

**Theme:** **SLIDE** Jesus Feeds Many People

**Object:** Dishes for storing leftovers

**Scripture:** “And when they had eaten their fill, he (Jesus) told his disciples, ‘Gather up the leftover fragments, that nothing may be lost.’” (John 6:12 ESV)

**SLIDE** Do you see the bowls on the slide? At my house these are used to store leftovers. Do you ever have leftovers at your house? When we cook more food than we can eat in one meal we save the leftovers for another meal. I love Thanksgiving leftovers. I especially love green chili turkey enchiladas.

When we go to a restaurant and there is food leftover we would take in home in a “doggie bag”. This was meant that we would not eat the leftovers and they were only good enough for our dog. I remember ordering a steak in the restaurant and having some leftover. I may have taken it home in a “doggie bag”, but I can tell you the dog did not get any of it – there is nothing wrong with leftover steak. I don’t know about you, but Joyce and I do not get steak very often and I sure wasn’t going to give it my dog, even though I love my dog.

Our Bible story today tells us about a time when Jesus feed 5,000 men and probably about 12,000 people total. Can you imagine how much food it would take to feed 12,000 people? Jesus turned to Philip and asked him if there was a store to buy food for all those people. Philip said, no there was no store and even if there had been a store they did not have enough money to buy all of them food. Poor Philip did not know what to do. Another disciple of Jesus, named Andrew also thought it

was hopeless. He look at Jesus and said there is only this young boy with 5 loaves of bread and 2 fish? Jesus said, "It will be enough, bring the bread and fish here." Jesus then blessed the bread and fish – we do as Jesus did when we say "grace" at our meals. We are thanking God for providing for our needs. Philip and Andrew saw only enough food to feed a few people, but Jesus knew God the Father would provide for all the people in order that they might know what a great God we have. As they passed the baskets around for the people to take bread and fish and eat - the baskets never were empty. When all these thousands of people had eaten the disciples gathered the leftovers and there was enough food to feed many more people.

Some people have very little and life is a struggle and other people have a lot. God teaches us when we have more than we need, we are to share it with others that they may be blessed. Do you share your toys? It is the right things to do – isn't it! As a church we share with each other and with people outside our church who have needs to bless them and pray they will know Jesus. We need to trust in Jesus to provide when we have little.

Let's pray. Jesus you a Lord of all, we thank you for giving to us and providing for our needs. Help us understand we are to be giving and generous with others as You are with us. We ask you to bless us, so that we may bless others in You name, Lord Jesus. Amen

**Slide Fourth Miracle**

We are studying the fourth miracle of Christ recorded by the Apostle John this morning. Apart from the miracle of the resurrection of Jesus from the grave - this is the only miracle recorded in all four gospels. The New Testament gives many reasons and evidences of Jesus' divinity. John relates how these miracles performed by Jesus show in unique and powerful ways His divine glory and are evidence that He is the long awaited Messiah. In chapter 1 of the Gospel According to John the prophet John the Baptist testifies that Jesus is the Lamb of God and then after John is arrested by Herod and needing assurance, John sends his disciples to ask Jesus,

**Slide** "Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?" (Luke 7:20 ESV)

In response Jesus does not cite Old Testament scriptures that testify of Him being the Messiah, but says, **Slide** "Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them." (Luke 7:22 ESV)

Jesus is saying, don't just take My word alone that I and God the Father are One, also believe because of the testimony of the miracles I am doing, miracles that only God has the power to do. **Blank**

Each of the gospels gives different details concerning this miracle of feeding the 5000, which in truth was the feeding of 12 to 15 thousand once you consider the women and children that were there as well. By the sheer numbers of people this miracle affected, this is the largest miracle Jesus performed. John's gospel being the last to be written adds details that the others did not include. John is the only one to mention that the loaves of bread were made of barley flour which was the least

of the gains and the type eaten by the poor. John's gospel demonstrates that one of the motivations for Jesus performing miracles was to meet people's present needs. By creating the wine out of water at the wedding in Cana Jesus met the needs of the guests and saved the bride and groom from a socially embarrassing situation. The feeding of the 5000 was an act of compassion on behalf of people, who were there for many reasons, most of which were not the right reasons, but these people would have gone hungry if Jesus had not interceded. John's narrative of this miracle is unfolded in four scenes: the crowd, the disciples, the satisfying meal and the false coronation.

Let me pray for our time this morning studying the Word of God and seeking spiritual wisdom to guide our lives, thoughts, words and deeds.

### **Slide** The Crowd

Please open your bibles to the Gospel According to John where we will spend our time this morning in chapter 6, I will begin reading in verse one, "After this Jesus went away to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias. <sup>2</sup> And a large crowd was following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing on the sick. <sup>3</sup> Jesus went up on the mountain, and there he sat down with his disciples. <sup>4</sup> Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand." In verse 1 "After this" refers us back to chapter 5 verse 1; if it is referring to the Feast of Tabernacles, we know there was about 6 months between chapters 5 and 6 or if chapter 5 is about the feast of the Passover then the time between the two chapters would have been about one year. The spread of Jesus' fame over this 6 to 12 month period helps explain the enormous size of the crowd. At the end of verse one, depending on your translation we see two names; Sea of Galilee and Sea of Tiberias. During the time of Christ's earthly ministry the sea or lake was known as the Sea of Galilee. However,

by the time John wrote his gospel account the sea had come to be also known as the Sea of Tiberias. **Slide** Tiberias was a city located on the sea's western shore about half way between the northern and southern ends and was founded about 20 AD. During Jesus' ministry Tiberias was a small town founded by Herod and named it after the Roman emperor, the name eventually was extended beyond the city to be used as the name of the sea or lake as well. The Sea of Galilee is the largest freshwater lake in Israel, and it is approximately 13 miles long, and 8 miles wide. The lake has a maximum depth of approximately 141 feet. At 686 feet below sea level, it is the lowest freshwater lake on Earth and the second-lowest lake overall after the Dead Sea, a saltwater lake 1401 feet below sea level. The lake is fed partly by underground springs although its main source is the Jordan River. **Blank**

The Synoptic Gospels suggest two reasons that Jesus and the disciples withdrew to the eastern side of the sea. First, in Mark chapter six we know the twelve disciples had just returned from their preaching mission. **Slide** "And he (Jesus) called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits." (Verse 7) They went out and preached repentance and then verse 30 reads, **Slide** "The apostles returned to Jesus and told him all that they had done and taught," and following this begins the story of the feeding of the 5000. **Slide** "When Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples, (and while the disciples had been sent out to preach the gospel) he went on from there to teach and preach in their cities." (Matthew 11:1<sub>ESV</sub>) Both Jesus and the disciples had been on the road and were probably tired and needed a rest and time to share with each other what had happened during their preaching journeys. About this time Jesus also received news of John the Baptist being executed by Herod as is written in Matthew chapter 14, verses 1 to 12 and this would have been another reason to have time away from the crowds. Upon hearing of John's death verse 13 says, **Slide** "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.” (Matthew 14:13 ESV) This is confirmed by what John wrote in verse 2 of our study. However, John’s writing sheds light on the attitude of this crowd **Slide** saying, “A large crowd was following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing on the sick.” These people were not motivated by faith, or repentance or love for Jesus as the Messiah. They followed Jesus because of the “signs” or miracles. **Blank** They were in some ways like the people who follow the false evangelists and prophets of our day, like Benny Hinn, hoping to see or experience a miracle, even though Benny’s “miracles” have been exposed time and time again as fake. The people following Jesus did not look for God in these miracles, but they were thrill seekers. These people wanted to see Jesus’ miracles, but refused to accept His teachings or believe in Him as the Son of God. They wanted the physical miracles, but not the spiritual resurrection, which is a miracle.

In verse 3 we discover that after arriving on the eastern shore Jesus and His disciples went up on the mountain to have time together. This mountain was most likely located in what today is known as the Golan Heights. Let me quickly relate to you an interesting modern fact about the Golan Heights it was the site of a major battle between Israel and Syria during the Six-Day War in 1967. During the Six-Day War Israel fought with Egypt, Syria, Jordan and Iraq. **Slide** The war began on June 5<sup>th</sup> and ended on the 10<sup>th</sup> of 1967 with Israel claiming the Gaza Strip, West Bank, Golan Heights and Sinai Peninsula to the Suez Canal. **Slide** This war gave Israel roughly the borders God had set for them in Numbers chapter 34. Because of the deep centuries old “bad blood” no one will ever be able to trade land for peace. Just as Christians can never soften or change the scriptures in order to gain acceptance and peace. Now that we know the setting and location we can continue in verse 5.

## **Slide** The Disciples

Back to our study of John chapter 6, I will begin reading in verse 5, “Lifting up his eyes, then, and seeing that a large crowd was coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, ‘Where are we to buy bread, so that these people may eat?’”<sup>6</sup> He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he would do.<sup>7</sup> Philip answered him, ‘Two hundred denarii worth of bread would not be enough for each of them to get a little.’<sup>8</sup> One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, said to him,<sup>9</sup> ‘There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are they for so many?’”

As this large crowd approaches the Apostle Matthew (Matthew 14:14) records that Jesus healed the sick and Luke (Luke 9:11) wrote that Jesus began speaking to the crowd about the kingdom of God. Apostle Mark writes, **Slide** “When Jesus went ashore, He saw a large crowd, and He felt compassion for them because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and He began to teach them many things.” (Mark 6:34 ESV) Even though Jesus knew the crowd’s superficial motives for following Him, He had mercy towards the people and loved them as lost “sheep without a shepherd” and showed compassion by meeting their physical need to eat.

It is now late in the day as Mark and Luke state. They were not near any villages and to send the people in mass to find a village to buy food enough for 12 to 15,000 people presents a problem. What was to be done? Jesus turns to Philip says, **Slide** “Where are we to buy bread, so that these people may eat?” Why Jesus singled out Philip is not known. **Slide Slide** The question was meant to show the impossibility of a human solution. **Blank** Jesus already knew what He would do, but He used this as a teachable moment for His disciples. Jesus was posing a dilemma as a way to test His disciples and then use this dilemma to strengthen their faith. Philip’s faith and by extension the faith of the other disciples, was found lacking because he did not

seek God in this impossible situation, **Blank** but hopelessly exclaimed, “Two hundred denarii worth of bread would not be enough for each of them to get a little.” A denarius equaled one day’s pay for a “blue collar” laborer as defined by Matthew in chapter 20. So 200 denarii was approximately eight months wages, yet it would not buy enough bread for everyone to have just a little. Philip had seen Jesus perform miracles. Like water made into wine at Cana, but he had not learned to seek Jesus or God the Father in impossible situations and to provide spiritual solutions. How about you? When life is difficult and at times impossible to you seek God for His will and His solutions.

Now Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, pipes in saying, **Slide** “There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are they for so many?” At least Andrew put up a front of trying to find a solution, even though he expresses 5 loaves and 2 fish is still completely hopeless. Mark writes in his account in chapter 6 that Jesus commanded the disciples to go find out how much food the crowd had. **Slide** It appears that Andrew was reporting the results of the search. Andrew’s faith collapses as did Philip’s as he looked at the 5 loaves and 2 fish and seeing the thousands who were hungry and concludes, “but what are they (5 loaves and 2 fish) for so many?” None of the disciples had faith to look to Jesus and say, “Tell us, Master, what to do.” We are Jesus’ disciples also, do we look to Him?

### **Slide** Satisfying Meal

Jesus now takes charge saying in verse 10, “Have the people sit down.” Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, about five thousand in number.

<sup>11</sup> Jesus then took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated. So also the fish, as much as they wanted. <sup>12</sup> And when they had eaten their fill, he told his disciples, “Gather up the leftover fragments, that



nothing may be lost.”<sup>13</sup> So they gathered them up and filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves left by those who had eaten. Jesus instructs the disciples to “have the people sit down.” Even though the disciple’s faith may have faltered - their obedience to Jesus’ command did not. The Apostle John mentions there is much grass in the place and this is the kind of detail that only an eyewitness would remember and it also indicates the feeding of the 5000 took place in the spring before the grass was withered from the hot early summer sun. The Apostle Mark adds that they had people sit in groups of 50 and 100.

Simply verse 11 says, **Slide** “Jesus then took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated.” When the Lord blessed the food it did not turn into a vast amounts immediately, but as it was passed out to the groups of 50 to 100 that were seated it did not run out. Remember the story of the prophet Elijah and the widow in 1 Kings, the Lord provided. The widow thought she and her son were about to die for they had only enough flour and oil for one more meal. The Lord sent Elijah to live with the widow and her son and provided for them for the duration of the drought, as we read, **Slide** “The bowl of flour was not exhausted nor did the jar of oil become empty, according to the word of the LORD which He spoke through Elijah.” (1 Kings 17:16<sub>ESV</sub>) In the same way as the baskets of bread and fish were passed around they never became empty. **Blank** Verse 11 ends with the people had eaten “as much as they wanted.” God’s abundant provision was no excuse for wasting resources. When all had eaten Jesus commanded His disciples to, “Gather up the leftover fragments, that nothing may be lost.’ So they gathered them up and filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves left by those who had eaten.” God demonstrates His abundant grace in that the leftovers exceeded the original 5 barley loaves. Jesus provided for the thousands and the leftovers would provide for Him and the

disciples as they went on their way for some days. Today, we simply go to the store and buy food. At the time of Jesus having enough food was not easy, most people had to work hard to provide. To have your stomach full and satisfied was often not the norm, except for the rich.

The people followed Jesus for the miracles He provided and because they wanted Him to take care of them. This reminds me of many people today that want the government to provide everything for them. The only way the government can provide everything is to rob from those who work to provide for those who do not. The government cannot produce miracles like Jesus even though the leader of government might think he is a messiah. The US continues to move towards a more and more socialistic form of government with the government gaining control of every aspect of people's lives. As the Prime Minister of England, Margaret Thatcher said, **Slide** "The problem with socialism is that you eventually run out of other peoples' money." History has demonstrated the following is true of socialistic governments: **Slide** Under socialism, everyone works, but there is nothing in the stores. **Slide** There is nothing in the stores, but everyone has everything. **Slide** Everyone has everything, but everyone is dissatisfied. **Slide** Everyone is dissatisfied, but everyone is for the system. **Slide** Everyone is for the system, but no one works. **Slide** No one works, but there is no unemployment.

We conclude our study with moving from the people experiencing Jesus providing miracles of healings and food to the people wanting to make Jesus their king because He could perform miracles and provide them; their needs and wants without them having to work.

## **Slide** False Coronation

Read along with me verses 14 and 15, “When the people saw the sign that he had done, they said, ‘This is indeed the Prophet who is to come into the world!’ Perceiving then that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by himself.” These verses are a reference to the messianic prophecy given by Moses in Deuteronomy chapter 18 and Luke writes of this prophecy in Acts chapter 3. The crowd was reminded of this prophecy by Jesus’ miracles of providing food as God provided Moses and the thousands of Jews wandering in the wilderness with manna. The people realized that this miracle in which thousands are fed was supernatural and proved Jesus was the Messiah, but not the messiah they wanted, which was different from the Messiah God had sent.

Jesus perceived that the crowd was “about to come and take him by force to make him king.” With Jesus as their provider, they would never want for food again, He could heal them of every illness. They could march on Jerusalem and overthrow the Romans and establish the ultimate welfare state where the Messiah would serve the people and provide for their every need. Jesus reacted, according to John, by withdrawing again to the mountain by himself. According to Matthew He sent the disciples away by boat and Mark adds that He dispersed the crowd and then withdrew.

Here is the problem at that time and to this every day. Jesus comes to no man on man’s terms. People cannot manipulate Jesus for their own selfish ends. This approach turns the gospel upside down. People want to come to Jesus on their terms and have Him fix their broken relationships, make them successful, make them feel good and provide money. People must understand that they need to

come to Jesus on His terms. He is the Creator and we are the creation. When we come to Jesus and accept His gracious love and mercy as His creation then He gives us **Slide** “Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.” (John 14:27 ESV) We develop a joy, but at the same time Jesus calls us to mourn over our sin, repent and acknowledge Him as our Lord and Savior to whom we owe our complete obedience. Today, as at this feeding of the 5000 Jesus continues to withdraw from those who seek Him for their own self-serving desires. Jesus expects believers to work hard to provide for their families. As the Apostle Paul wrote to his disciple, Timothy, **Slide** “If anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.” (1 Timothy 5:8 ESV) You see my beloved, when we come to Jesus with empty hands and give our lives to Him in worship, then He changes us and we come to enjoy being in His presences, serving others in His name, working hard to provide not only for our own families, but for the work of the Lord’s ministry and to help those who are in true need. The gospel of Christ is demanding and only those who have truly given their lives to Jesus are able by the power of the Holy Spirit that dwells in them to live this demanding life with love, grace and mercy because God provides for them in rich abundance. For those who consistently fall short of living the precepts of the gospel of Christ – it might be that they lack the Holy Spirit and that then means they lack Christ Himself.

It is our desire at Canyon Bible to be a community that is living out what our Lord has stated in Mark chapter 12, **Slide** “ ‘AND YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.’ The second is this, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.” (Mark 12:30-31 ESV) If we live in a way to do this

– then everything else will come together as the Lord has said it would in our lives.  
The harvest begins in your life when you die to yourself and live for Christ and then  
Christ will use you in His harvest of souls.