





What Do You Have?

Matthew 14:13-21
Mark 6:30-44
Luke 9:10-17
John 6:1-14

Life of Jesus: Miracles

You may choose to teach from any of the gospels, but you may prefer to teach from the gospel of John and combine the information from the other gospels as you tell the story to get the complete story.

**It is to the discretion of the teacher to discuss details of the death of John the Baptist or ask the students if they know the story and guide them through it.*

Jesus has just received the news of the death of John the Baptist. Jesus and John the Baptist were cousins, and John had been an important part of Jesus' ministry. He was the one who spoke about Christ's coming and prepared the way for Jesus.

This news obviously had an impact on Jesus, and he took a boat across the sea of Galilee to a private place in the desert near Bethsaida to be alone.

Discuss:

Have you ever just wanted to be by yourself?

Jesus tried to get to a quiet place to be alone, but thousands of people followed him.

You probably did not have thousands of people following you, but maybe your family or friends would not give you privacy.

Jesus was not able to be alone. People recognized him (Mark 6:33) and news probably spread quickly that he was near. People followed him everywhere he went hoping to be healed; they walked from all the cities around to see him. But instead of getting irritated or frustrated, Jesus was moved with compassion for the people; he felt sorry for them.

He saw them as "sheep without a shepherd," (Mark 6:34). He taught them about the kingdom of God and healed them.

We read in Mark 6:31 that they had been so busy that Jesus and his disciples did not have time to eat. So they were also hungry.

The gospel of John tells us that Jesus looked up and saw all the people coming, and he asked Philip,

"Where can we buy bread so that all of these people can eat?"

He was testing Philip by asking him this; Jesus knew what he was going to do, but he wanted to see what Philip would say.

Philip's answer is very specific. He says, "Two hundred pennyworth (some versions say 200 Denarii) is not enough for each of them to have a little."

Two hundred denarii was actually quite a bit of money; it was equal to about eight months of wages. But it would not have been enough to feed that many people. Because he answered with a particular amount, it seems very possible that this is the amount of money they had. Philip is thinking in terms of lack; this is not enough. If this is what they had available, he is looking at it and saying it is not enough to give them even "just a little."



What Do You Have?

Matthew, Mark and Luke all say that the disciples suggested that Jesus send the people home; to let them get food on the way home in the different villages. But Jesus responded to them by telling them,

“They don’t need to leave; you give them something to eat.”

The disciples also respond the same as Philip, and mention the same amount of money, and ask about buying bread. They are not considering that there are any other options. They looked at what they needed, and then at what they had, and they saw a lack. They all ask Jesus, “Do you want us to go buy bread?”

Jesus doesn’t even respond to this question. He says, “How many loaves do you have? Go and see.”

Discuss:

They probably walked around asking if anyone brought any food.

Does anyone have anything to eat? Everybody’s looking around, trying to see if anyone has anything.

Finally, they find someone: a little boy has brought five barley loaves and two small fish.

Discuss:

Barley was looked down upon; it was a poor man’s food.

This little boy was probably poor but he was willing to share what he had.

Do you think the little boy was the only person who brought food to this event?

Were there other people there who had food but did not want to share?

The disciples said to Jesus, “We *only* have five loaves and two fish,” Matthew 14:17.

“We *only* have five loaves of bread and two fish,” Luke 9:13.

“There is a boy here, who has five barley loaves, and two small fish: but *what are they among so many*,” John 6:9?

What do all of these comments have in common? What are they saying?

It isn’t enough.

We can’t do this; there’s not enough. They were not giving value to what they had. We **ONLY** have.

Did Jesus look at it and say, oh, yes, you are right...too bad; this just is not enough?

Absolutely not! The kingdom of heaven is opposite of the “normal” way of thinking. Jesus placed value on what they had. He did not consider it insignificant or small. What they considered small and useless, he considered priceless. They had **SOMETHING**. He could do a miracle with this.

Jesus was not saying, tell me what you do not have.

He was saying, tell me what you **DO** have. He cannot work with what you lack, but he *can* work with what you *have*. Size and amount do not determine value.



What Do You Have?

The value of something is determined by the person who has it, and how it is viewed.

Jesus said, "Bring them to me."

When we give whatever we have to Him, even if it does not seem like much, it is our offering to Him. In our own power we are not capable of doing anything, but He can do the impossible. We have to release it, to give it to him, and that gives him permission to do something with it. The disciples could have passed this food out on their own and it would not have gone very far. But when they gave it to Jesus, he was able to transform it into more than they ever imagined (Jeremiah 33:3 Ephesians 3:20).

Discuss:

What if you were the boy? The disciples are taking your lunch to Jesus....this is exciting.

The man that everyone came to see is taking YOUR lunch!

Maybe this boy got to meet Jesus personally!

After Jesus told them to bring him the bread and fish, he *commanded* (Matthew 14:19; Mark 6:39) all the people to sit down on the green grass (Mark 6:39). The other gospels say that he told the disciples to *make* them sit down (John 6:10) in groups of fifty," (Luke 9:14).

If you look up the Greek word for "sit" in this verse it actually means, "to lean upon, lay down, or recline." In this culture the accepted way to eat was to lean back and eat almost lying down.

Does this sound familiar? Can you think of another place in the Bible where it says that the Lord makes people lay down in the green grass?

Look at Psalm 23:

"The Lord is my shepherd,"

Jesus was on his way to a private place, but he saw all the people coming to him and he gave them the rest that he needed. He taught them and healed them because they were like sheep without a shepherd (Mark 6:34). Jesus says "I am the good shepherd," (John 10:11; 10:14).

"I shall not want."

Some versions say, "I have all that I need, or "I will not lack."

Did the people need food? Did the Lord hesitate to provide it for them? Did they even ask? We have no evidence that they asked. John said it was Jesus' suggestion when he saw them coming.

"He makes me lie down in green pastures."

What did Jesus do? He *commanded* them; he told the disciples to *make* them sit (or lay) down.

Jesus came to fulfill prophecy. He is fulfilling the prophecy of the Messiah from Psalm 23 in this story.

But there's more.



What Do You Have?

He told them to sit down in groups of fifty, and this is a parallel between Jesus and Moses. When Moses was presiding as a judge and leader over the people *in the desert*, he was overwhelmed by the needs of the people. Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, told him to distribute the work by dividing the people into groups and putting leaders over them (Exodus 18:13-23).

Jesus is not judging the people, but in contrast he is feeding them and meeting their needs. He is also making the disciples participate and spread out the task that needs to be done. There are a LOT of people that need to be fed - at least 5,000. Jesus brings the disciples into the process and instructs them to pass out food.

On further comparison, this parallels with the manna that God provided for the Israelites in the desert. They were hungry, and God rained down manna from heaven; Jesus himself is that manna, that "food" for the people (John 6:48-58).

Everyone is sitting down, anticipating, eagerly waiting. Do you think that everyone there knows that there are five loaves and two fish? What do you think the crowd knew?

Jesus took the five loaves, and the two fish and he *looked up* to heaven.

If you do a word study on "looked up" or "lifted eyes and looked," often when this word combination is seen in Scripture in the Old Testament, there is a connection with someone or something in heaven and either a provision, a message, or a vision for the people (Joshua 5:13; Daniel 10:5; Zechariah 2:1, 5:1).

Then Jesus *blessed* it.

Discuss:

What is a blessing? What happens when you bless something?

Will it produce? Will it be fruitful? Will it do even more than what it is intended to do?

Then Jesus broke the bread.

This is parallel to the future where Jesus' body is broken for his people.

He breaks the bread and begins handing off pieces of it, and they're all breaking the bread. He then gave the loaves to his disciples, and the disciples gave it to the people. Then he also divided the fish, and they gave fish to everyone.

Do you think the disciples walked around and each of them handed it to hundreds of people? If they did that, would everyone have been aware of what had happened? Maybe, maybe not. Maybe they would just think the disciples were pulling out of their reserves. But what if the disciples walked around and handed it one person in each group of fifty, and that person broke it, and the next and the next? Would people all see the glory of God that way? We do not know exactly how it was done. But we do know that the people saw the miracle and believed that Jesus was a prophet (John 6:14).

We also know that there were many people there that day.

There were 5,000 men, but that does not include women and children.

If many of these men had wives, and children there also, there could have easily been 10,000-15,000 people.



What Do You Have?

Who ate? They ALL ate (Matthew 14:20; Mark 6:42).

Not just the men, but the women and children too. And did they each just get a bite? That's all Philip thought they would be able to provide. If we use what we have in the physical, what we have in our own resources (in this case 200 denarii), then everyone *might* get a little. But when it is out of our control, and we give it to God, He is now the provider.

It is no longer our responsibility. When we let it go and give it to the Lord, it is His responsibility. He is now the source, not you.

And He is not going to just give to some people, or make sure everyone just gets a little. When Jesus put his plan into action, they ALL ate, and were all FILLED (Luke 9:17; John 6:12). No one went away hungry.

He is a God of more than enough, a God of abundance.

When he does it, He does it for His glory, and he is never going to make it small.

If this little boy would have feared that he would not have enough, he might not have shared it. If he would have held on to what he had, he would have only had enough for the moment, then he would run out. Instead, when he gave it to Jesus, it became more than enough for everyone there. The boy ate as much as he wanted, and there was still an abundance left over. When you give what you have to God, He will multiply it for others, as well as multiplying it for you.

After the meal, people must have gone around to clean up. After every church event you must have a clean up crew, and it was no different at Jesus' meetings. They did not have bags, but they had baskets.

They gathered up all the leftover bread crust, and fish bones, and fish meat, and there were TWELVE baskets left over.

Anyone who knew that they started with five loaves and two small fish would have been astounded that not only did it feed many more than 5,000 people, but they took up enough pieces of leftover food to fill twelve baskets. The baskets were FULL (Matthew 14:20) and that they were "over and above" to those who had eaten (John 6:13).

Psalm 23:5 says "...my cup runs over."

The baskets of leftovers show that there was more than enough. God is a God of abundance. He can do more than you can ever imagine. But you must value what you HAVE and give it to Him, rather than focusing or even talking about what you do not have. When you emphasize the lack, you limit God's ability to do something with what you do have, no matter its size.

Jesus in the Story



This is a beautiful story of the Messiah, the promised Christ, in Psalm 23 who is the shepherd who provides for his sheep.

His people will never want or be in lack of anything. We can walk in the same blessings if we are thankful. We must place value on what we **do** have, no matter how small, and offer it to him. He will make it into more than we could ever imagine if we do not limit him by focusing on what we need.

In the desert, when God provided the manna, it was always enough, but it was *just enough*. But when Jesus came, God was able to bless his people in the way he always wanted to, he could be the God of abundance, the Good Shepherd who provides over and above, and beyond with generosity.

Jesus represents a new type of Moses.

Not one that governs by a set of laws, but one that rules with love and compassion. He is full of grace and truth. He is a God of justice, but his primary goal is to show the love of a good God, and a good Shepherd who wants to provide for his people. But in order to receive his provision, we have to put our trust in him. Value what you have, entrust it to him, and completely depend on him to meet our needs.

Lesson Questions & Memory Verses

13. Set Free!

Read Matthew 14:34-36; Mark 6:53-56

Jesus returned to this area later and the people had a different response:

1. Where did the people meet Jesus?
2. What did they bring to Jesus?
3. Who was healed?

Isaiah 61:1

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord has anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor; he has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound...

14. Only Believe

Read Mark 5:27-34; Luke 8:44-48

1. Does this lady ask Jesus to heal her?
2. What happened to her when she touched Jesus?
3. What happened to Jesus when the lady touched him?
4. What did Jesus say made her well?

Malachi 4:2

But to you who fear my name the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings; and you shall go out and grow fat like stall fed calves.

15. What Do You Have?

1. Who doubted there would be enough?
2. What did the disciples want to tell the people?
3. What did Jesus do with the food after blessing it and giving thanks?
4. How much was left over?

Psalm 23:1-3

The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul; he leads me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

16. If It Is You

1. What did Peter say to Jesus?
2. What happened as soon as they stepped into the ship?
3. After seeing this, why were the disciples now convinced that Jesus was the Son of God?

Job 9:8, 10

He alone spreads out the heavens, and treads on the waves of the sea. He does great things past finding out, yes, wonders without number.



