

That You May Have Life In His Name - John 6:1-15

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Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand

6 After this Jesus went away to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias. ² And a large crowd was following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing on the sick. ³ Jesus went up on the mountain, and there he sat down with his disciples. ⁴ Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand. 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?”

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.”

(Mt 14:13–16)

¹¹ When the crowds learned it, they followed him, and he welcomed them and spoke to them of the kingdom of God and cured those who had need of healing.

(Lk 9:11)

³² And they went away in the boat to a desolate place by themselves. ³³ Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they ran there on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. ³⁴ When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. And he began to teach them many things

(Mk 6:32–34)

⁶ He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he would do. ⁷ Philip answered him, “Two hundred denarii worth of bread would not be enough for each of them to get a little.” ⁸ One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, said to him, ⁹ “There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are they for so many?” ¹⁰ Jesus said, “Have the people sit down.” Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, about five thousand in number. ¹¹ 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.

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.

(Mt 14:20–21)

¹⁴ For there were about five thousand men. And he said to his disciples, “Have them sit down in groups of about fifty each.” ¹⁵ And they did so, and had them all sit down. ¹⁶ And taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing over them. Then he broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples to set before the crowd. ¹⁷ And they all ate and were satisfied. And what was left over was picked up, twelve baskets of broken pieces. (Lk 9:14–17)

¹² And when they had eaten their fill, he told his disciples, “Gather up the leftover fragments, that nothing may be lost.” ¹³ So they gathered them up and filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves left by those who had eaten. ¹⁴ When the people saw the sign that he had done, they said, “This is indeed the Prophet who is to come into the world!”

A New Prophet like Moses

¹⁵ “The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen—” ¹⁶ (Dt 18:15–16)

¹⁵ 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. (Jn 6:1–15)

- It’s possible from a crowd of 5000 men (likely 20,000 total people) that some could and would want to take him by force...
- Jesus wasn’t seeking to be made a king by force... he was on a very clear mission of humble perfect obedience to the Father.
- This isn’t the first time God, according to his word and power, has provided an abundance of food with an initially limited supply...

⁴² A man came from Baal-shalishah, bringing the man of God bread of the firstfruits, twenty loaves of barley and fresh ears of grain in his sack. And Elisha said, “Give to the men, that they may eat.” ⁴³ But his servant said, “How can I set this before a hundred men?” So he repeated, “Give them to the men, that they may eat, for thus says the Lord, ‘They shall eat and have some left.’” ⁴⁴ So he set it before them. And they ate and had some left, according to the word of the Lord. (2 Ki 4:42–44)

- John, as he is writing this account of Jesus feeding the 5000, is pointing towards Jesus being a greater Moses... Let’s remember that in the previous chapter, John shares the words of Jesus to the angry Jewish opponents...

⁴⁶ For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me. ⁴⁷ But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?"

(Jn 5:46–47)

The Jewish opponents of Jesus would know and remember

- Moses was also leading a large group of people during their escape from slavery in Egypt into the promised land
- Moses also had accompanying signs and wonders with the 10 plagues
- Moses also went up on a mountain and received the law from God
- Moses was the one God commanded with the Passover lamb for Israel's safe exodus
- Moses would lead the people towards trust in God's provision, even for food

Here we see in John 6 – very clear parallels:

- Jesus is leading a crowd – and we see from Matthew, Mark, Luke and John - that Jesus sees this crowd, has compassion for this crowd, even in a remote desolate place
- Jesus has performed miracles of water to wine, of healing – and some people believe and are following Jesus because of these signs and wonders.
- Jesus and the disciples are up on a mountain, and there on the mountain is where we see Jesus teaching the crowd and healing those who were sick
- This miracle of feeding the 5000 is during the Passover, where Jews are remembering God's saving power and protection through the blood of the Lamb... the words of John the Baptist are true... "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."

In this story – we see the clearly inadequate lunch of a boy – whose loaves of barley and two fish in the hands of Jesus, can feed thousands of people.

This story – is primarily for us to see God's great power to provide, His ability to multiply a meager lunch offering, for us to see the compassion of Jesus on a crowd and how he teaches them and heals them.

But there is also a hidden figure – a participant - whose simple possession was brought to Jesus.

The boy whose lunch went missing... didn't go hungry. Somehow – by God's power – not only did he eat, but thousands also ate his lunch... because what He had was brought to the hands of Jesus.

Can I ask you today – what of yours are you willing to place in the hands of Jesus?

Our temptations:

- Limited offerings – God you can have this, but not that.
- Conditional obedience
 - God I will tithe if I have money leftover
 - God I will forgive them once they accept responsibility
 - God I will be loving once they love me
 - God I will serve others once someone serves me
 - God I will surrender once I have my life together

What is the goal? Knowing Jesus as we offer our whole life response to Him.

Jesus is the hero of this story – He’s the one that gets the glory. But He uses one boy’s lunch.

George Verwer – died on April 14 at the age of 84. At his funeral – his family read this verse over his life: ⁵⁸Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain. (1 Co 15:58).

John Piper [wrote a beautiful tribute](#) regarding this life,

“God lit the fire of Verwer’s faith when he was 16 years old. Before he graduated from high school, two hundred students had professed faith through his spreading flame. He went to Moody Bible Institute, and when he was 21 he led an all-night prayer meeting for the unreached nations of the world. The ripple effect was incalculable. Probably more so than the historic “haystack prayer meeting.”

Hoping to find donuts and girls, a Wheaton student named Greg Livingstone showed up at the prayer meeting. Instead of girls, he found a group of young men kneeling over world maps on the floor. Verwer put his finger in Greg’s face and said, “What country are you claiming?” Having no idea what that meant, Greg said, “What’s left?” Verwer said, “You’ve got Libya.”

The reason that story matters is that George Verwer’s passion for the nations led to not just one large missions organization but two. Everyone who knows Verwer knows he founded Operation Mobilization, which today “has 3,311 workers representing more than 110 nationalities . . . bringing God’s truth to millions every year.” What most people don’t know is that Greg Livingstone went back to Wheaton that night a changed man. He switched his major to Bible and went on to found Frontiers, the largest missions agency in the world devoted entirely to inviting Muslims to Christ.”

What does it mean to have life in His name?

- We yield not just our lunch but our whole lives in His hands.
- We see His Kingdom and the crowds on whom He has compassion
- We offer hope and healing to those who are hurting in His name
- We speak truth in love about who Jesus is and what it means to trust Him.
- We orient our lives about what matters most to God.

What of your life can you bring to God?

¹¹To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by his power, ¹²so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

(2 Th 1:11–12)