



## Jesus Feeds the 5,000

Luke 9:10-17



A huge crowd had followed Jesus and His disciples. Jesus welcomed them and taught them. Jesus then showed them He had all power and authority when he miraculously fed thousands of people.

## Day #1: A Hungry Crowd

Who does the cooking in your family? Is it your mom, your dad, or you? Before the cook can make a meal, he or she must first have the food to prepare. This raw food comes from a grocery store. Sometimes, the food might come from someone's own garden. But, no one can prepare food from nothing - no one but Jesus. In today's story, we will see the need for lots of food for lots of hungry people.

Because John the Baptist taught the truth about sin and repentance, some people who were living in sin became very angry with him. They did not want to turn from their sin and obey God's commands. King Herod ordered that John be killed (Mark 6:14:29). This made Jesus and the disciples very sad. Jesus took His disciples by boat to a quiet place called Bethsaida to rest (Mark 6:31). People had seen and heard about the miracles Jesus had been doing. A crowd of people heard where Jesus had gone and they went on foot to Bethsaida.

*When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, He had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So He began teaching them many things.* - Mark 6:34 (NIV)

Jesus felt sorry for them. He taught them and healed many sick people (Luke 9:11). As nighttime approached, the disciples asked Jesus to send the crowd away to find something to eat and a place to sleep. The Bible tells us there were 5,000 men, plus women and children, by that time (Matthew 14:21). They were in a remote place with no markets or inns.

*Jesus replied, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat."* - Matthew 14:16 (NIV)

*Philip answered him, "Eight months' wages would not buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!"* - John 6:7 (NIV)

The disciples had left their homes and their jobs to follow Jesus. There was NO WAY they could buy enough food for the huge crowd! Of course, Jesus knew the disciples could not provide the food that was needed. He said these things as a test for them (John 6:6) and to show them they could not solve this problem on their own. Remember, it was Jesus who chose to go to this remote spot. It was NO surprise to Him that the crowd would follow, and that they would need food. Tomorrow we will see how Jesus was the ANSWER.

Sometimes God allows a situation that seems impossible to us to show us we MUST depend on Him. An example of this is when God led Moses and the Israelites right to the edge of the Red Sea, with Pharaoh's army chasing behind. They were helpless; God was POWERFUL! When you are faced with a difficult (or impossible) situation, praise God for it (2 Corinthians 12:9-10)! God will receive the glory when we completely depend on Him because we are unable to help ourselves.

## Day #2: Hunger Satisfied

The very first verse in the Bible tells us, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." The Hebrew word for created is **bara**. *Bara* means to create or fill. This word *bara* is only used when God is doing the creating or filling. Only God can create something out of nothing, or fill an empty basket with food.

So, in the quiet hillside community of Bethsaida, darkness was falling and stomachs were grumbling. The disciples were beginning to panic, but Jesus had a plan (John 6:6).

*Another of his disciples spoke up. It was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He said, "Here is a boy with five small loaves of barley bread. He also has two small fish. But how far will that go in such a large crowd?"* - John 6:8-9

Jesus told the disciples to have the people sit down in large groups.

*He took the five loaves and the two fish. He looked up to heaven and gave thanks. He broke the loaves into pieces. Then he gave them to the disciples. And the disciples gave them to the people.* - Matthew 14:19

Jesus miraculously multiplied the little boy's food. Jesus looked toward heaven and thanked His Father for the food that was given up by the child. That evening, 5,000 men, plus women and children, ate until they were full! They did not just get a little snack. The Bible says, "They all ate and were satisfied." (Luke 9:17) Then Jesus instructed His disciples to gather the pieces that were left over.

*So they gathered them and filled twelve baskets with the pieces of the five barley loaves left over by those who had eaten.* - John 6:13

Each disciple returned with a basket full of broken pieces. This is further proof that the crowd had plenty to eat. No one leaves leftovers unless their stomach is full!

Previously, in Matthew 6, Jesus had told his disciples, "Do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'...But seek first His (God's) kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." (Matthew 6:31,33) The disciples saw this truth lived out that day. The crowd came seeking Jesus, and Jesus gave them what they needed.

Discuss at what point you think the disciples realized Jesus had performed a miracle. Each disciple began that day with a broken heart. They ended the day with an overflowing miracle. Jesus fills our emptiness with Himself. Ask Jesus to fill you when you are empty or broken.

## Day #3: One Small Lunch

We are not told anything about the boy who gave Jesus his lunch that day. Perhaps his morning went something like this:

*"Mother, I heard that Jesus is coming nearby today."*

*"Jesus? Yes, I've heard of Him."*

*"My friend Eli said Jesus and his disciples were headed toward Bethsaida. Eli and his father are going to go hear him teach. Can I go, too?"*

*"Oh, I don't know. Your father is still not back from his trip, and I have to stay with your baby sister."*

### Day #3 continued:

*"Please, Mom, please!"*

*"Well, I suppose it can't hurt. You'll have to promise to stay with Eli and his father."*

*"Oh, thank you!"*

*"Wait a minute, young man. It's a pretty far walk. Take this basket of food in case you get hungry. There are two fish and five barley loaves. Be home before dark. And don't forget to share."*

Children were not thought of as very important in Jesus' day. But Jesus taught a new message about children. God values children and is pleased with their praise (Matthew 21:16).

 Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me. Don't keep them away. The kingdom of heaven belongs to people like them." - Matthew 19:14

And on this particular day, Jesus used the willingness of one little boy to share what little he had, to feed well over 5,000 people (Matthew 14:21).

Imagine what a story that little boy had to tell his mother when he returned home!

*"Mother! Guess what?!..."*

 Do not think that you must wait until you are older to be used by God! Follow Jesus and be obedient, as the boy with the basket of food was. God can use you, no matter what age you are.

*Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity.* - 1 Timothy 4:12 (NIV)

## Day #4: Bread from Heaven

At what other time did God miraculously provide bread for thousands of people? God provided manna for the Israelites in the desert. This miracle was so important that God instructed Moses to keep some of the manna in a jar, to be kept in the heart of the tabernacle. All of the future generations would be told about God's provision of bread.

 Moses said, "This is what the Lord has commanded: 'Take an omer of manna and keep it for the generations to come, so they can see the bread I gave you to eat in the desert when I brought you out of Egypt.'" - Exodus 16:32 (NIV)

The Israelites received manna for forty years (Exodus 16:35). The Bible tells us that the reason God gave them the mysterious bread was to teach them that God's truth was more important than having food to eat.

*He (God) humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna... to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord. - Deuteronomy 8:2-4*

The "future generations" mentioned in Exodus were the thousands of Jewish people now crowding around Jesus! They had all heard the story of how God sent manna to their forefathers (John 6:31). Did these people recognize that GOD had provided bread for them once again? Did they know that this miracle showed Jesus' authority to teach God's truth? Did they know that the words Jesus taught were more important than the food they were eating? Some of the people began to wonder if He was the Prophet God had promised to send (John 6:14).

The next day, the crowd followed Jesus to the other side of the lake. They asked Jesus what God wanted them to do. Jesus told them that they must believe in the One God had sent (John 6:29).

### Day #4 continued:

*"It is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. The bread of God is the One who comes down from heaven. He gives life to the world."*

*"Sir," they said, "give us this bread from now on."*

*Then Jesus said, "I am the bread of life. No one who comes to Me will ever go hungry. And no one who believes in Me will ever be thirsty." - John 6:32b-35*

Jesus was what the people truly needed. They needed His truth. They needed to walk in His ways. They needed the forgiveness of sins that only He could provide when He went to the cross as their substitution.

 Thank God for sending Jesus - the Bread of Life.

## Day #5: The Lord Provides

Throughout the entire Bible, from the first page to the last, God longs to show us He is the great Provider. **Jehovah Jireh** is one of the names of God. It means, "The Lord will provide." (Genesis 22:14) Let's take a look back at the stories we have studied this year to see some of the things that God has provided.

**God provided** the world in which we live (Genesis 1).

**God provided** life in Adam and Eve (Genesis 2:7, 22).

**God provided** an ark for Noah and his family. That ark preserved not only Noah, but all of mankind (Genesis 6:18).

**God provided** escape for Lot and his family (Genesis 19:16).

**God provided** a son for Abraham. That son would be the beginning of the Hebrew nation, through whom the entire world would be blessed (Genesis 21:3).

**God provided** a basket for baby Moses to escape death in the Nile River (Exodus 2:3).

**God provided** escape from slavery for His people, the Israelites, by sending Moses and raining down plagues on Egypt (Exodus 3-12).

**God provided** escape from the plague of death by instructing His people to place the blood of a lamb on their doorframes (Exodus 11-12).

**God provided** escape from Pharaoh's army by splitting the Red Sea (Exodus 13:17-14:31).

**God provided** bread in the desert to feed His people (Exodus 16).

**God provided** the law to teach His people that they fall short and need a Savior (Exodus 20-23).

**God provided** the Tabernacle - a place where God could dwell with His people (Exodus 25-30).

**God provided** a messenger named John the Baptist who came to prepare the way for the coming of the Messiah (Luke 1:13-17).

**God provided** the WAY for us to be reconciled to Him once and for all - **Jesus Christ** (Luke 1:30-33; John 1:29).

 *It is all from God. He brought us back to Himself through Christ's death on the cross. - 2 Corinthians 5:18a*

 Dear child of God, LISTEN to God's Word. God is the great Provider. He provides the things we cannot provide for ourselves. Seek Him first, and He will provide everything you will ever need (Matthew 6:33).