

Today's part 2 of our message of when Jesus fed the 5000 and when He walked on the water... Neat trick, hey... Ahh, it's much more than a neat trick – these miracles demonstrate something pretty significant about Jesus – about who He is, and about the scope of His ability to save.

Last week, I began by saying that this Bible reading, is one of **the most significant** passages in the whole of the New Testament... And it's **Jesus**, who draws our attention to this.

Out of **all** of the miracles that Jesus did, the feeding of the **5000**, and the feeding of the **4000**, are the **two** miracles that Jesus said, **should** have made it clear (to His disciples), who He was.

And throughout the Gospel of Mark, the disciples seem to be just bumbling along, almost completely unaware, of who this Jesus bloke really is. Jesus keeps **demonstrating** who He is (by the things that He does, and the things that He says), but they just don't seem to be 'getting it'...

And when we get to chapter 8, Jesus says to them: "Are your hearts still so hard?" "Do you not yet understand?" "Even after I fed the **4000**, and even after I fed the **5000**, **can you still not see?**"

For some reason, out of all of the miracles of Jesus, the feeding of the multitudes, is **all** the evidence that the **disciples** should've needed, and it's all the evidence that **we** should need, to convince us, of who Jesus really is... And yet, His disciples missed it,, and many people today miss it. Their eyes are blinded to the significance of Jesus.

- was Jesus a good man? Yes, He was a good man, but He wasn't **just** a good man;
- was Jesus a healer? Yes, He was a healer, but He wasn't **just** a healer;
- was Jesus a prophet? Yes, He was a prophet, but He wasn't **just** a prophet;
- was Jesus a teacher? Yes, He was a teacher, but He wasn't **just** a teacher;
- was Jesus a miracle worker? Yes, He was a miracle worker...

but what does this all reveal about who Jesus really is???

The ultimate message of the Gospel of Mark, is “Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God”...

This is what the feeding of the 5000, was supposed to reveal. And it's at this point in the Gospel, (to be quite frank), the disciples are starting to look ‘a little bit silly’, because they're just not getting it...

So, where are we up to?

- The disciples have come back from their time of mission;
- Jesus said, righto, let me take you away for a time of rest for a while;
- But as they head across the lake in the boat, they are recognised, and so this big bunch of mostly blokes hot-foot it around to the other side of the lake, and they're there before ‘team Jesus’ arrive.
- Gone is any chance they had, of rest and solitude;

- Jesus sees the crowd – they’re like sheep without a shepherd; and
- so He teaches them.

That’s where we got to last week.

Now remember, the disciples, are wanting some ‘time out’;
And they’re wanting to have some special ‘alone time’ with Jesus:

“Jesus, it’s getting pretty late, there’s a lot of people here, so maybe we’d better send them into town to get some tucker for themselves...”

But Jesus said, “**You** give them something to eat.”

“But Jesus, that’d cost a fortune. We couldn’t possibly buy enough food to feed this lot.”

“Well, how many loaves do you have? Go and see”.

They went and had a look.

- 5 loaves
- 2 fish

And so Jesus commanded everyone to sit down on the green grass... In groups or lines of 100’s and 50’s... To me it seems like they made 50 lines of 100, or 100 lines of 50, or 100 picnic groups of 50, or 50 picnic groups of 100...

Regardless, it seems like it’s an organised method, to not only distribute the food, but to calculate how many people were there... 5000 men... Maybe a few women; Maybe a few children, but 5000 men were there. (a Men’s dinner)

⁴¹ And taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing and broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples to set before the people. And he divided the two fish among them all.

And everybody ate until they'd had enough, And then they gathered up what was left, and there were 12 baskets, full of left-overs...

Isn't it amazing? It's amazing, how God takes what little we have, and He makes it enough... If those disciples had held on to what was theirs, instead of freely giving it to Jesus, the feeding of the 5000 would not have happened – at least, not in the amazing way that it did...

And here's a lesson for us: The mission and the ministry of God, is **im**possibly expensive. We cannot possibly fund it... **But** we give what little we have, and God takes care of the rest.

Do you get this??? We can't do everything... But we give what we have...

- We can't fund **all** of God's ministry, but we can give to God, the finances we do have.
- We can't do everything that needs doing, but we can give to God, the skills and the abilities, and the Spiritual gifts that we do have.
- We don't have everything that God needs, but we can give Him the equipment we have; and

- the resources we have
- We **give** Him what we do have.

And He takes care of the rest.

And what an amazing miracle. It wasn't entirely original (you know): The prophet Elisha fed 100 men with 20 loaves (and remember, these are like individual portion type loaves) – each loaf should've been enough for one man, but there was left-overs with one loaf per 5 men...

But even though it wasn't entirely original, Elisha's feeding of the 100 with 20 loaves, pales compared to Jesus feeding the 5000 with five.

So, Jesus did a miracle... Very good... Neat trick... So what??? What are we really being told here?

Well, today I want to share with you 3 lessons:

1. And I've already shared the first one: **We** give what we have. **God** takes care of the rest.

2. Secondly, Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

Can anyone think of another story in the Bible, where the people of Israel were out in the wilderness, and they were hungry, and they were miraculously fed... Who fed them? No, it wasn't Moses. **God** fed them.

Moses had led the People of Israel out of Egypt. They were in the wilderness. They had nothing to eat. And they grumbled. And God said to Moses:

Exodus 16:12 (ESV)

¹² "I have heard the grumbling of the people of Israel. Say to them, 'At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread. Then you shall know that I am the YHWH your God.' "

And God sent bread from heaven.

Ex 16:31 the house of Israel called its name manna. It was like coriander seed, white, and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey.

Wow! Isn't God good! God didn't only give them bread – He gave them the taste of spread as well, and for the evening meal, they got poultry... And there was plenty for everyone – no one went hungry...

Who can do something like this? Can a man do it? No. This is something that only God can do.

You know, some people try to explain this miracle away: *Some people say "Everybody had their own food – they just didn't want to share it, so they had it tucked away, under their cloaks" ... Yeah, like a dead fish is the last thing I want to tuck into my singlet...*

And they put forward their explanation, when the little bit of food came out, they all started sharing their food, and there was plenty for everybody, and then they took up the scraps...

They just try to explain it away...

Really.... Let me make it simple for you. This is what really happened:

And look, I've put it into a mathematical formula, to make it easy:

$(5 \text{ loaves} + 2 \text{ fish})^{\text{Jesus}} - (\text{appetite of a man} \times 5000) = 12$
Baskets of leftovers

That's what happened – it's as simple as that.

Now, to the mathematician the only unknown quantity in that formula, is the power of Jesus... It cannot be the power of a man, because a mere mortal cannot make that formula work...

And so, this miracle reveals who Jesus is: Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, but the disciples still don't get it...

V⁴⁵ Immediately he **made** his disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd.

BTW, there's a few Bethsaida's in that district. Bethsaida means "Fishing Village". And on the shores of that very large fresh-water lake, there were a few Bethsaidas.

But basically Jesus makes his disciples head off: Look, I'll finish up here – you lot head off.

He sends the disciples off; He sends the crowds off, and Jesus heads up the mountain to pray.

And when evening came, Jesus is there all alone, and he looks out onto the lake, and the disciples haven't gotten very far, because they're rowing against a strong wind. And in the 4th watch of the night, (3am-6am), Jesus walks across the water, and catches them up... He makes out that He's going to walk right past them.

And, the disciples are terrified – they think He's a phantom, or a ghost.

"Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid."

And Jesus got into the boat; The wind ceased; And the Disciples were utterly astounded...

And this is a strange phrase:

they were utterly astounded, ⁵² for they did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened.

What were they supposed to understand about the loaves? What did the feeding of the 5000, and the multiplication of the loaves, reveal about Jesus?

Remember, what's the unknown factor? The power of Jesus.... This is not the power of a man – this is the power of God...

And let me explain to you, something more here in the Greek:

In Exodus 3, God has called Moses to lead the People of Israel, out of slavery in Egypt. And Moses isn't too keen on this idea: And he says, "Well, God, who are you? Who will I say, has sent me, to lead them out of Egypt?"

And God says, "I Am"... - that's how God identified Himself "I Am"

A couple of hundred years before Jesus was born, The Old Testament was translated into Greek. And this Greek version of the Old Testament, (called "The Septuagint"), is significant because it sometimes gets quoted in the **New** Testament, which was **also** originally written in Greek.

And in the Greek, God tells Moses, Ἐγώ εἰμι (Ego Eimi) "I am" – That's how He identified Himself: Ἐγώ εἰμι (Ego Eimi) "I am" – That's my name...

And now Jesus walks out on the water; the disciples are terrified, thinking He's a phantom; and Jesus says, "Take heart Ἐγώ εἰμι (Ego Eimi) "I am"..."

Does the significance of that statement dawn on you?

- This is how God identified Himself - Ἐγώ εἰμι (Ego Eimi) "I am"
- This is how Jesus identified Himself - Ἐγώ εἰμι (Ego Eimi) "I am"

If anybody else had said that, it would be blasphemy...

Let me give you an example of how blatant, that statement was:

In the Gospel of John 8:58, Jesus is having a bit of an argument with the religious leaders, and He says:

⁵⁸ **"I tell you the truth," "before Abraham was born, 'Εγώ εἰμι (Ego Eimi) I am!"**

And how did these religious leaders take that? Straight away, they picked up stones to stone Him...

Why did they do that? Because Jesus was making the claim, that He was God.

"Take heart 'Εγώ εἰμι (Ego Eimi) "I am". Don't be afraid... Don't be afraid, I'm God..."

What did it mean, that their hearts were hardened? Pretty simple really – they didn't recognise that in Jesus, they had with them, right there, in the boat, the very presence of God...

Hardness of heart, is the failure to recognise, the divinity of Jesus.

The disciples knew there was something special about Jesus; They really wanted to be a part of whatever it is that Jesus was doing; but their hardened hearts couldn't see the obvious.

Who is Jesus? - that's what's at issue here.

Jesus is making the claim, that He is God. Is this true???

Well, as CS Lewis said, If Jesus claims that He is God, there's 3 alternatives:

- He's either a liar; or
- a lunatic; or
- it's true, and Jesus is Lord...

So, who are you following?

Have you come today, to hear about a liar?

Or have you been taken for a ride, following a lunatic?

Or is it true, and we're here today, because we're following the Lord????

Today's reading finishes with the Jesus team arriving at Gennesaret, and once again, Jesus is recognised, and wherever Jesus goes, all the sick people are brought to Him, in the hope that maybe they might be able to touch the fringe of His garment, and everyone who managed to do that, was made well...

What's happening?

They want to experience Jesus the teacher;

They want to experience Jesus the nice man;

They want to experience Jesus the healer;....

But hardened hearts haven't yet accepted the fact that Jesus is Lord...

This, my friends, is the great conversion conundrum...

Today many people are looking for answers in their life. We might say, "They're looking for some kind of life-improvement", and so they're willing to 'give this Jesus thing a bit of a go', because He might improve their life...

But who is Jesus? Is He just a 'life improver'?

- is Jesus merely a mechanism to give us some kind of meaning in life?
- Is He merely some kind miracle worker, to give me some kind of healing that I might want?
- Is Jesus merely a means of fixing my relationship with my family?
- Do I only need Jesus if I'm at the end of my tether, and my life is all falling apart? And if my life's not so bad, I don't need Jesus???

Let's never think of Jesus in such shallow terms.

Jesus **is** the Christ, the Son of God;

Jesus is the Lord God Almighty;

Jesus is the saviour of the world...

Let's not come to Jesus for what we think we can get out of Him...

- We bow before Jesus, because we are weak and He is strong;
- He is the Creator – We are His creation;
- He is Lord. He is our God...
- He owes us nothing, and we owe Him everything...
- And yet He died for us...

3. And so we come to the third lesson

Jesus took the bread and He blessed it, and He broke it. When else did Jesus do that?

On the night before He was betrayed, **Mark 14:22** ... as they were eating, he took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to them, and said, **"Take; this is my body."** ²³ And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, and they all drank of it. ²⁴ And he said to them, **"This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many."**

When Jesus blessed the bread and broke it, He didn't tell them at this stage, but we can now see that the feeding of the 5000, was a symbol of Jesus' body being broken to save the many...

And when we realise this, it's a picture of the extent of the availability of God's grace... You might be sitting here today, or listening to this recording, and feeling, "My sins are so bad – and I've so messed up, God's grace isn't enough for me..." "I can never be forgiven". "I'm too far gone – there's no hope left."...

The broken body of Jesus, is more than enough for the multitudes. Everyone who repents of their sin, asks for forgiveness, and gives themselves to Jesus because He is Lord – Every one of these, will be saved... God has so much love and so much forgiveness, that everyone who comes to Him will be saved, and there's leftovers...

Let's pray:

Lord Jesus Christ,

Forgive us, for our hardness of heart.

Forgive us, for failing to recognise the significance,
that You are, 'Εγώ εἰμι (Ego Eimi) "I am"

Lord, forgive us, for the way that we so often set our hearts on
physical blessings, that You might happen to give us now,
instead of bowing our knee before You, for You are "The
Lord"...

Lord, we thank You, that You gave Yourself for us on the
cross...

The Highest of Heaven, became the lowliest peasant on the
cross...

But You are Lord.

You have the Name, that is above every other Name.

And at the Name of Jesus, every knee will bow,
and every tongue confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father...

Lord, we thank You that You haven't hidden this from us.
And we thank you that Your grace, and Your mercy, is in
abundance.

Lord, we give ourselves to You, because You are God;

You deserve our Loyalty;

You deserve our praises;

You deserve our obedience; and

You deserve our Worship.

Thank You Jesus,

amen.