

WEDNESDAY BIBLE FELLOWSHIP

Christ Church, Crouch End Hill

Tel/ Fax: 020 8340 1566

No: 83

"The fourth of the signs" - Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand.

Brief Talk on John 6: 1– 14

Read John 6:1-14

Introduction

Every miracle that Jesus performed was a mighty marvellous and meaningful miracle. But there are several things about the miracle we are going to study today that makes it unique and especially significant. First, it is the only miracle mentioned in all four gospels. Second, it is the only account in which Jesus asked the advice of another person before He proceeded to perform the miracle. Third, it is the only time that Jesus ever performed a miracle before such a huge crowd.

It will be instructive if we take note of the principal actors in the story: Jesus, the disciples, especially Phillip and Andrew, the little boy who gave up his lunch pack and the multitude.

There were actually two things that were missing that day. One shortage was obvious and one shortage was not. The first problem was the crowd lacked food. The major problem was not that the crowd lacked food, but that the disciples lacked faith.

I am convinced that Jesus was far more grieved over the lack of faith than He was the lack of food. A lack of food never stops God, but a lack of faith can stop him dead in his tracks. I believe Jesus was especially grieved because He had given them every reason to have faith, and no reason to have doubt. They had seen Jesus turn water into wine; they had seen Jesus heal the nobleman's son; they had seen Jesus heal a paralytic man, and yet they still needed the faith of a mountain to move a mustard seed. They still didn't get it.

Questions for discussion

1. Why did the crowd follow Jesus and what did they think about him?

2. What was the test that Jesus was using on Philip? How might the wedding at Cana (2: 1-11) be a factor in this test?

3. What can you say about the responses of Philip and Andrew (vv.7-9)?

Comment

The disciples of Jesus were focusing on their problems - not their possibilities. Did Jesus ask them what they had to work with? No! Did he ask them if any of them had any experience in the catering business? No! Jesus knew that no task undertaken at God's command is impossible. It matters not how big or small that task may be. If God tells us to go out and feed a hungry world - not only with physical bread but also with the bread of life which is the Word of God - is that impossible? No! If Christ tells us to make disciples of all people, is that impossible? No! If the Holy Spirit invades our fellowship and tells us there are things we can do to make this church a better church and this community a better community, is that impossible? No! No task undertaken at God's command is impossible. Our God is a God of miracles. Our God can take a lump of clay and fashion it into a living human being. Nothing is impossible to God.

4. What is the significance of the boy who was willing to part with his "lunch box" and what lessons do you think this boy would have learnt after this miracle?

5. Jesus took what was presented to him and blessed it and it, in turn became a blessing to the people. How do we apply this to situations where people think they have nothing or too little to contribute to the growth of the gospel?
-
-

Comment

What is your dream for this church? A greater ministry to young people - an outreach to our community - a warm fellowship where everyone feels loved and needed. If it comes from God, it can be accomplished. Jesus blessed the bread and the fishes and many persons were fed and twelve baskets full were left over. God wants to perform a miracle in your life and my life. God wants to take our little and turn it into much. God wants to take our dreams and use them to God's glory. Will we give God a chance?

6. What is the significance of the fact that there was more left over after the feeding than there was food to start with?
-
-

7. It may not be very straightforward to deduce the significance of the sign from this short passage but latter verses shed more light. Read vv. 30-35. What can we learn from this fourth sign?
-
-

8. What impression did the miracle leave on the people and what was their immediate response(vv.14 and15)?
-
-

Conclusion:

That little boy had brought barely enough to feed himself.

What he had was not the type of loaves of bread we buy at our grocery shops like Tesco's, Sainsbury's etc.

These were actually wafers, flat, hard, and brittle, about the size of a small pancake because barley was the bread of poor people. Furthermore, the word for fish refers to a little pickled fish much like a sardine. This was not a great sea bass or a big salmon. But this little boy was willing to share what little he had. Do you notice that what was transferred to Christ was transformed by Christ? Christ can only transform what is first transferred. **What that little boy had was valuable because it was available.**

There is one area in which every one of us ought to remain just like a little child, and that is the area of faith.

You know what is wrong with many of us Christians? When it comes to faith we have gotten too big for our shoes. Now what is the lesson at this point? We need to learn two things: First of all, never doubt what God can do. He is in the miracle business. Secondly, never deny whatever God asks you to give him. He is in the multiplication business.

So far we have had a wonderful story of a hungry crowd, hopeless disciples, and a helpful boy, followed by a hearty feast. But that really isn't enough. There is more to this story than meets the eye. That bread that Jesus blessed at the feeding of the five thousand was a picture of Jesus Christ Himself.

That's why He goes on to tell these disciples in v.35, "I am the bread of life." That is the meaning and the message of this miracle.

It wasn't the lad that fed the crowd, nor the disciples; it was Jesus that fed the crowd. The lad gave the loaves, the disciples passed them out, but it was Jesus that provided the food. The disciples had to keep coming back to Jesus to get more loaves and more fish because He was not only the source; He was also the supply of that food. Likewise the Lord Jesus Christ is the source and supply of true life. That's why He said, "I have come that you might have life and have it more abundantly." (Jn. 10:10) **Jesus did not come just to add years to your life; He came to add life to your years.**