs. Those are the special things that happen at church after the service, and that those who leave right away miss out on. And sometimes it's those physical needs that are met, like someone needs help paying a bill, or feeding their family, or something done or fixed in their home, or just lunch with a few brothers and sisters in the Lord, simply because they need that Christian fellowship, or wisdom of believers.

Sure, you may be hungry after church, and you want to go eat, but Jesus did not feed the 5,000 men and their families until He taught and healed everyone that He wanted to heal that day, then He fed them all.

There is always a time to eat, but if you focus more on eating, then you are missing out on the awesome things that the Lord is doing for others spiritually, and He probably wants to do some of them for you too, but He can't if you run off to In-n-Out or Applebee's instead of getting fully fed spiritually.

† **Deuteronomy 8:3** *So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you*

know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD.

† **Exodus 15:11 (NLT2)** *Who is like you among the gods, O LORD— glorious in holiness, awesome in splendor, performing great wonders?*

† **Psalm 66:5** *Come and see the works of God; He is awesome in His doing toward the sons of men.*