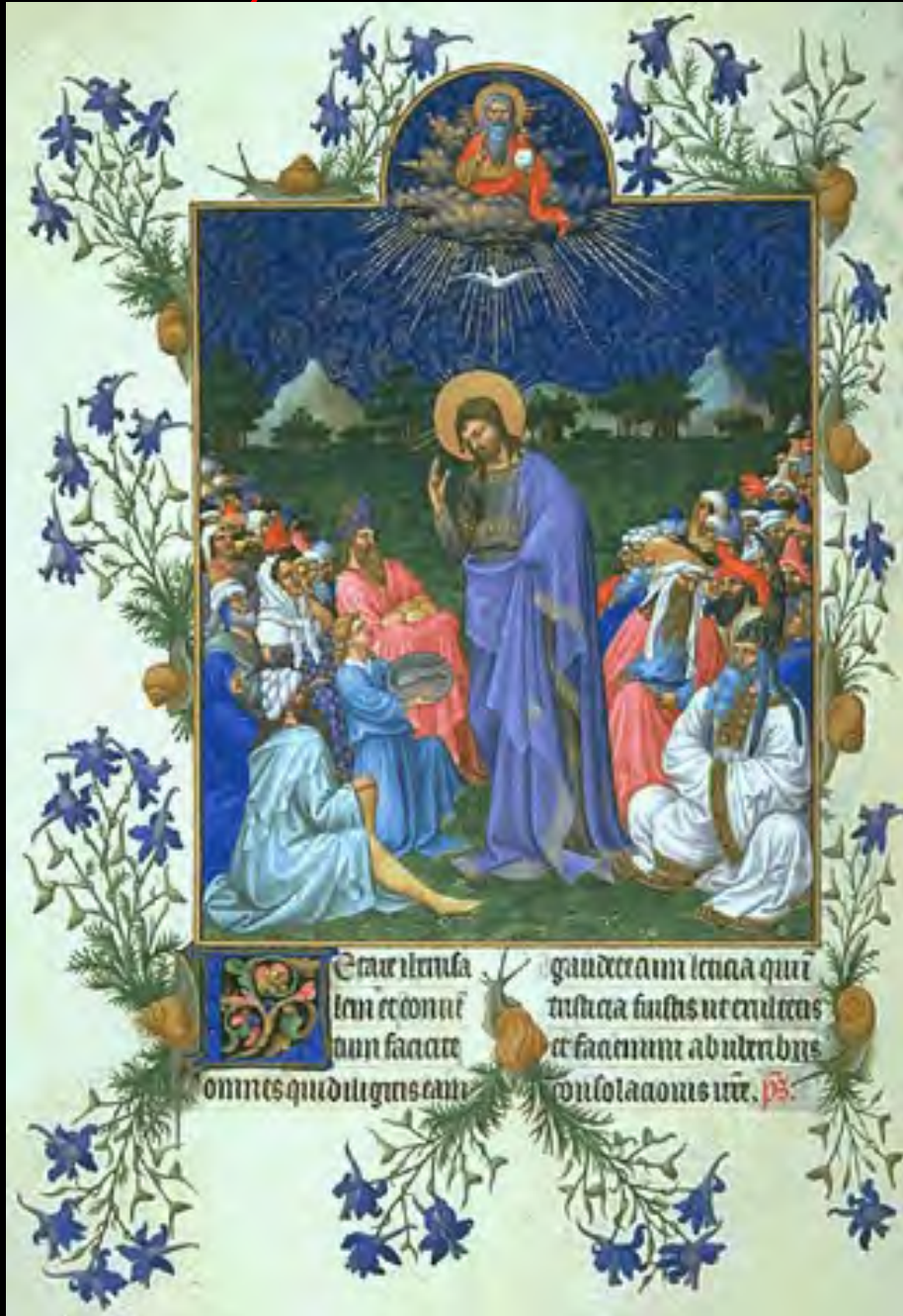


Pentwater Bible Church

*Gospel of Mark
Message 26*

September 21, 2014



Et ait illis
Ite et comite
cum facite
omnes qui diligunt eum
gaudeam in terra qui
iustitia factis ut eruditas
et faciemini ab uerbis
consolationis uestrae. ps.

The Multiplication of Bread and Fish by van Limburg Brothers cir. 1375-1416 Illuminated manuscript.

Daniel E. Woodhead – Pastor Teacher

Pentwater Bible Church

The Book of Mark
Message Twenty-Six
Jesus Feeds Five Thousand
September 21, 2014
Daniel E. Woodhead



Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes by James Tissot Cir. 1886-96

JESUS FEEDS THE FIVE THOUSAND

Mark 6:30-44

³⁰ And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught. ³¹ And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat. ³² And they departed into a desert place by ship privately. ³³ And the people saw them departing, and many knew him, and ran afoot thither out of all cities, and outwent them, and came together unto him. ³⁴ And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things. ³⁵ And when the day was now far spent, his disciples came unto him, and said, This is a desert place, and now the time is far passed: ³⁶ send them away, that they may go into the country round about, and into the villages, and buy themselves bread: for they have nothing to eat. ³⁷ He answered and said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they say unto him, Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread, and give them to eat? ³⁸ He saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? go and see. And when they knew, they say, Five, and two fishes. ³⁹ And he commanded them to make all sit down by companies upon the green grass. ⁴⁰ And they sat down in ranks, by hundreds, and by fifties. ⁴¹ And when he had taken the five loaves and the two

fishes, he looked up to heaven, and blessed, and brake the loaves, and gave them to his disciples to set before them; and the two fishes divided he among them all. ⁴² And they did all eat, and were filled. ⁴³ And they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments, and of the fishes. ⁴⁴ And they that did eat of the loaves were about five thousand men (KJV).

THE APOSTLES RETURN TO JESUS

Mark 6:30

³⁰ And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught. (KJV).

These verses serve as a transition back to the teaching ministry of the Lord Jesus from the story of John the Baptist's execution. When the apostles returned to Jesus from their evangelizing they had many stories to tell about what they encountered. The word apostle (*apostoloi*, "delegates, messengers") means "one sent" as a missionary or an authorized agent for the one that sent them. The term began to be applied to the twelve after Jesus' death and resurrection (Acts 1:25-26; Ephesians 2:20). Mark uses the term apostles because they had completed their first missionary journey so to speak and they were now officially doing the work of an apostle. The term also applies very narrowly to the original twelve and Paul as a title. As a result of their work and Jesus fame which was spreading rapidly in Israel, the crowds became ever increasingly larger.

THE NEEDED REST

Mark 6:31-32

³¹ And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat, ³² And they departed into a desert place by ship privately. (KJV).

The success of the ministry had many people following them and this text characterizes the situation with the term the people *coming and going*. They had returned to Capernaum, which was Jesus' home base, and they could not find any solitude for necessary rest. They were so busy that they didn't have time to eat or rest. They were becoming worn out and needed a respite. So Jesus said to them, "*Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while.*" Luke says that they went to Bethsaida (Luke 9:10). They entered a ship on The Sea of Galilee and tried to depart clandestinely to a more remote and quiet location.

THE CROWDS FOLLOW

Mark 6:33-34

³³ And the people saw them departing, and many knew him, and ran afoot thither out of all cities, and outwent them, and came together unto him, ³⁴ And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion

toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things. (KJV).

The popularity of a group who performed so many miracles and healed the sick was so strong that the crowds *ran afoot thither out of all cities, and outwent them, and came together unto him.* They simply would not let them rest. Jesus and His apostles were viewed as supermen. They were able to do things for them that no one ever could before. The religious authorities that pushed back on Jesus and His work could only tie the people up with thousands of unbiblical rules and practices designed to make the population increasingly more beholden to them and increase their wealth. But this did nothing for the people. Now that the Messiah had come they were not going to let Him out of their sight. So the people ran faster than Jesus and His apostles and caught up with them. This did not change the need for necessary rest. In fact Jesus realized that He had to do something to alleviate their needs. His compassion for them was significant as He realized their lack of any credible Godly leadership. He began to teach them as a means of bringing them some comfort from the circumstances with which they were living. Clearly because of the Jewish religious leaders lack of compassion and knowledge of God they needed healing. The ruling Jews had this admonition given to them before in the Old Testament (Numbers 27:17; Ezekiel 34:5; Zechariah 13). The true God will always reach His people with comfort and knowledge so as to assuage their anxiety over their dire earthly conditions. They were dealing with demonic possession, severe crippling, other health issues and poverty in addition to the overbearing lack of genuine spiritual leadership from the Jewish leaders.

THE MIRACLE OF THE FEEDING OF THE FIVE THOUSAND

Mark 6:35-37

³⁵ And when the day was now far spent, his disciples came unto him, and said, This is a desert place, and now the time is far passed: ³⁶ send them away, that they may go into the country round about, and into the villages, and buy themselves bread: for they have nothing to eat. ³⁷ He answered and said unto them, Give ye them to eat And they say unto him, Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread, and give them to eat? (KJV)

This section of Scripture begins the story of the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand with five loaves and two fish. It is an important miracle. Attesting to its uniqueness is the fact that all four Gospel writers included it in their books (Mark 6:32-44; Matthew 14:13-21; Luke 9:10b-17; John 6:1-14). Now in the state of a much needed rest and spending all day attending to the needs of the crowd the apostles said to Jesus, “*send them away, that they may go into the country round about, and into the villages, and buy themselves bread: for they have nothing to eat.*” Jesus however knew that he was going to perform one of His greatest and perhaps best known miracle. He was going to feed them all with whatever meager food was available. The apostles were tired and had compassion on the crowd asking Jesus to let the people go buy food for themselves because they had *nothing to eat.* This was a desolate desert wilderness type location and there was no close by places to buy food. It was getting dark and for safety’s sake it was beneficial to have the people leave to secure food now before the danger of darkness fell where thieves could attack them. As Jesus answered them saying, “*Give ye them to eat,*” they thought the people should buy their own food because it would be extremely costly for them to

purchase it for them. And where would they get the resources to make the purchase anyway? This was a seemingly impossible request Jesus was making of His apostles. Go buy bread with what? It would take at least the equivalent of eight months of a typical farmer's wages to pay for this volume of food. It gives us some insight into their lack of faith in Him even after seeing all the miracles He had done. They were still living in the flesh and not the Spirit even though they too had performed many miracles themselves while out on the road bringing the Gospel to the population of the people of Israel. They still did not fully realize what God was doing. Jesus did not want them to be so quick to shake off responsibility. They were often ready to do this very thing, acting in the flesh instead of the Spirit and to say, "Send the people away" (Mark 6:36); "Send her [the Syrophenician woman] away" (Matthew 15:23). They even "rebuked" those who brought little children to Jesus that he might touch them (Mark 10:13). See also Luke 9:49, 50. "Don't bother the Master and don't bother us," was frequently their response to requests.

It is fair to observe that Jesus wanted to remind these men of the fact that getting rid of people in need is not a solution. It is not what God would have them do for needy situations (Matthew 5:43–48; 11:25–30; Luke 6:27–38; John 3:16).

JESUS ORGANIZES THE FEEDING MIRACLE

Mark 6:38-40

³⁸ He saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? go and see. And when they knew, they say, Five, and two fishes. ³⁹ And he commanded them to make all sit down by companies upon the green grass. ⁴⁰ And they sat down in ranks, by hundreds, and by fifties (KJV).

In response to their incredulity at His request for them to feed the many, He asks for a tally of the available food resources. John's Gospel records the amount as five loaves of round barley cakes and two fishes. These were found with a young boy who had it for his uneaten lunch (John 6:9). So it seems that in the crowd's haste to follow Jesus and the apostles desire to sneak away for some much needed rest no body brought any food except this young boy. Even that it was his lunch that he failed to eat. The Lord's teaching probably mesmerized him and eating his lunch was not important to him. He offered it to the apostles when they were doing their inventory (John 6:8). Jesus seems to order the apostles to get the crowd organized for food distribution in the normal formation. One can only imagine the thoughts of all who were there as Jesus began arranging the people in the traditional Jewish custom of taking food. Men were traditionally separated from the women and children. He organized them into manageable separate groups on the green grass. This observation could only be made by one who was there and it was probably the apostle Peter. It must have been spring times as well because the grass springs up in the spring and quickly withers and turns brown with the sun and heat of the Mediterranean desert climate.

THE MIRACLE BEGINS

Mark 6:41

⁴¹ *And when he had taken the five loaves and the two fishes, he looked up to heaven, and blessed, and brake the loaves, and gave them to his disciples to set before them; and the two fishes divided he among them all (KJV).*

Jesus was the host of perhaps the greatest dinner party ever conducted and attended. The banquet was about to begin. The host made a prayer in the form of a customary Jewish blessing over the two fishes and the five loaves of bread which pertains to their ingathering of crops.

Leviticus 19:24

²³ *And when ye shall come into the land, and shall have planted all manner of trees for food, then ye shall count the fruit thereof as their uncircumcision: three years shall they be as uncircumcised unto you; it shall not be eaten. ²⁴But in the fourth year all the fruit thereof shall be holy, for giving praise unto Jehovah. ²⁵And in the fifth year shall ye eat of the fruit thereof, that it may yield unto you the increase thereof: I am Jehovah your God (ASV 1901).*

Deuteronomy 8:6-10

⁶ *And thou shalt keep the commandments of Jehovah thy God, to walk in his ways, and to fear him. ⁷For Jehovah thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, flowing forth in valleys and hills; ⁸a land of wheat and barley, and vines and fig-trees and pomegranates; a land of olive-trees and honey; ⁹a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack anything in it; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig copper. ¹⁰And thou shalt eat and be full, and thou shalt bless Jehovah thy God for the good land which he hath given thee (ASV 1901).*

The term giving thanks meant directly to God, as was the custom. He looked up to Heaven and began to break the bread. The dependence on God must be noticed because Jesus is God and depended upon the Father for everything. We must also do this by example. That is, trust God for all of our circumstances. As he broke the bread the miracle began occurring. There are two Greek verbal tenses present in this miracle. The word *breaking* in the aorist tense implies the action was instantaneous. The word *giving* is in the imperfect tense which implies a continuous action. The miracle occurred in Jesus' hands. He broke the bread and it kept breaking and then giving it out. The same thing happened with the fish. The disciples then were wait staff handling the distribution to the many people on that spring grassy hill in the wilderness. They continued to serve until all had been fed. Just as God provided manna and quail to the Jews in the wilderness during their wandering God in Jesus was providing food for His people. Other instances of God's provisions are the instance of Elijah and the widow at Zarephath seen in I Kings 17:7-16 where the Lord multiplied a meal of oil and meal. Another similar instance occurred in Elisha's time as recorded in II Kings 4:1-7 where bread was provided to the people.

THE RESULT OF THE MIRACLE

⁴² And they did all eat, and were filled. ⁴³ And they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments, and of the fishes. ⁴⁴ And they that did eat of the loaves were about five thousand men (KJV).

Not only did all eat their fill but also the leftovers filled twelve baskets. The size of the group is reaffirmed at five thousand people. The remaining volume of food was larger than what they started out with. The five thousand men did not include the women and children. Which means that the total population was minimally twice that number, or at least ten thousand.

Here as always Jesus reveals himself as the perfect Savior, the One who provides for both our flesh needs but more importantly our spiritual needs (Mark 8:19–21; John 6:35, 48). He is the One Prophecied in the Old Testament (1 Kings 17:16; 2 Kings 4:43, 44; John 6:14; Deuteronomy 18:15–18; John 6:32). As was and is still typically a human response the population wanted primarily earthly, erroneous, materialistic view of the Deliverer, as seen in John 6:15.

In light of their ingratitude toward Him we are allowed to see the depth of his love and compassion (Mark 6:34; 8:2; Matthew 9:36). Our Lord experienced periods of great popularity, with the masses but only hostility of the *leaders*. At times people would ask him to depart (Mark 5:17) or were offended in him (6:3). At times they deserted him (John 6:66). Moved by selfish considerations (John 6:26), they generally misunderstood him and his true mission (John 6:15). At last they allowed themselves to be persuaded by their leaders to demand his death by crucifixion (Mark 15:11–14).

In contrast to this is the temperament of Jesus during His time with us the first time. He never used His power to destroy or even to hurt the people but always to help them. He fed the hungry, healed the sick, had compassion on and taught the misled, and sought the lost. In fact, even when he felt constrained to pronounce Jerusalem's fall, he did so with a heavy heart (Matthew 23:37–39). It was only to the religious leaders who denied God as hypocrites in their desire to enslave the population and take from them that He was angry.

NEXT WEEK: MARK: JESUS WALKS ON WATER

Please call or e-mail with any questions or comments

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