

Feeding the Five Thousand  
Luke 9:10-17  
Sermon Prepared for WellSpring Church  
February 27, 2011

Introduction

“This is a test”, EBS

Tests are often announced and they are designed to show how much a student has learned.

Tests Sometimes can show us how much we have forgotten—the TV Show “Are you smarter than a fifth grader?” is meant to test memory as much as it was to show knowledge.

Tests sometimes show preparedness and readiness. This is why pop quizzes are so devastating to students. Without the stress and the urgency of a test date we are inclined not to learn and study and work.

How much have you forgotten? How much will you remember in the future?

This is important because in our life [with God] we are always being tested.

We have seen the Jesus is both the preacher of the good news and the subject of that Good News. He is the announcer of the Kingdom and the and the king of the kingdom

Who is Jesus? That is the test. many of us can give the answer properly in a doctrinal and theoretical manner—WE might even be able to quote the Nicene Creed... but when the tests of life Come, what is our answer to the question who is Jesus?

What does that mean for us today? Life is full of tests—in fact all of life is a test.

We are constantly being asked what we will do when we are faced with our inadequacies, our lacking, our forgetfulness, our pain and our confusion.

Where will we go when the tests come—and they will.

Genesis 22:12

Exodus 15:25; 16:4

Deut 8:2

Judges 2:22

John 6:6

Big Idea: All of life is a test to see whether we see God as adequate, sufficient, enough—and live under his benevolent regency and reign. Is Jesus the adequacy for our every situation That is the question. That is the reason for every test

Setting of the Story

In Luke

Return of the disciples

Preaching mission—with its successes

From the twelve to apostles (v.10 from Learners and students to practitioners with authority)

They withdrew to rest, report, celebrate, debrief, receive the well-done.

William Hendricksen writes: “Working without resting, being busy without ever taking a vacation, performing all the arduous duties pertaining to ministerial or missionary activities and not making a retreat for relaxation will never do.”

Rest interrupted—From Privacy to Publicity

But the crowd interrupts—why? They had seen miracles. It wasn't for the truth that they came but for the power of Jesus—oh, how we need to be careful here—why do we come to Jesus? Is it for what we want, what we think that we need? is it for an experience of power—or is it for Jesus?

Notice the response of Jesus—It a response of compassion

Matthew 14:14 (Compassion heals)

Mark 6:34 (Compassion teaches)

And Jesus teaches them (begins to speak to them about the Kingdom) He teaches about freedom because this is more important than health.

“So he began to speak to them about *the kingdom of God*...For people living under the oppressive yoke [of human achievement] the teaching of Jesus—according to which man's salvation is *not* basically a result of human effort and strict obedience to regulations but a product of Gods gracious reign in human hearts—must have been truly startling.

for constant fear Jesus substituted fortitude

for sadness, gladness

for spiritual night, light

for antipathy, sympathy

for egoism, altruism

for pomposity, humility

from “I Must” to “I trust”

Once the kingdom of God is established in hearts and lives, everything is undergoes a radical change and the world is turned upside down.

NOTE: There is a wonderful chapter in the little book, Gospel that deals with the Kingdom of God.

In the whole of the Bible

Desert Place—Moses Exodus 16:1-18

Notice that Moses went outside of Pharaoh's realm

Manna came down from heaven, Jesus feeds the crowd.

Elisha and the 20 loaves II Kings 4:42-44

In the Future

Psalm 23:5

Isa. 25:6

Rev. 19:6-10

### Crisis and Test

How does Jesus see the situation? Jesus sets them up in John 6:5,6—Jesus says to Philip “where are we going to get bread for all of these people?”

How do the disciples see the situation?

They see the people as an imposition, a problem, an annoyance. “Get rid of these people” We find them trying to get rid of people in other situations—  
are they more concerned for Jesus or for themselves?

danger of projecting our feelings, concerns, hurts as though we are feeling, hurting, concerned for someone else.

danger of taking on someone else’s hurts for ourselves.

They see it as an excuse for impertinence!

They are telling Jesus what to do! How why?

familiarity

a sense of equality since they have ministered with his power

they cared for his well-being, and their care and concern outweighed their caution?

they haven’t yet seen him as a sufficient provider

Kent Hughes

“How like us they were. We remain dull to Christ and his ways, though he has provided for us a thousand times. Jesus does a miracle for us, and then not much later we find ourselves in a tight spot, and not only do we think God is not adequate for our needs, but we have the cheek to try to tell him what to do!”

Our prayers are often impertinent demands

We put our impertinent demands on others—as though we are called to be in a place of authority over them—even when they are in authority over us.

We often think we know what others should do, what their motives are...and then we judge them and see them as right or wrong...

They see the situation as an impossibility. We can’t feed these people—! It is a situation of impracticability

There is not enough time—it is late send them away to buy their own food

not enough money (200 denarii) mark 6:37; John 6:7

Philip shows a good head for figures, but he forgot the X factor.

not enough food—we have no more than 5 loaves and two fish (John identifies them as barley loaves—small cakes of the cheapest sort of grain) the fish would have been just small as well.

They were focusing on their insufficient means and the impracticality of the method

Again Hendricksen: “The trouble with these disciples was that they concentrated all their attention on the vast hungry crowd. They were forgetting about Jesus, his power and love.”

A.W.Pink: "Philip answered him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little" (John 6:7). Let us see in Philip, once more, a portrait of ourselves. First, what does this answer of Philip reveal? It shows he was occupied with circumstances. He was looking on the things which are seen—the size of the multitude—and such a look is always a barrier in the way of faith. He made a rapid calculation of how much money it would require to provide even a frugal meal for such a crowd; but he calculated without Christ! His answer was the language of unbelief—"Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may *take a little*." Fancy talking of "a little" in the presence of Infinite Power and Infinite Grace! ... How surprising was this failure in the faith of Philip. One would have supposed that after all the disciples had witnessed of the Lord's wonder-working power they had learned by this time that all fulness dwelt in Him. We should have supposed their faith was strong and their hearts calm and confident. Ah—*should* we? Would not our own God-dishonoring unbelief check such expectations? Have we not discovered how weak our faith is! How obtuse our understanding! How earthly our minds and hearts! In vain does the Lord look within us sometimes for even a ray of that faith which glorifies Him. Instead of counting on the Lord, we, like Philip, are occupied with nature's resources. Beware, then, of condemning the unbelief of Philip, lest you be found condemning yourself too.

They were like men without a memory

A.W. Pink again: How often we look at God through our difficulties; or, rather, we try to, for the difficulties hide Him. Keep the eye on Him, and the difficulties will not be seen. But alas! what self-centered, skeptical, sinful creatures we are at best! God may lavish upon us the riches of His grace—He may have opened for us many a dry path through the waters of difficult circumstances—He may have delivered us with His outstretched arm in six troubles, yet, when the seventh comes along, instead of resting on Job 5:19, we are distrustful, full of doubts and fears, just as if we had never known Him. Such frail and depraved creatures are we that the faith we have this hour may yield to the most dishonoring distrust in the next. This instance of the disciples' unbelief is recorded for our "learning"—for our humbling and watchfulness. The same unbelief was evidenced by Israel in the wilderness, for the human heart is the same in all ages. All of God's wonders in Egypt and at the Red Sea were as nothing, when the trials of the wilderness came upon them. Their testings in "the wilderness of sin" (Ex. 16:1) only brought out of their hearts just what this testing brought out of Philip's and Andrew's, and just what similar testing brings out of ours—blindness and unbelief. The human heart, when proved, can yield nothing else, for nothing else is there. O with what fervency should we daily pray to our Father, "Lead us not into temptation [trial]"!

They saw the situation as men without God. They were looking at the situation from merely a human perspective—as though they didn't have a God or hadn't known God. You've got to know God.

*You* give them something to eat! They are men who are faced with the inadequacy shown! They wouldn't admit to their inadequacy. They failed the test!  
For us as readers! We are tested all the time.  
Our impertinence  
Our practicality  
Our human world-view—looking at circumstances, resources, abilities, people.  
Not God.  
Our forgetfulness  
Our Pride.  
How does Jesus respond? (Provision and Adequacy)  
There is no rebuke  
But he does say *You* feed them.  
Sets things in Order and (fifties and hundreds)  
Creation—look at this in the face of their inadequacy. The adequate God. He kept giving

A.W. Pink "And Jesus took the loaves" (John 6:11). He did not scorn the loaves because they were few in number, nor the fish either because they were "small." How this tells us that God is pleased to use small and weak things! He used the tear of a babe to move the heart of Pharaoh's daughter. He used the shepherd-rod of Moses to work mighty miracles in Egypt. He used David's sling and stone to overthrow the Philistine giant. He used a "little maid" to bring the "mighty" Naaman to Elisha. He used a widow with a handful of meal to sustain His prophet. He used a "little child" to teach His disciples a much needed lesson in humility. So here, He used the five loaves and two small fishes to feed this great multitude. And, dear reader, perhaps He is ready to use you—weak, insignificant, and ignorant though you be—and make you "mighty through God, to the pulling down of strongholds" (2 Cor. 10:4). But mark it carefully, it was only as these loaves and fishes were placed in the *hands of Christ* that they were made efficient and sufficient!

He used both the small means and men as means.

more than enough—

Philip Ryken Writes, "The feeding of the 5,000 reminds us that God is not limited by our inadequacies. Rather our very limitations can display the glory and grace of Jesus Christ wherever he does what we are unable to do."

Satisfaction and  
Leftovers!

Here is the answer to the test: God in Christ can supply any need  
Even Christ thanked God for the food.

What do we see?

tender compassion

regal lavishness

uncalculating generosity

Applications

Where are you being driven to the point of your inadequacy? How are you responding to this drive? This test? Here is a way to increase and continue your intentional spiritual growth.

decision making

confusion

helpless before the actions of others

disease and death—three this week in the life of our church have felt death,

finances

relationships

addictions

salvation

Where are you looking at a situation and judging it according to human categories and practicality? Here is a way to exercise your Biblical World View

money

doctors

help

people

“What are you going to do?”

Where are you being tested in regards to the sufficiency and adequacy of Christ? see John MacArthur’s book “Our Sufficiency in Christ” another way to exercise worldview

Pragmatism

Psychology

Mysicism/Experience

Where are you looking at the means that God has provided and dismissing them as inadequate and insufficient? (Do not despise the day of small beginnings)

Where have you forgotten the largess of God’s grace, mercy and power in the past?

Moses

Elisha

The disciples had seen the miracles of Christ

Their own “successes”

The provisions of God in your life

In the church’s life? In this church’s life?

Where are you being given an opportunity to tell others what God has done... Here is a way to pass on the knowledge of Christ to the next generation.

Ex. 10:1-2

Ex. 13: 8, 14

Dt. 4:9

Deut 6:20, 22

Psalm 78:5-7

Where are you being asked to get involved in the distribution of the God's gracious gifts?

Where are you looking for more than God has provided?

Where are you wasting the surplus?

All of this is meant to test us in our trust of Christ as the all sufficient one—and to give glory to God.