

John 6:1-14

- The story of the feeding of the 5,000 is the only miracle recorded in all 4 gospel accounts.
- This story is similar to the situation at the wedding at Cana as in both situations the supplies (wine and food) were in low supply to provide for the people. Also similar between the stories is that Jesus turned water into wine (John 2) and will now perform a miracle involving bread. Bread and wine are the main elements of the Lord's supper and represent His blood and His body being poured out and broken.

Verse 1

The events in chapter 5 occurred in Judea. Since there is no certainty of the Jewish feast that is in view in John 5:1, the time that has elapsed between chapters 5 and 6 are unknown but could have ranged from 6 months to one year. The setting of chapter 6 is the area of Galilee which is north both of Judea and Samaria.

Verses 2-4

Just as has been the case in previous verses through the book of John, large crowds of people begin following Jesus. Many follow Him not because of who He is or because of the message that He proclaims, but because of the miracles He has performed.

- Jesus like was the case in Matthew 5:1 with the sermon on the mount, He went up to the mountain with His disciples.
- There also may be a connection with Moses who went up on Mount Sinai as Moses will be discussed in later verses in this very chapter and how Jesus is greater than Moses and how He is the true bread of Life.
- This story takes place near Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Verses 5-9

Jesus is going to put His disciples to the test. Jesus knew the answer to the question but wanted to test them. These are the same people who have seen Him perform miracles already. They have seen Him multiply the wine by turning the water into wine. They had seen and knew the power of Jesus. However, they would seemingly fail this test as they were unaware of how all the people that were there could be fed.

- There is a similar story in Numbers 11 regarding Moses and how he did not know how to feed meat to a multitude of 600,000 people. Phillip did not know either. However, Jesus knows exactly what He is going to do.
- Jesus provided for the Israelites in the wilderness with manna which will be mentioned later in this chapter. As God provided for them in the wilderness, He provides for His people now.
- A denarii was the equivalent to a day's wage. Therefore, 200 denarii would be roughly 7-8 months wages. This shows the size of the crowd as 8 months wages couldn't provide enough bread to feed this crowd even the smallest of portions.
- Andrew finds a boy in the crowd who has 5 barley loaves and 2 small fish. However, his faith and trust in Jesus is impacted and limited by the small quantity of food.

Verses 10-13

The Bible records that there are 5,000 men but does not mention women or children. Estimates range from 15,000-25,000 people that could have possibly been present.

The people did not just eat a little bit, but rather ate until they had all that they wanted. God is a God of provision. He provides for His people. Not only did they eat all they wanted but had leftovers.

The leftovers and the amount of leftovers is critical to this story.

- **Matthew 16:9-10** Do you not yet understand or remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets *full* you picked up? ¹⁰ Or the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many large baskets *full* you picked up?

The significance that this feeding has 12 basketfuls left signifies that 12 tribes of Israel and God being the bread of life to the Jews. Jesus is a Jew and salvation is from the Jews (**John 4:22**). The primary audience of Jesus and His disciple's ministry initially was the Jews (**Matthew 10:1-6**) which is why this feeding of the multitude has 12 basketfuls left, whereas the second feeding of the 4,000 will have 7 basketfuls left over representing the Gentiles and Jesus being the bread of life to not only the Jew but to the Gentile. This speaks to the mystery of the gospel.

Verses 14-15

The reference to "the Prophet" is a reference to **Deuteronomy 18:15**. The people wanted to come and by force make Him king. After seeing what Jesus had done, they want a leader who would give them what they desired physically and temporally. They wanted Jesus to be their personal genie who could provide food, abundance, and freedom from the oppression of the Romans. They were concerned about their physical needs and had no concern for the spiritual aspect of Christ. The people wanted a king who they could selfishly demand things from but did not take into consideration the things that He would demand. He is the King of Kings! Jesus knew their hearts and withdrew again to the mountain alone which is very important.

Jesus told the woman at the well that whoever comes to Him will never thirst again as He is the Living Water. Not only is He the Living Water, He is also the Bread of Life and whoever comes to Him will never hunger. God is our provider and our sustainer. He has blessed us not just a little, but with abundance. Not only do our cups run over, but our baskets are full!