

## ***His Power in My Need***

Matthew 14:13-21 - NCBC, August 16, 2020

Main Point: **Our greatest limitations produce the greatest opportunities for satisfaction in King Jesus.**

- We often do not seek Jesus' help until we've exhausted ourselves (13-15)
  - Jesus' compassion for you can never be exhausted
  - Jesus' grace towards you begins when self-reliance ends
- Jesus gets glory by showing His power through our weakness (16-18)
  - Jesus desires to show Himself strong through you
  - Jesus delights to provide what is impossible for you
- There is no greater satisfaction for us than Jesus' glory (19-21)
  - Jesus will satisfy you through your obedience to His commands
  - Jesus will satisfy you through your ministry to His people

Application: **Believe that Jesus is enough and expectantly ask Him to satisfy you.**

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### **Opening Announcements:**

- **Remember to visit [mynCBC.org](http://mynCBC.org)** and follow our NCBC Facebook page to stay informed on all ministry/event updates during this season of careful regathering.
- **Baptisms!** Congratulations to Katie Jo Whitson, Haden Whitson, (first service) and Ryan Schmidt (second service) on following Jesus in believer's baptism today!
- **Our Weds evening AWANA and Rooted Student Ministries** have been delayed one month. All Weds evening programming now kicks off Weds October 7<sup>th</sup>.

<<Jesus Strong and Kind>>

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**There is no greater satisfaction possible for the human soul than knowing our glorious Christ.** What a joy to worship Him together today!

Thank you for setting aside time today to feed your soul with the glories of Jesus. If you're joining us online, please notice the links alongside this livestream offer fill-in-the-blank sermon notes, the preaching manuscript, and children's coloring pages to assist your worship. At

any time you may pause this video, print those files, and then rejoin our worship with those notes in front of you.

Now let's continue our worship by opening our Bibles to **Matthew chapter 14**.

I'm so thankful for Pastor Scott's super spectacular summer sermon series the last three weeks in Obadiah. All of God's Word is sufficient for life and godliness, and Obadiah offers a great reminder of how God will someday make everything right in our world gone wrong.

Today is our 54<sup>th</sup> sermon in our **Matthew** series. We're taking our sweet time, but with everything going on around us this year, I'm so thankful our pulpit is continually reminding us to *Behold King Jesus!*

Since we are just a little over half-way through our study of Matthew's gospel, I want to remind you that you are all welcome to help yourself to one of Crossway Publishing's *Matthew Scripture Journals*.

If you take lots of notes and mark up your Bible when you study, then you will love these Scripture Journals. Every other page is left blank, and the text is well spaced to help you keep your sermon and study notes all together in one place. We have plenty of these, so if this is something that interests you please pick up your copy from the back table this morning, or any Sunday from our Church Resource Center.

Today we are looking at **verses 13-21 of Matthew 14**. Except for Jesus' resurrection, this is the only miracle of

Jesus that is recorded in all four gospel accounts. Here Jesus multiplies 5 loaves and 2 fish into enough food to satisfy a large crowd of several thousand people. This miracle proves Jesus is God. He is better than Moses and the wilderness manna in **Exodus 16**.<sup>1</sup> He is better than Elisha who fed 100 people with just twenty loaves in **2 Kings 4**.<sup>2</sup> Jesus is the Messiah who can prepare a large enough feast to satisfy all His people during His earthly reign.<sup>3</sup> Jesus is the Bread of Life which alone can satisfy the deepest hunger of the human soul.<sup>4</sup>

So as we read the account of this Messianic Miracle, pay special attention to how Jesus involves His disciples. Matthew's account puts significant focus on the disciples' involvement, so we are going to examine this miracle from the perspective of the disciples this morning.

So please stand for the public reading of God's Word as I read from **Matthew 14 verse 13**, in the ESV:

*13 Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a desolate place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. 14 When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them and healed their sick. 15 Now when it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a desolate place, and the day is now over; send the crowds away to go into the villages and buy food for themselves." 16 But Jesus said, "They need not go away; you give them something to eat." 17 They said to him, "We have only five loaves here and two fish." 18 And he said, "Bring them here to me." 19 Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass, and taking*

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<sup>1</sup> C.f. Revelation 2:17

<sup>2</sup> 2 Kings 4:42-44

<sup>3</sup> C.f. Psalm 132:15; Isaiah 25:6

<sup>4</sup> John 6:30-35, 47-58; c.f. Matthew 5:6

*the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing. Then he broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. 20 And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up twelve baskets full of the broken pieces left over. 21 And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.*

This is God's Word.

### Let's Pray Together.

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Have you ever reached the end of yourself where you just want to throw up your hands and give up?

Maybe it's your marriage? You just can't see any way that your spouse will ever fulfill your expectations...and so even though you've tried for years to make it work, you're out of energy, and you don't know how much longer you can stay.

Maybe it's your health? You've gone to all the doctors. You've tried countless medications. Yet it seems like you're always sick, and there's no hope of ever enjoying health like others around you.

Maybe it's some sin that started out small enough? But now you are scared. You feel trapped. There seems to be no hope for freedom from this greedy monster which is slowly destroying your life and your relationships.

There's all kinds of reasons why you and I can be tempted to give up in life. Crushing financial debts. Disorienting grief. Systematic injustices.

Even a virus pandemic can be a source of despair and frustration as we are forced to realize how little we actually control of our children's education, or our political landscape, or our business outlook, or even our own church's corporate worship gatherings!

Have you ever looked at all the weaknesses you can't control in your life and resigned that you'll never ever really be satisfied again?

Loved ones, today's Scripture comes to renew our hope. True satisfaction for our souls is indeed still possible in this broken life, with all the real limitations that we are currently experiencing. But real satisfaction doesn't come from the restored relationship, or the clean bill of health, or the coronavirus vaccine.

True eternal satisfaction for the deepest hunger of our soul comes from giving glory to God. In fact, the main point of this sermon is that,



Our greatest limitations produce the greatest opportunities for satisfaction in King Jesus.

God never wastes your suffering. God has a good purpose for your greatest limitations in life.

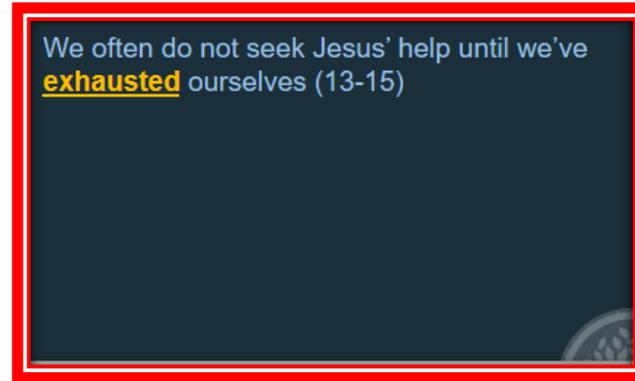
The greatest opportunity for you to discover satisfaction in God is wherever you have reached the end of yourself. For God gives grace to the humble.<sup>5</sup> He blesses the poor in spirit.<sup>6</sup> And He satisfies those who hunger for righteousness.<sup>7</sup>

Just like Paul wrote in **2 Corinthians 12** after he pled with God to remove the greatest problem in his life,<sup>8</sup>

*God said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.*

Church, Jesus' feeding of the 5,000 is a timely encouragement for all of us this morning that our greatest limitations produce the greatest opportunities for satisfaction in King Jesus.

Because here's the reality for all of us:



We often do not seek Jesus' help until we've exhausted ourselves.

Isn't that true? As long as we still have ideas and resources and cards to play... we don't bother humbling ourselves long enough to entirely depend upon God.

Let's see how this plays out in **Matthew 14**:



In **verse 13** we find Jesus retreating with His disciples by boat from Capernaum. Jesus had no interest in engaging with Herod Antipas at this time. He still had

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<sup>5</sup> James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5-7

<sup>6</sup> Matthew 5:3

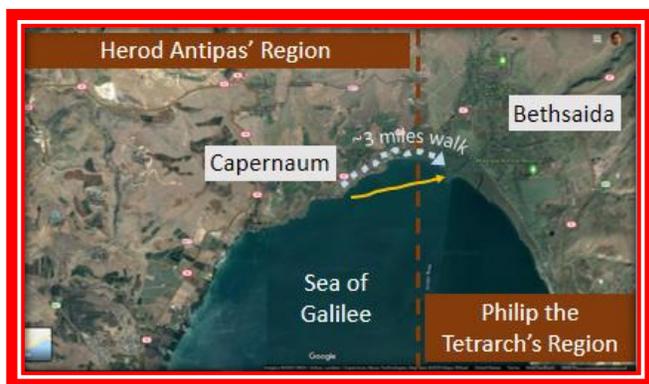
<sup>7</sup> Matthew 5:6

<sup>8</sup> 2 Corinthians 12:9-10

another year of ministry before His crucifixion, so instead of creating a premature political confrontation with the unbelieving puppet king, Jesus quietly left the region under Herod Antipas' control.

**Mark's gospel** adds that Jesus wanted his disciples to rest, since the ministry had them so busy they didn't even have time to eat!<sup>9</sup> They were all tired. They were grieving the senseless death of John the Baptist. They were grieving Israel's growing rejection. The disciples were gassed. Done. Nothing more to give...and so Jesus planned this quiet getaway to give them all some well-deserved rest together.

We know from **Luke's gospel** they headed towards to a grassy hillside on the Northeast corner of the Sea of Galilee near the small village of Bethsaida.<sup>10</sup> This northeast region of the Sea of Galilee was quite unpopulated, under the control of Philip the Tetrarch. But now look at the rest of **verse 13**: *when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns.*



<sup>9</sup> Mark 6:31

<sup>10</sup> Luke 9:10-11

Now it is approximately a 3-mile-long walk along the shore from Capernaum to the hillsides outside of Bethsaida.

And **verse 14** makes it clear that most of the crowd beat Jesus and the disciples to their location and were waiting for Jesus and the disciples to arrive.

Now put yourself in the disciples' sandals for a moment.

The last year of constant ministry has left you exhausted. The reason you left Capernaum by boat earlier this morning was to purposefully distance yourself from all the people.

The last couple of hours in the boat had been fairly quiet; everyone's tired minds were just soaking in the gentle sea breezes as you slowly rowed towards Bethsaida. You were really looking forward to some peace and quiet with Jesus and the rest of the team.

But now the shore is covered with thousands of people waiting for Jesus. Needy people. Sick people. Thousands of people!

**Verse 21** says that there were 5,000 men, plus women and children. So the crowd could have easily numbered 10,000 people or more this week before the Passover<sup>11</sup> – beaming with the smiles of enthusiastic curiosity waiting to receive Jesus as soon as your boat landed.

<sup>11</sup> John 6:4

I don't know about you, but this would have angered my tired flesh. How dare these sick and needy people interrupt my well-deserved rest?

Jesus certainly won't expect me to minister to these people when I'm so physically and emotionally depleted, will He?

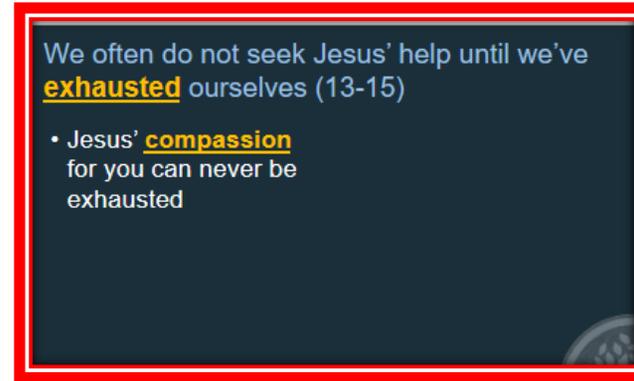
In fact, I think some of that justified self-focus is behind the disciples' words in **verse 15**, for after they put up with a few hours of Jesus healing and teaching, they are quick to ask Jesus to send the crowds back home.

But Jesus had purposefully brought them to the end of themselves for His greater glory. He had something to teach His disciples, and He has something to teach us too whenever we get to the end of our hope.

First, we learn from Jesus' response in **verse 14**,

*When Jesus saw the crowd, He had compassion on them and healed their sick.*

Listen dear friend:



Jesus' compassion for you can never be exhausted.

Jesus always cares for you. No matter how many other people fail or abandon you. No matter how exhausted you are yourself... nothing can ever separate you from God's love!<sup>12</sup> Jesus will never leave you nor forsake you!<sup>13</sup>

Today some of us just need to be reminded of this Gospel truth. Jesus' compassion for you can never be exhausted. Jesus is never too tired, or too busy, or too self-consumed to minister to your real needs.

Ask for God's help today. For nothing is impossible with God!<sup>14</sup>

The word for "sick" in **verse 14** means powerless, or weak. And Jesus healed them. Jesus sacrificially gave life from himself to those who had no way to heal themselves.

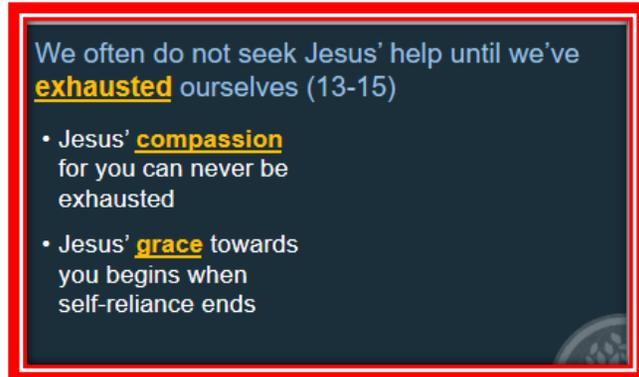
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<sup>12</sup> Romans 8:31-39

<sup>13</sup> Hebrews 13:5; c.f. Matthew 28:20

<sup>14</sup> Luke 1:37

And this illustrates a second point I want us to remember this morning:



Jesus' **grace** towards you begins when your self-reliance ends.

God opposes anyone who proudly keeps trying to manage their own situation and improve themselves. Jesus only healed those who acknowledged their weakness and asked Jesus for help.

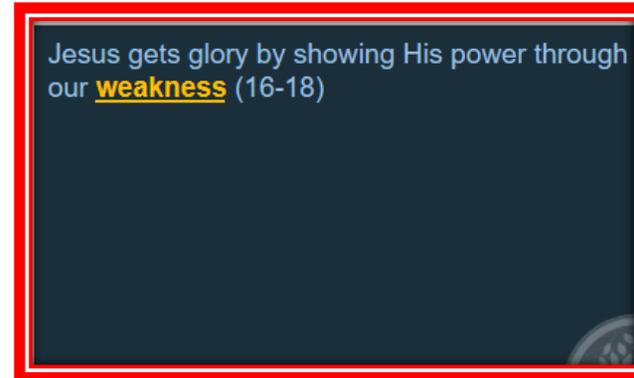
So dear friend. I do not know what the "hungry crowd" is in your life today. But this I do know based on the truthfulness of God's Word: your greatest problem is the greatest opportunity for you to come and be satisfied by believing in Jesus.

Jesus cares for you, and He stands ready to pour out His grace in your life...just repent from trying to fix your problem yourself, and come in humble dependence upon Jesus.

We could say it this way from **verses 16-18**:

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<sup>15</sup> 2 Corinthians 12:9-10



Jesus gets glory by showing His power through our **weakness**. This is why we can boast in our weaknesses!<sup>15</sup> It is specifically your greatest need that gives God the opportunity to display His greatest power in your life.

God often purposefully takes us to the end of ourselves, so that we have no choice but to depend upon His power in our lives, and then receive the greatest satisfaction known to the human soul.

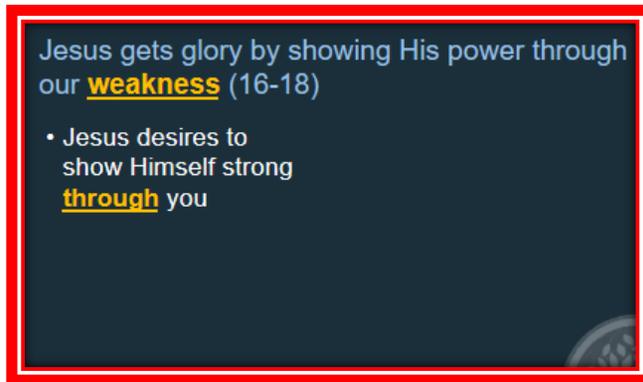
In **verse 16** Jesus responds to the disciples' conclusion that they have to send the crowds away. After all, they simply do not have adequate resources to feed everyone.

But Jesus says something amazing,

*They need not go away; you – the language puts the emphasis on you – you disciples yourselves give them something to eat.*

I find this so interesting. Jesus could have just called down manna from heaven and powerfully provided food for everyone with a simple word of His mouth.

But Jesus gets glory by showing His power through His weak and limited people.



You see, Jesus desires to show Himself strong through you. Jesus desires to use your limitations and handicaps – Jesus desires to use your weakness and inability – to bring greater glory and honor to God.

If God used our strongest characteristics, we'd all take the credit and boast in ourselves. But God instead chooses what is foolish in the world to shame the wise, what is weak in the world to shame the strong, what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> 1 Corinthians 1:26-31

<sup>17</sup> John 6:5-9 provide more background details to this account, but Matthew does not deem these details necessary to what he is trying to emphasize

So Jesus tells the disciples to do something that He knows they are unable to do apart from Him... *you yourselves give the crowd something to eat!*

In **verse 17** the disciples are well aware of their limited resources... all their searching only produced 5 small barley loaves and 2 pickled sardines.<sup>17</sup>

Their resources are woefully limited. This was only enough food for one person's lunch, and there were at least 10 thousand hungry mouths to feed! There was absolutely nothing they could do.

But Jesus says clearly in **verse 18**,

*Bring whatever you have to me.*

Because your nothing, plus Jesus, is truly enough!<sup>18</sup>

Listen, if we would have asked the disciples if Jesus had the power to create bread from nothing – every one of them would have said, "Absolutely!" They had all seen Jesus turn the water to wine.<sup>19</sup> They had seen countless miracles from Jesus. Their doctrinal statement was tight – Jesus was God and He had the power to do whatever He wanted to do.

But when they were personally faced with an overwhelming crisis, not one of the disciples looked to God's power. They were so blinded by their own neediness they couldn't see the abundance of supernatural supply right in front of them!

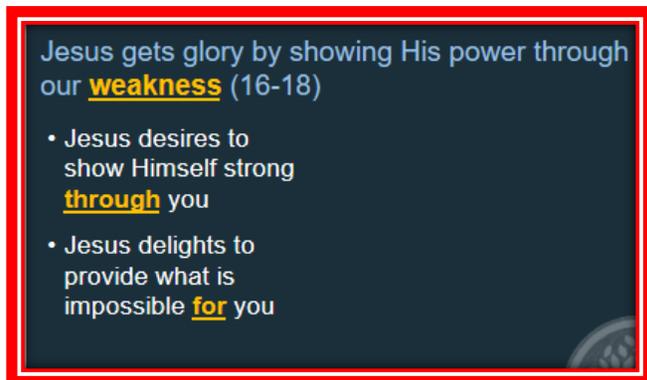
from this profound discipleship miracle.

<sup>18</sup> C.f. John 15:5

<sup>19</sup> John 2:1-12

Can you relate? Too often we only look with earthly eyes at our earthly resources... and we forget that God is our Father and His Spirit lives in us.

Yes we are weak and very limited...but,



Jesus delights to provide what is impossible **for** us. God is glorified every time His power is displayed through our weakness.

So whenever you pray, “Lord, I don’t know what to do, but my eyes are on You!”<sup>20</sup> you are inviting God to do something for His glory through your weakness.

Whenever you surrender every part of you to God – and commit to obeying Him by faith – His grace is unleashed in you. All so that God is glorified by how He sustains you, strengthens you, and provides for you in your time of need.

Notice – God’s glory is the ultimate aim of His provision. God is not our genie who lives to supply our every whim.

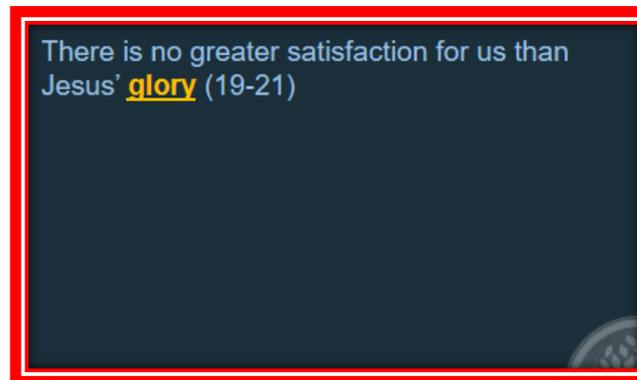
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<sup>20</sup> 2 Chronicles 20:12

<sup>21</sup> I.e. John 9:3, c.f. Isaiah 43:7

No...God is our good Father, and His Divine attributes are put on glorious display every time we trust God to do what we could never do on our own.

After all,



There is no greater satisfaction for us than Jesus' **glory**.

God created each and every one of us with all of our handicaps and human limitations expressly so that our neediness would drive us to find our satisfaction in His perfection alone.<sup>21</sup>

Here in this discipleship miracle, Jesus wants to teach us that we can trust Him to supply all our needs according to His heavenly riches.<sup>22</sup> Jesus is always sufficient for our greatest needs. No amount of earthly resources or human management will ever be able to satisfy the deepest hunger of our souls that were created to know and glorify Jesus as our God.

<sup>22</sup> Philippians 4:19, cf. 4:13

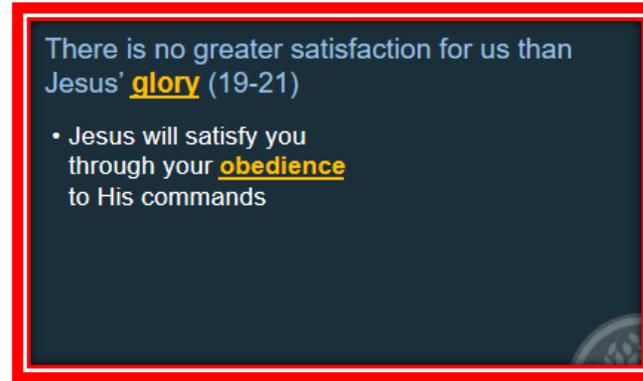
So once the disciples finally surrender their needs and all their meager resources to Jesus, in **verse 19** Jesus starts to act.

First, He commands the disciples<sup>23</sup> to organize the massive crowd into groups of 50 to 100<sup>24</sup> people all around the green grass.<sup>25</sup>

To “*sit down*” literally refers to reclining at a table in preparation of a meal. Now think about a total of 10,000 people in the crowd. And Jesus sends out the twelve disciples to get them organized for dinner.

This would take some time, right? Listen up everyone – we need you to cluster up in groups of about 50 people each...leave walkways between your groups ... because we’re about to have a meal together, and there’s going to be some servers coming by in a moment... so please – make yourselves comfortable on the grass in small groups. We’ll start eating soon!

Notice how the disciple’s faith required them to obey Jesus’ command before He accomplished the miracle. There’s a lesson here on how to experience satisfaction for your soul.



Jesus will satisfy you through your obedience to His commands. Faith obeys even what it cannot see or fully explain.<sup>26</sup>

And so the disciples spread out among the thousands of people and hurriedly obey the Lord’s command. Now they had joy. Their demand for personal rest was eclipsed by the opportunity to see the glory of their Lord as He provided what was needed at just the right time.

And once the crowd was arranged like a huge colorful quilt across the green hills near the lake, Jesus took the common food of a poor person – 5 loaves and 2 fish – looked up to heaven, saying,

“Blessed are You, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who brings forth bread from the earth.”<sup>27</sup>

And then He broke the loaves and kept giving<sup>28</sup> to the disciples, and the disciples distributed to the crowds.

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<sup>23</sup> Luke 9:14; John 6:10

<sup>24</sup> Mark 6:40; Luke 9:14

<sup>25</sup> Mark 6:39; John 6:10

<sup>26</sup> Hebrews 11:1

<sup>27</sup> This was a common Jewish benediction which recited before meals.

<sup>28</sup> Luke 9:16

And while Scripture doesn't tell us exactly how it happened, **verse 20** simply states,

*They all ate and were satisfied.*

All the men, women, and children in a crowd of 10,000 or more people ate and were literally stuffed!

What was humanly impossible, had just been accomplished – all in a way that glorified God and profoundly satisfied His people.

And isn't the last phrase of **verse 20** interesting?

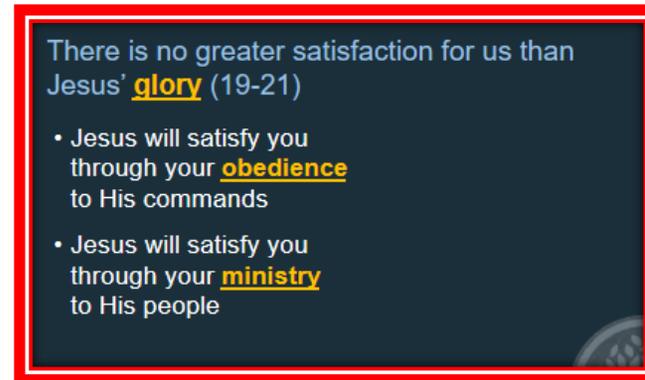
*And they took up 12 baskets full of the broken pieces that were left over.*

So each of the disciples who served the crowds all returned back to Jesus with their own sufficient supply for their own meal and enough to share with Jesus as well!

Here's the point:

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<sup>29</sup> As they were serving this crowd of mostly Jewish people (since they would have likely all come from the Jewish communities along the Northern shore of Galilee), the 12 baskets left over suggest a symbol of Jesus' sufficiency for all 12 tribes of Israel. Later in **Matthew 15:32-39**,  
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Jesus will satisfy you through your ministry to His people

Your spiritual soul can't be satisfied by earthly wealth, or health, or comfort. What satisfied the disciples was their eventual submission and trust in God's power alone. Even the disciples' hunger was only met after they had relied on God's power through them to serve others first.  
<sup>29</sup>

Church - You will never experience more joyful satisfaction in life than when you are absolutely confident that God just worked through you, in spite of you, to do something that only He could do!!

When you obey the Lord in those difficult relationships, God's Spirit has a supernatural way of satisfying your soul that others may never understand. When you keep serving others in the strength that God supplies<sup>30</sup> - even when you wonder how you can keep serving any more – you will discover the greatest satisfaction and fulfillment known to mankind.

Jesus will again miraculously feed a crowd of 4,000 Gentiles, after which the disciples will gather up 7 baskets of left-overs – signifying that Jesus is enough for all the nations of the world.

<sup>30</sup> 1 Peter 4:10-11

For there's no greater satisfaction for us than living for the fame and honor of Jesus.

So be amazed at the wonder of Jesus the Messiah this morning. Lift up your eyes to the heavens – from where your help comes!<sup>31</sup>

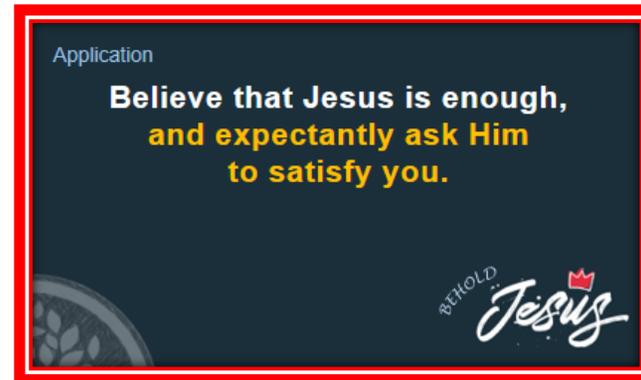
This miracle made a lasting impression on all the disciples, and it should make a lasting impression on all of us as well.



For our greatest limitations produce the greatest opportunities to be satisfied in King Jesus.

In other words, every weak person here has an opportunity to help make Jesus' Name famous on the earth. For as we bring our needs to Jesus, we can boast in God's all-sufficient supply as our souls become deeply satisfied in knowing Him.

So then, church, today I urge you to respond in two ways,



First, Believe that Jesus is enough and then second, expectantly ask Him to satisfy you. Today you must first believe that Jesus is God.

Believe that Jesus is strong and kind. When you are overwhelmed in a crisis, you must renew your mind with the truths about who God is. Study His attributes. Refocus your attention on the good and powerful nature of your Heavenly Father.

Remember Jesus died on the cross and rose again so God could be glorified through the forgiveness of your sins. Don't forget what Jesus has already done to set you free from sin's slavery. Jesus truly is enough for your needs!

Then, bring everything you have to Jesus. Bring all your cares, all your troubles, all your resources. And give God control of everything.

Pray and ask God to take over in your life. Pray with thanksgiving – to help you focus more on who God is and what He is doing than the urgent demands of your

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<sup>31</sup> C.f. Psalm 121  
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problem in the moment. Ask God to satisfy your soul by glorifying Himself in your situation.

Then commit to obey whatever God's Word says while you wait for your deliverance. Repent of your self-reliance and self-dependence.

And while you wait for God's grace to display His power, keep your eyes and heart open to how you can serve others with God's grace. There's nothing like sharing God's grace with others that helps bolster your own hope in God's deliverance when you are overwhelmed by the needs of your own "hungry crowd."

Church – there's no god like our God! When He displays His supernatural power in the midst of our lives, He gets all the glory and our hearts are supremely satisfied. So let's believe that Jesus is the answer, and expectantly ask Him to satisfy our greatest needs.



Let's pray.

<<What a Friend we have in Jesus>>

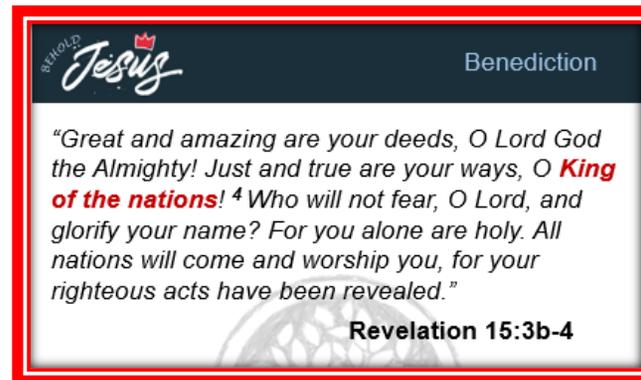
[Remember to take advantage of the online Downloads and links!](#)

<<Closing comments>>



As a reminder, this Tuesday the Dobbins family leaves to join King's Cross Church in Greensboro, North Carolina. So please be praying for their family as they travel, and consider joining their financial support team over the next 2 years to help Cameron complete this pastoral training for the glory of our God.

Let's pray our benediction together as we dismiss.



*Great and amazing are your deeds, O Lord God the Almighty! Just and true are your ways, O King of the nations! Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship you, for your righteous acts have been revealed.*  
**Revelation 15:3b-4**

## Recommended Resources on His Power in My Need:

- Genesis 17:1
- Exodus 16
- Judges 7:2
- 2 Kings 4:38-44
- 2 Chronicles 20:12
- Psalm 78:19; 132:15
- Isaiah 25:6; 55:1-7
- Ezekiel 34:23
- Mark 6:31-44
- Luke 9:11-17
- John 6:1-14, 26-58; 15:5
- 1 Corinthians 1:26-30
- 2 Corinthians 3:5-6; 4:16-18; 12:9-10
- Philippians 4:10-13, 19
  
- <https://www.desiringgod.org/labs/how-does-self-sufficiency-exalt-christ>
  
- *Not God Enough*, JD Greear
- *Knowing God*, JI Packer
- *A Praying Life*, Paul Miller

## Growing Deeper: Life Group Questions

1. Read Matthew 14:13-21. Do you ever believe God is intimidated by the magnitude of the problems and needs in your life? Discuss together what causes us to be so slow to ask for God's help in our times of need? What causes us to believe it's never the right time or place for God to work?
2. Review Matthew 14:16-19. Matthew's account of this miracle emphasizes how Jesus involved the disciples in this "discipleship miracle." Why do you believe Jesus desires to show His power to the world through weak and imperfect Christians like you and me?
3. Read Philippians 4:11-13, 19 and 1 Peter 4:10-11. How do you tend to respond to ministry opportunities when you are already at the end of yourself? When is it right to rest and go away for a while, and when is it right to continue to serve in the strength God supplies? How can you know when you are starting to minister in your own strength?
4. Read Luke 9:23-25 and 2 Corinthians 4:10-12, 15. How should God's glory motivate our daily self-denial and willingness to die to self? What provides the greatest and most lasting satisfaction for your soul? Can you honestly say your soul is deeply satisfied in this season of your life? If not, why not?
5. How has the COVID-19 pandemic produced opportunities for you to be more deeply satisfied in God? Share testimonies with each other about how you have seen God show up in unexpected and supernatural ways in your life for His greater glory.