

Feeding The 5,000

John 6:1-14

MEMORY VERSE

JOHN 6:14

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."

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

Two cans of tuna and five crackers.

A chalkboard and chalk.

ATTENTION GRABBER!

The "Pressing" Game

Pick a child to be "it." Have this child get up and walk around while the rest of the class follows him closely. The more crowded the child feels the more effective the game will be. Choose one or two children to be "it."

Explain to your class that Jesus was so popular with the people that they always crowded around Him, hoping to be close enough to hear Him or be healed by Him. Ask the children that were "it" to share with the class how it felt to be so crowded.

LESSON TIME!

Today we are going to study about one of the most popular miracles that Jesus did. We are going to learn about the feeding of the 5,000. Though this miracle is wonderful in itself, we are going to learn a lesson from it that is much greater.

With nearly a year left before His triumphal entry into Jerusalem and His crucifixion, Jesus is at the height of His ministry. There is a huge crowd that follows Him everywhere He goes. As we have seen before, the people in this crowd are following Him for all kinds of different reasons. Some reasons are good and others are not. Since there were so many people following Jesus, the time He spent with the 12 disciples became very important.

We must understand that the religious leaders had been seeking to kill Jesus. Herod Antipus beheaded John the Baptist, and he was now seeking Jesus (Luke 9:7-9). As we begin our lesson, the 12 disciples have just returned to Jesus from their mission throughout Galilee of preaching, casting out demons and healing the sick (Mark 6:7-13). It is here in Galilee that we find Jesus united with the disciples making their way for a retreat to rest and spend time together (Mark 6:31).

JOHN 6:1-3

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.

And Jesus went up on the mountain, and there He sat with His disciples.

Doing God's work is very important, but Jesus recognized that His disciples would need rest and renewal to continue to be effective in the ministry that He called them to do. Because they were serving so many people with different needs it was difficult for them to get the rest they needed. It is a blessing to serve others, and we need to work hard doing it. It is important to remember, however, that we also need a time of rest, time to spend quietly with God, receiving His refreshing and strengthening.

As Jesus went across the sea, the people followed Him there, probably walking along the shore. Mark tells us the crowd was like a flock of sheep without a shepherd. Sheep are easily scattered, and without a shepherd, they are in grave danger. But Jesus had great compassion for the people as they came with anticipation to hear Him teach and heal the sick (Matthew 14:14).

Instead of showing impatience at this intrusion, Jesus welcomed the people and ministered to their needs as a loving Shepherd, filled with compassion. Jesus had shown His disciples that they must put others before themselves, for He had called them to be servants.

JOHN 6:4-7

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

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.

Philip answered Him, "Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may have a little."

With the Passover at hand, many people from both near and far away places journeyed to Jerusalem to worship. Hearing that Jesus was in the area, the multitude sought Him with great expectation, hoping somehow that they would meet Him. Jesus knew He was their Shepherd and could teach them and meet every need in their life.

As the day drew to an end, the disciples, in their own wisdom, told Jesus to send the people away to find food and lodging (Mark 6:35-36). But Jesus would take this opportunity to teach His disciples a valuable lesson, preparing them for ministry.

The disciples looked at the situation and relied on their own ability and resources to deal with the problem. But Jesus used this situation to teach them how they should respond.

Jesus would use the miracle of feeding the five thousand to increase the faith of His disciples. This way, when they came across something that was impossible later in life, they would remember that **Jesus makes possible the impossible**.

Unexpectedly, Jesus told them to feed the crowd (Mark 6:37). This crowd had 5,000 men. Including women and children, it probably totaled at 10,000 to 13,000 people. Philip suggested that 200 denarii, which is equivalent to 8 months wages, would not even be sufficient to feed them. He realized that he could never hope to feed the people on his own.

Though Philip had been walking with Jesus and witnessing His glorious ministry of wisdom and power, he continued to look at His ministry in relation to his own resources. We should never limit God by our own abilities and resources when we are faced with trials in life and ministry. **Jesus makes possible the impossible**.

JOHN 6:8-9

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?"

The "Philip and Andrew" Skit

Pick two children to be Philip and Andrew. Give Andrew two cans of tuna and five crackers. Have the children reenact the scene described in today's lesson. Make sure that Philip expresses the impossibility of the situation, and have Andrew offer the meager supply with doubt.

Explain to the class that Philip could see no way to feed so many, and that Andrew offered what was available but doubted that Jesus could accomplish such a miracle.

When Andrew spoke out, it must have seemed really silly for him to even suggest that five barley loaves and two fish could ever meet the needs of this crowd. Yet Andrew's perception was much broader than Phillip's. He looked at the resources he had but failed to rely on Jesus to meet the needs of this impossible situation.

Now that Jesus had forced them to realize their inadequacy, He told the disciples to bring their resources to Him (Matthew 14:18). Barley bread was the cheapest and basest bread you could buy, yet Jesus used these meager loaves to feed a multitude. **Jesus makes possible the impossible.**

So often we go to the Lord as a last resort, only after we have exhausted our own resources. Jesus wanted His disciples to turn to Him for help, just like you and me. We must turn to Jesus first and trust in Him to care for us and our needs. It is so important for us

to bring what we do have to Jesus. He does not ask US to provide the impossible, only to bring what we do have to HIM so that He can meet the need.

Many times we look at how little we have and how impossible the situation is. But in Jesus we can “do all things.” If He asks us to do something, we need to realize that He will give us the ability and resources that we need to carry out what He has asked of us. **Jesus makes possible the impossible.**

The "Order" Game

This is a game to determine what a person should do first in any given situation. On the chalkboard write a certain situation. Underneath the situation make a list of the things a person must do to resolve the problem. Make sure to scramble the order of the solution.

Read each of the situations to your class and have the children put them back in order. Your board might look like this:

Flat Bike Tire

find the pump
pray to Jesus
pump up the tire

Scared of dark

turn on the light
call your Mom
pray to Jesus

Fight with friend

try to talk it out
pray to Jesus
ask/give forgiveness

Think of other scenarios and solutions. Make sure that the resolutions always start with "pray to Jesus." Explain to the class that no matter how small the problem, we need to take it to the Lord first.

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.

In an orderly fashion, Jesus had the crowd sit in groups of fifty and one hundred in the green grass (Mark 6:39,40). After the disciples gave the little bit of food to Jesus, He gave thanks. He then placed the food into the hands of the disciples to give to the people.

Once they had given Jesus what they had, He multiplied it and gave it back. Jesus would supply, but the feeding would be done through the disciples. Feeding as many as 15,000 people was no big deal for Jesus, but it was a big deal for His disciples to learn that they could always place their shortcomings and impossibilities into His hands. **Jesus makes possible the impossible.**

JOHN 6:12-13

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.

This was not a light meal; the people were filled, which means they were stuffed. Jesus had not only met their needs physically but also spiritually. Jesus had supplied abundantly, but He did not want to waste anything. Jesus is able to do exceedingly, abundantly beyond all that we ask or think (Ephesians 3:20). We also need to be good stewards of what the Lord has blessed us with as He does not want to waste anything. **Jesus makes possible the impossible.**

The "Guess Who" Game

Tell your class that you are going to reenact some prayers from different characters in the Bible that faced impossible situations. Pretend to pray to God as Sarah who was very old and waiting for the promise of a child, Daniel in the lions' den, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednigo, Queen Esther, King David, Gideon, Mary, etc...

Have your children raise their hands when they think they know who you are and pick one to tell after a little while. If the child is right, go on to the next character. If the answer is wrong, keep going until someone gets it or you feel the need to tell the class.

Explain to your class that Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever. If He could help all of those people in the Bible with their impossible situations, He is certainly able to help us with ours.

This miracle began when the disciples realized their inadequacy to meet the needs of the people and gave what little they had to Jesus. We too need to realize that Jesus is with us and desires that we place our faith in Him, allowing Him to control our life. If you take the first step and make yourself available to Him, He will show you how greatly you can be used to minister to others.

JOHN 6:14

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."

The people Jesus fed sensed that He was the anticipated Prophet (Deuteronomy 18:15) and tried to make Him king. They thought, surely if He can do such miracles, He must be the king. But it was not His Father's will for Him to be made King yet. Before Jesus could be the reigning Lion of Judah, He had to be the Lamb of God who bore the sin of the world (John 1:29). Knowing the desire of the people, Jesus made His way up to the mountain by Himself.

How do you think the disciples responded to Jesus after He had shown them His great power and provision? Unfortunately the disciples failed to understand its meaning (Mark 6:52). Their hearts were insensitive to the Lord.

We are like the disciples in so many ways. When we have something to do that is difficult, we often give up or do not even try. But Jesus gives us the proper way for us to handle these things. We need to take what we have to Him and see what He does with it.

We must be careful never to rely on our own abilities but to place our faith in Jesus who is not only able to save us but is also able to meet our every need. Each of us can face the impossible when we come to Jesus as long as we place our life into His hands. **Jesus makes possible the impossible.**

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of thanksgiving that **Jesus makes possible the impossible.** If there are any children who have not yet responded to the gospel, give them opportunity to do so.