

Lighthouse Bible Church

February 17th, 2013

John 6: 1 – 15

‘The Presentation of the Miracle Meal’ #2

Stand – Read – Pray

Last week we began to look at the preparation of the miracle meal in John Chapter 6, Verses 1 – 9, and this morning we are going to look at the presentation of the miracle meal in Verses 10 - 15.

You remember that there is a 6 month to a year break between chapter 5 and chapter 6. We see Chapter 6 starting out with Jesus getting into a boat and crossing over the Sea of Galilee or the Sea of Tiberias.

He had gained a huge following because of the miracles He was doing all throughout the land and people were coming to Him from all over, they were following Him wherever He went. And they were following Him, not for His teaching or eternal life that He offered or because He was the Son of God, but because He was meeting their physical needs and they saw the signs He had done and they were, as He will say later in Verse 26, getting free food.

So as Matthew, Mark and Luke record, He and His disciples went to a deserted place called Bethsaida to get some rest and get something to eat. Well, when they cross the sea and get there, the other scriptures record that some had already arrived and many more were coming from every city. They had actually run the 8 to 10 miles around the sea that Jesus had just crossed over in the boat.

There were a lot of people there because the Passover was near and all four gospels record that including men and women and children, there were about 20,000.

And in spite of their motives for following Jesus, it says in the other parallel passages that He had compassion on them. He healed their sick and He taught them many things about the kingdom of God.

It starts getting late so the disciples tell Jesus to send the crowds away so they can eat and Jesus says to them, you feed them. Then after figuring out that it would be an impossibility to feed so many, Philip says, 'we don't have enough to feed this crowd, a whole years wages wouldn't feed them but very little'.

And of course, Jesus, our passage says, asked this question to test Philip and the other disciples, because He already knew what He was going to do. We looked also at the fact that God sometimes tests us to take us past our point of trust to increase our faith and trust in Him.

If He only takes us to our point of trust now, we would never grow, but when He takes us beyond our point of trust, we increase our faith and trust in Him. And by the time we finish with this passage, we see the disciples faith was incredibly stretched.

You remember in **Mark 6: 38** Jesus told them to go into the crowd and see how much bread they could find. All they found in the crowd was a lad with 5 barley loaves and 2 small fish and this time Andrew said 'but what are they among so many?' And Jesus is about to answer that in a very profound way. So lets pick it up at Verse 10.

Verse 10: 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.

The disciples were not quite sure what was about to happen but they did what Jesus had asked them to do. And listen, that becomes a very important thing; even though their faith had failed, their obedience did not. Obedience is the channel through which faith comes and grows. Our faith will never grow unless we trust the Lord by obeying His Word.

Philip and Andrew and all the disciples lacked the faith to be able to feed that great multitude when Jesus said ‘you feed them’. But they obeyed our Lord’s command to have the people **sit down**. This miracle would not have happened apart from their obedience, right?

They told the people to sit down and **Mark 6: 40** adds that they divided the people into groups of 50 and 100. That in itself would have been a monumental task; getting 20,000 people seated in smaller groups of 50 and 100.

Even if they were all in groups of 100, and they weren’t, and even if there were only 15,000 people, and there were probably more, then you would have at least 150 groups of 100 people in each group and if you divide that by the 12 disciples, each disciple would have about 10 groups.

They had to set the people up that way so that they could get to all of them with the food that was about to be served. That is 12 people serving almost 20,000 people. If you think you have a long wait at McDonalds, that’s nothing.

As we saw before, the hearts of most of these people coming to Jesus was selfish and self-centered and He extended His love and grace and mercy to them in healing them and in teaching them about the kingdom of heaven and now He is going to meet their physical need of hunger.

You see, God's grace and mercy and love are never dependent on the recipients attitude or actions or anything else, God's love is unconditional and His grace extends to all whom He desires to extend it too. Look at Verse 11.

Verse 11: 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.

Jesus takes these 5 little cookie size pieces of barley loaves and the two small fish and **He gives thanks**. Giving thanks and blessing the food was always the practice of Jesus, especially when it came to partaking of the Passover bread and cup.

Matthew, Mark and Luke all say that Jesus **blessed** the food and the distributed it. That word blessed is *you-log-eeoo* where we get our English word eulogy from or to speak well of or to praise or to bless. In John here, He uses the word **given thanks** which is *you-co-rid-zo* where we get our English word Eucharist and it means to be grateful or to express gratitude.

And when you think about that fact that every meal we receive is because of the gracious provision of God, do we give thanks, or praise or glory to God or express gratitude to Him in thanksgiving through prayer.

What does **1st Corinthians 10: 31** say **whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.** **1st Thessalonians 5: 18** says in **EVERYTHING give thanks for this is the will of God for you.** Why is it that some Christian families don't do that before a meal or when they are in a restaurant?

Well, after giving thanks, it says that **He distributed them to the disciples and the disciples to those sitting down and likewise of the fish, as much as they wanted.**

This is one of the amazing things about the Scriptures;; it doesn't go into any detail as to how this miracle was done, it just simply says that the disciples distributed the bread and fish and the people could have as much as they wanted.

In many of the miracles and supernatural events of the Bible, no explanation is given as to how, it just says that it happened. From our human perspective and curiosity we want to know every detail of how something like that could happen and that's what makes the Scriptures so believable as being written by God Himself.

If mere men wrote the Bible apart from the inspiration of the Holy Spirit they would have wanted to put in all the details to satisfy those questions that we would inevitably have when a miracle or supernatural event is recorded.

We don't even know how the disciples distributed the food. Did they take a basket from the crowd and then go to Jesus and He put some bread and fish in it and then they distributed it and then came back for more. Did they just keep reaching into the basket and taking out more as they went? We don't know.

We do know that **as** this miracle was taking place and as every one of the 20,000 people were eating to the full, the disciples' faith was growing as they experienced this miracle first hand and were used by Jesus to complete this miracle.

Jesus could have created this food and plopped it into the laps of everyone one of those 20,000 people, but He used the disciples because this miracle was for them. It was a test of trust and faith building for them; from, we don't have enough resources to do this, so we believe that You, Lord, can do anything.

Jesus used the disciples to accomplish His miraculous feeding. God always uses fallible, weak, foolish people to accomplish His will, doesn't He?

God used Moses to display His miracles that delivered the people from Pharaoh in Egypt and that sustained them in their wilderness wanderings.

God used Joshua's prayer for a miracle to stop the rotation of the earth so that he could defeat his enemies.

God used one young boy named David to defeat the giant Goliath and free his people from the Philistines.

God used 3 young men in the miracle of the fiery furnace to turn the heart of the most powerful man of His time. He used Daniel in the lions den to perform a miracle deliverance that changed the course of history even into the New Testament.

And do you want to know something else, God can and wants to use you. He wants to use you in the miracle of changing the soul of a hell bound sinner to a heaven bound saint as you become His ambassador.

Anyway, I just can't imagine what they were thinking as the food just kept coming and coming until the entire multitude was fed to the full. But I can tell you this, Jesus took them to a whole new level of trust and faith in Him.

This is Jesus, God in human form, creating food and bypassing the normal process for providing that food. Think about that, the God who said 'let there be light' and there was light. The God who said let the waters be formed, let the earth, moon and stars be formed, let the plants and animals be formed and let man be made in our image, He is now sitting on a grassy hillside and saying 'let the bread and fish be formed to feed this great multitude'. Incredible.

And it says at the end of Verse 11 they ate as much bread and fish **as much as they wanted**. And apparently some people wanted more than they could eat; their eyes were bigger than their stomachs. Look at Verse 12

Verses 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.

Jesus didn’t create just a little bit of food, He created enough so that every single person there was full; that is quite a meal. And then He tells His disciples to **gather up the fragments that remain so that nothing is lost**. This is neat. So they **gathered them up and filled** (what) **12 baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves which were left over by those who had eaten**.

Jesus not only fed the 20,000 people in the crowd to the full but look what He is about to do. He is going to feed the 12 disciples as well. How many baskets full of food were left, 12, how many disciples were there, 12.

He took them from the place of; ‘200 denarii wouldn’t be able to feed all these people’ and; ‘what is 5 loaves and 2 fish among so many’, to each one having their own basket of food to eat. And by the way, **Mark 6: 31**, you remember, said that **they didn’t even have time to eat**. Now they do.

What an incredible display of the creative sustaining power of God in the provision of the food for the multitude and what an incredible display of Christ’s love for His disciples to bring them to a greater level of faith and trust in Him.

But you say, ‘what about Jesus, there wasn’t a basket for Him, what was He going to eat’. Do you think the disciples shared with Him? I don’t know. I do know that Jesus said to His disciples before that **‘My food is (what) to do the will of Him who sent Me**.

The question becomes, did the people in the crowd understand what an incredible miracle just took place? Remember the disciples had gone out into the crowd earlier asking if anyone had any food and all they could come up with is the 5 loaves and 2 fish.

And then all of a sudden the disciples are feeding people enough food to fill them to the full. And if the Lord created it, it was probably, like the wine, the best tasting ever. And maybe the disciples were telling the people as they were distributing the food that ‘the Lord is somehow creating this food and it just keeps coming and coming’. Anyway look at their response in Verses 14 – 15.

Verses 14 – 15: 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’.

So they did **see**, through their participation in the eating of the food, **the miraculous sign that Jesus did**. They are thinking that this guy just fed 20,000 of us to the full with 5 loaves and 2 fish and as a result they conclude **this is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world**.

What Prophet are they referring to? Well, we looked at that back in **John 1: 21** when the Pharisees asked if John the Baptist was **the Prophet**. It is the one mentioned in the Old Testament book of **Deuteronomy 18** and again in **Acts 3** and **Acts 7**. It is the One that God would raise up like Moses that the Old and New Testament refer to as the Messiah.

So what they are saying is that Jesus is the fulfillment of the prophecy that He is the Messiah, the Prophet that was foretold to **come into the world**. The problem is, their view of what the Messiah should be and do was far different than what the Bible says the Messiah would be and do. Look at Verse 15.

Verse 15: therefore when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king ...

You see, they wanted a Messiah, a **king**, that would rule over them that would meet their physical needs. He will heal us when we are sick, He will feed us when we are hungry so let's march Him right into Jerusalem and make Him our king. He wanted to be their king but on His terms and not theirs. No one can come to Christ on their own terms. No one can make Jesus Lord of their life, they must yield to His Lordship in their life to be one of His.

They had no concern whatsoever about their spiritual need for repentance and preparing their hearts for the words of the Messiah that would lead to eternal life in the kingdom of God. They viewed this Prophet, this Messiah as a political king and as the one who would overthrow Rome, become king and then heal every sickness feed every hungry person and have the perfect social welfare state.

They wanted a Messiah that put not spiritual demands on them for repentance or faith or acknowledgment of their sin, and they wanted a Messiah that would meet all of their physical and emotional and felt needs. Like some people today; they will accept a Jesus that will meet their physical and emotional and felt needs but will reject Him when they are confronted with their own sin and need for repentance and acknowledging the wages of their sin as death and hell forever.

That is why they would later crucify Jesus, because He didn't fit their mold of the kind of Messiah they wanted. He wasn't the kind of Jesus they wanted and if you are not willing to love Him more than father or mother, son or daughter and take up your cross daily to follow Him, then He is not the Jesus for you either.

He demands that you acknowledge your sinful condition, He demands that you repent of your sin and seek His forgiveness, He demands that you put your faith and trust in Him as your sin bearer, He demands that you confess Him as Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead. It is His terms.

Well, they weren't willing to accept Him on His terms but they were willing to take Him by force and make Him be what they wanted Him to be. And they were willing to **take Him by force** to do this. So, it says, **He departed again to the mountain by Himself alone. Matthew 14: 22** and **Mark 6: 45** adds that **Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side while He sent the multitude away.**

After Jesus sends His disciples away and spends some time in prayer on the mountain late into the night, He is about to perform two miracles that John records that will leave no doubt that He is God in human form.

Closing prayer.

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Verse 11: Jesus took the loaves and gave thanks

1st Corinthians 10: 31

1st Thessalonians 5: 18

Verses 12 – 13: Gather up what remains

Mark 6: 31

Verse 14 – 15: Truly this is the Prophet to come

John 1: 21, Deuteronomy 18: 13 – 15

Acts 3: 22 – 23, Acts 7: 37,

Matthew 14: 22, Mark 6: 45

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