

LET GOD BREAK YOU!

John 6:1-14, "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."

Statement: If we are willing to be used by God then great things will happen for God in our church, but until then nothing much will happen that has lasting effects.

I. This is the only miracle of Jesus which is related in all of the four gospels (Matthew 14:13, Mark 6:30, Luke 9:12, and John 6:1). It begins with a lovely thing. The Twelve had come back from their tour (Luke 9:10). Never was a time when Jesus needed more to be alone with them. He needed to listen to them. He needed to keep them from becoming excitable. It is so easy to begin to think we in our own power have done these great things. Jesus wanted to make sure they continued to glorify God.

Plus Jesus, himself needed rest for his body. He needed strength for His soul. The cross grew nearer. A time alone was much needed for all of them. There are times we all need to draw strength from one another. Of course that means we need to be in fellowship with each other. So Jesus took them to the mountains in the neighborhood of Bethsaida, which was a village on the far side of the Jordan to the north of the Sea of Galilee (verse 1 and 3).

When the people discovered where they were going they followed. It was easy to see and deduce where their boat was going. Everywhere Jesus went they followed in crowds. Sometimes we are too busy to be disturbed. Sometimes we are annoyed when our privacy is invaded. Sometimes we put people off. But, for Jesus, human need took precedence over everything, even His own needs. Have you found it hard to talk to some? You can always talk to Jesus.

At the sight of the crowd Jesus' sympathy was kindled (verse 2). Here was a people waiting, so He met their needs (healing them) Then evening came and the people were hungry and tired. They needed to be fed. Philip was the natural man to whom to turn, for he came from Bethsaida (John 1:44) and he would have local knowledge.

Jesus asked him where food could be acquired (verse 5). The disciples tell Jesus (Matthew 14:15) that it is getting late and they better disband for the day and come back tomorrow. Philip's answer was despairing. For he said that even if food could be gotten it would cost more than two hundred denarii to give this vast crowd even a little food each. A denarius was the standard day's wage for a working man. Therefore, it was Philip's calculation that it would take more than six months wages to begin to feed a crowd like this (verse 7).

Then Andrew appeared on the scene. He had discovered a lad with five barley loaves and two little fishes (verse 9). Quite likely the boy had brought them as a picnic lunch. Andrew, as usual was bringing people to Jesus. Andrew had this habit of bringing people to Jesus. That is the kind of habit we all need to have.

The boy didn't have much to bring. Barley bread was the cheapest of all breads. Barley bread was the bread of the very poor. Even five loaves were of little value (cost) and besides the size of the loaves would have been very small. The fishes would have been no bigger than sardines. Pickled fish from Galilee were known all over the Roman Empire. In those days fresh fish was an unheard of luxury, for there was no means of transporting it in an eatable condition. Small sardine-like fish swarmed in the water of the Sea of Galilee. They were caught and pickled and made into a kind of savory. The boy had his little pickled fish to help make the dry barley bread go down.

II. Imagine with me as we go and become part of this group that day. We over hear the disciples telling Jesus that after a long search they have only these five loaves of bread and two small fishes. Jesus says "tell the people to sit down", lets use them and feed the people (verse 10). The look on the disciple's faces is surprise when He said that. Except for Andrew, who had brought Jesus the lad in the first place. It seems he's not sure what Jesus can do but he knows that Jesus can do something. Such a great display of faith moves our hearts. Do we have that kind of faith? Jesus tells the disciples to make the people sit down.

It is very important what Jesus did to the loaves of bread.

1. Jesus first TOOK the bread (verse 11), simple enough. But that is exactly what Jesus has to do to us, take us, before He can use us. He took the five loaves of barley bread and I can see Thomas' face, as he was the doubter. There are always those that doubt that Jesus can forgive them. But, He is the only One that can. He is the One who has died in our place. His blood is the only blood that can cleanse us. "...there is no salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).` Have you surrendered your life to Jesus?

2. Secondly, Jesus BLESSED it (verse 11), but that is more than just giving thanks or grace before a meal like we do today. Jesus put something into that bread, something to make it grow, so that there would be enough to feed the people. Jesus also must put something into us after He takes us. That something is the Holy Spirit.

Then He gave the bread to His disciples to pass out. Again I can see Thomas' doubting face as he breaks it and begins to give a small half to each disciple and tells them to go and feed this or that group. He gives Philip his piece and says: "Go feed those people over there." Philip says, "Am I to feed all those people with this small piece of bread?" Jesus being busy passing out the rest of the bread to the other disciples says simply, "Yes." Philip must have replied, "You've got to be kidding Lord, there is no way it can be done!" The Lord said, "Just try it Philip, see what happens." Philip "Alright, but it won't work, it can't possibly." Isn't that our attitudes? It's hard to be usable when we are full of doubt. Why is it so hard to remember that "with God all things (nothing is impossible) are possible" (Matthew 19:26)?

As Philip starts feeding the people, he breaks very small pieces off and gives them to the people, before long he is apologizing to people because the pieces are so very very small. But when he gets to the 100th person he notices something very strange, the piece of bread that he has is not getting smaller but it keeps getting bigger, it is growing. Now he hurries and gives the people bigger pieces and the bread is still growing. As he finishes he notices that there is still plenty of bread left so he rushes back to the first people he served and gives them more because he feels that he cheated them. After he is finished, he still had bread left, more than when he started. Isn't that what Jesus meant when He spoke of the "abundant life" (John 10:10)? Are you allowing God to fill you with His Holy Spirit?

3. The third thing Jesus does, is BREAK the bread. Now, we aren't told this in the scriptures, but He had to do this before He could give it to the disciples. In order for each disciple to have some bread to serve the people Jesus would have had to break them. After all there was only five loaves and twelve disciples. You figure it out.

Some time after we accept Christ as our Lord, we have to bow down on our knees and seek God's perfect will for our lives. We have to completely give ourselves to God. Give Him all of us, our all. We have to let God break us before He can use us. This was the most important part of this miracle. We have to put aside our will and put God's will first. Have you?

4. Last thing Jesus does is distribute or USE the bread (verse 11). After we have been broken by God and for God, then we can be used for His service. He can never use us until we submit our entire selves to Him, willingly to be used by Him for His glory. Please understand God never does for us what we ourselves can and should do. It is so easy for us just to pray and forget it. When we pray for lost souls we must put feet to those prayers and share our faith. When Jesus prayed "Thy will be done" (Luke 22:42) in the garden, He was not trying to avoid responsibility, but was in full surrender and obedience to God's will. For most of us when we say "Thy will be done" we are meaning for God to take care of it without bothering us. Jesus was involved in His prayer - are we? Are you being used by God?

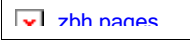
III. Jesus wrought His miracle. Jesus has given each of us the tremendous task of sharing Him with others, but He does not demand from us splendors, and qualities and magnificence that we do not possess. He says to us, "Come to me as you are, however ill-equipped; bring to me what you have, however little (like the lad), and I will use it greatly in my service." Little is always much in the hands of Christ.

At the end of the miracle there is that strange little touch that the fragments were gathered up (verse 12). When the people had eaten their fill, Jesus told His disciples to gather up the fragments that were left over. So from the fragments the disciples filled, each man, his basket (verse 13). And so the hungry crowd were fed and more than fed. But why gather the fragments? Even when a miracle could feed men sumptuously there was no waste. There is something to note here. God gives to men with magnificence, but it is never right to waste God's gifts. God gives generously but to waste such gifts is never right. God's generous giving and our wise using must go hand in hand. Much is wasted in our service to God. Wasted because we haven't allowed God to break us and to make us fit for His use.

Lets be just like the bread - just as willing to be broken and used. If we are that willing then great things will happen for God in our church. But until then nothing much will happen that has lasting effects.

1. We need to be taken by God, this is done when we surrender to Jesus as our Savior and Lord. Have you received Jesus as your Savior?
2. We need to be blessed, this is done when we allow the Holy Spirit in us to operate. Are you allowing the Holy Spirit full freedom in your life?
3. We need to be broken so God's perfect will can be accomplished in us. This part is so important. Have you allowed God to break your will so you are usable for His kingdom?
4. We need to be used in God's service. We must never waste God's abilities.

(Preached on 10/26/97 at Woodville Baptist Church by Glenn A. Hamer, Senior Pastor.)

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