

Lesson 15: The Feeding of Five Thousands

Objective: To know that little can become much in God's hands.

Background: As a part of their training, Jesus sent the twelve disciples out, two by two, to share the Good News and help the needy. As a result of this missionary activity, the news of Jesus spread throughout Galilee, and His popularity reached its peak at the feeding of five thousand. Soon after the event the people, including many of His disciples (not the Twelve), turned their backs on Jesus because He refused to be the kind of Messiah they were looking for, one who would set up an *earthly kingdom*. (John 6:14, 15; 66-69).

Instruction: Read John 6: 1-71 over and over again until the event comes alive for you.

Let's Think: Ask the Lord Jesus to speak to you as you study and think.

1. Was Jesus frustrated when the crowd spoiled His plan to have a quiet "retreat" for the returning missionaries, the twelve disciples? What glimpse of Jesus do you catch through this incident? What is "compassion"? Please consult a dictionary. Do you have it?
2. What do Philip's calculation (Jn6:7) and Andrew's exclamation (Jn 6:8-9) reveal about their feeling of the situation? On what did they focus their attention: *the circumstances or Jesus*? What difference does it make? Explain.
3. Had the boy lost his "lunch" when it was given to Jesus? How much did the boy give to Jesus? How does the event demonstrate the divine principle that God works through people? (1 Cor.3:9a)
4. How did the event of feeding become another opportune time for the Tempter? When was their last encounter? (Jn 6:14, 15, Lk. 4:13, also Hebrews 4:15) How did Jesus "nip the temptation in the bud"? Analyze Jn 6:14, 15 and Mk. 6:45-46, and show the steps that led to Jesus' victory over the Tempter.
5. The following day Jesus offers "spiritual" bread to the Jews who seek after "physical" bread. Which is better and why? (Jn 6:27, 33, 35, 50, 51, 58) Reflect on your life and see what proportion of time and energy you give to physical and spiritual needs respectively. Does it require re-evaluation?
6. Is there an indication that the feeding of the five thousand was the peak of Jesus' public favor? If so, how did it come about? Was Jesus ever concerned about His popularity? Explain. (6:14, 15, 60, 66)
7. Which part of the lesson speaks to you at this point in your life? Be specific. Think how you would implement that knowledge and conviction. Be concrete.

Let's Remember: Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life, he who comes to me shall not hunger, and he who believes in me shall never thirst." (John 6:35)