

The Gospel of John – Feeding the Masses

Today we're going to continue this series by looking at John 6:1-15. This scripture says:

- (1) After these things Jesus went over the sea of Galilee, which is *the sea* of Tiberias.
- (2) And a great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased.
- (3) And Jesus went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples.
- (4) And the passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh.
- (5) When Jesus then lifted up *his* eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?
- (6) And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do.
- (7) Philip answered him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little.
- (8) One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him,
- (9) There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?
- (10) And Jesus said, Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand.
- (11) And Jesus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would.
- (12) When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.
- (13) Therefore they gathered *them* together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten.
- (14) Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world.
- (15) When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone.

As we look into this Scripture we find people following Jesus because of the miracles that they had seen and heard of him performing. I think that this is an interesting thing to discuss. You see, the people were following for the physical blessings, yet many of them were not receiving the Spiritual food. As we continue to study this chapter we'll find that many of these same people went away when Christ begins to feed them with Spiritual meat.

Likewise we find that often in today's church there are those who just want to follow Christ for miracles. Sometimes churches get too focused in on miracles to see the true picture of who Jesus is. God does perform miracles – he's the same yesterday, today, forever (Hebrews 13:8). Jesus Christ performed miracles during his ministry, and miracles should be part of the Church today. I've seen many instances where the effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availed much (James 5:16). Many today want to deny miracles and put them into the hand of man, but I believe that we should rather be glorifying God. On the other hand, though, miracles shouldn't be the end of the story. If so, people won't really get the gospel. People won't really get saved. They'll hang around for the miracles but leave when the meat of the gospel gets preached.

Jesus also here ministered by feeding the hungry. Do we minister enough in this way as a whole today? Do most Christians even recognize that feeding people is one of the greatest ways to reach out. It gives opportunity to not only feed the hungry – it gives opportunity to feed the spiritually hungry. Jesus could have sent the people away earlier. He could have went off to himself without feeding them, but he recognized that some would hear because he took time to care for their physical needs. We're told in Matthew 25 that there's a group of people who claimed to do all kinds of things for Christ, but they didn't show kindness to their fellowman. They didn't feed the hungry. They didn't clothe those who had tattered clothes. They didn't provide shelter for those who had no home. They didn't visit the prisoners. They just didn't seem to care. This group of people weren't Christlike because they never knew Christ.

It is significant that this miracle is repeated by all four of the gospels. When God chose to tell us something twice in means it's something we'd better really stop to think about. When he tells us four times it's something that we need to just be hit over the head with.

There's a lot of other things that could be said about this passage of Scripture, but I'm going to spare that for this lesson. It is my hope and prayer that you know Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, not just from an outwardly but an inwardly way.

If you have questions about parts that were covered, or parts that weren't covered, feel free to contact me at john@intotheword.org.

Yours in Christ,

Bro. John Rich