

I Need a Miracle:
Lessons from a Lunch
John 6:1-15

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Text Introduction:

Text: After this, Jesus crossed the Sea of Galilee (or Tiberias).² And a huge crowd was following Him because they saw the signs that He was performing by healing the sick.³ So Jesus went up a mountain and sat down there with His disciples.

⁴ Now the Passover, a Jewish festival, was near.⁵ Therefore, when Jesus looked up and noticed a huge crowd coming toward Him, He asked Philip, “Where will we buy bread so these people can eat?”⁶ He asked this to test him, for He Himself knew what He was going to do.

⁷ Philip answered, “Two hundred denarii worth of bread wouldn’t be enough for each of them to have a little.”

⁸ One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, said to Him,⁹ “There’s a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish—but what are they for so many?”

¹⁰ Then Jesus said, “Have the people sit down.”

There was plenty of grass in that place, so they sat down. The men numbered about 5,000.¹¹ Then Jesus took the loaves, and after giving thanks He distributed them to those who were seated—so also with the fish, as much as they wanted.

¹² When they were full, He told His disciples, “Collect the leftovers so that nothing is wasted.”¹³ So they collected them and filled 12 baskets with the pieces from the five barley loaves that were left over by those who had eaten.

¹⁴ When the people saw the sign He had done, they said, “This really is the Prophet who was to come into the world!”¹⁵ Therefore, when Jesus knew that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king, He withdrew again to the mountain by Himself.

Introduction: The miracle of the feeding of the 5,000! It’s impressive. From nothing, Jesus feeds the multitudes. Again, we see Jesus do that which otherwise seems impossible. Like the other miracles, this miracle confirms who Jesus is, confirms what others are saying about Him, and what He has said about Himself. As you might have heard, this is the one miracle that appears in all four Gospels. It seems that this fact gives some evidence to the importance of this miracle.

If the other miracles say “nothing is too big for God” (and this miracle stands in agreement with that) this miracle reveals that “nothing is too small for God.” And that’s what we need to hear sometimes.

That's what I see in this miracle. I'm calling these truths "Lessons from a Lunch."

By the feeding of the 5,000, Jesus is revealing several things.

1. He cares.

You know the thing I like about this miracle. It's just lunch. It's not the royal official's son who is about to die. They are not going to die if they don't eat. It's not the man by the pool for 38 years. The crowd gathered with Jesus and His disciples have only been there a day. They are not going to starve to death if they do not have something to eat. Uncomfortable? Yes! Sick? Possibly! At the point of death? No! But, this miracle shows us that you don't have to be dying or permanently disfigured for God to care.

Does it make a difference for you to know that if it is important to you, it is important to Him?

You are not dying, but you do need your house to sale. You are not dying, but you need \$1,000 to fix your car so you can drive to your job. You are not dying, but you need a job. You are not dying, but you sure long for God to provide you a soul mate—someone to marry that will love you and that you will spend the rest of your life with. You are not dying, but you sure need to understand Algebra. The list goes on and on. And in this miracle, I hear God say, "If it is important to you, and it does not involve sin, guess what, it's important to Me."

I said last week, "It's not always about your happiness, it's about your holiness." And that is true, but please don't take me out of context with that statement. The Lord cares. And He meets your daily need. You hear folks say, "It is all about the glory of God." Or they will say, "All things point to the glory of God." And that's true, but don't take that to the extreme and come up with some sort of crazy theology that says that God is not out to show compassion on His creation. For that also brings glory to God.

Some of you might well be saying, "Well, his need is greater—her need is greater. When I compare my prayer need with another's prayer need, I'm ashamed." Don't get into comparison. Your need is great because it is yours. And because it is your need, your Heavenly Father cares.

2. He is conforming me.

Verse six is the most important verse in the application of this miracle. Jesus asked the disciples about feeding the multitudes in order to "test them." Interesting isn't? Are the disciples needed for the miracle? No! We've seen this in all of the miracles. Jesus, the Master, Messiah, Miracle-worker, uses weak people as a prop to produce the miracle. Might he be doing the same in you? He is conforming you to His will. It could be that He is "testing you." What if what you are struggling with the most today is a test?

Does it make a difference that your trial may be to test you?

It should. You know why? Because if it is a test, God is the One in control of the test. Know this! God tests you not to fail you, but to pass you.

I learned this spiritual principle in a non-spiritual way. I learned this lesson in my academic career. Unfortunately, it took me all the way to the end of my academic career before I learned this. My major professor in my Ph.D. program was a gracious and Godly man by the name of Gerald Stevens. And in addition to being gracious and Godly, did I also say that he was demanding? He was tough, asked hard questions, and expected great preparation and mastery of the material. He invited me one time to what I thought was a leisurely lunch, but instead he peppered me with questions for over an hour about my studies. But, I came to learn that he was also my greatest ally. I came to understand that he wanted me to succeed. I was his student, and my success (my passing and meeting high academic achievements) was in a sense a trophy for him. This seemed to come to a head at the oral defense of my dissertation. I can't tell you how nervous I was. To me, it felt like I was about to be thrown to the lions—a panel of professors that would ask me to defend my dissertation. Before I was brought into the examination room, Dr. Stevens brought me into his office. I imagine that he had the same conversation with each of his students before me. In essence, he told me that he was proud of my work. He told me that I was going to be asked a number of questions, but he also told me not to worry that I would be fine and ultimately be passed to be awarded my Ph.D. He told me that he would control the questions. I've thought much over the years about that brief conversation, and now I get it. Not only was I on trial that day, but in a very real way, he was on trial that day, because he had been my primary teacher. If I failed, he had failed.

Now, multiply that analogy by infinity. The trial you are going through right now? It's also God's trial. He is not out to fail you, He desires to pass you. He is conforming you to His way, His Word, and His Will. Does that make a difference in what you are facing this day?

3. He is confirming who He is.

Does it make a difference that He Himself knows what He is going to do?

God has a plan. There is no panic in Heaven. There are no emergencies in Heaven. Just because Jesus sent the disciples to look, according to verse six, certainly did not mean that he had no idea of what He was going to do. So, why did He send them? Two things! First, they had more than they thought. Second, what they had was still woefully short. And because of that, all there that day knew that Jesus performed this miracle. Here is yet another example of total dependence upon the Lord.

Max Lucado said it just right when he said, "You do not know that Jesus is all you need until He is all you've got."

Pray using Ephesians 1 as a guide.