

# Feeding the Crowd

Luke 9:10-17<sup>1</sup>

## Who is This?

- ❑ In Luke 8:22-56, Jesus demonstrates his comprehensive power & authority.
  - ☑ Authority over nature (8:22-25). Jesus calmed a dangerous storm. “In fear and amazement [his disciples] asked one another, ‘Who is this? He commands even the winds and water, and they obey him’” (8:25, *NIV*).
  - ☑ Authority over evil spirits (8:26-39). Jesus drove out many demons (evil spirits) from a man.
  - ☑ Authority over sickness and death (8:40-56). Jesus healed a woman who had been subject to bleeding for 12 years; and he raised a man’s daughter from the dead. Who is this Jesus?



## He Who Sends

- ❑ Jesus was sent to proclaim the kingdom of God and heal people (*Luke 4:43; 8:1-2*). But he was not sent to do it alone. While Jesus was *the* Sent One, he also sent his disciples.
  - 📖 “When Jesus had called the Twelve<sup>2</sup> together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and heal the sick.” (*Luke 9:1-2, NIV*) “So they set out and went from village to village, proclaiming the good news and healing people everywhere.” (9:6, *NIV*)

## He Who Welcomes

- ❑ After the Twelve returned from their travels, they needed some rest,<sup>3</sup> but... Read Luke 9:10-11.
- ❑ Jesus teaches by example. Sometimes we need to withdraw (get away) to rest and pray. “Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed” (5:16). But Jesus also welcomed opportunities.<sup>4</sup>

## What are They?<sup>5</sup>

- ❑ As evening approached, the Twelve became sensitive to a problem. Read Luke 9:12-14a.
- ❑ The disciples’ concern seems reasonable. But Jesus replied, “You give them something to eat.”
  1. How do you think the disciples felt after Jesus’ reply? How did they respond?<sup>6</sup>



<sup>1</sup> This story (often entitled ‘Jesus feeds the 5,000’) is also recorded in Matthew 14:13-21, Mark 6:32-44, and John 6:1-15. Besides the story of Jesus’ resurrection, this is the only miracle story told in all four gospels.

<sup>2</sup> The ‘Twelve’ refers to the twelve disciples whom Jesus designated ‘apostles’ (‘sent ones’) (Luke 6:13-16; 9:10).

<sup>3</sup> In Mark’s gospel, he says, “...because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, [Jesus] said to them, ‘Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.’” (Mark 6:30-31, *NIV*).

<sup>4</sup> In Mark’s gospel, he says, ‘When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd’ (Mark 6:34, *NIV*).

<sup>5</sup> After realizing they had only five loaves & two fish, Andrew asked, ‘...what are they for so many?’ (John 6:9, *ESV*).

<sup>6</sup> It was obvious that five loaves and two fish were inadequate for a group of 5,000 men (*andres* - males) plus women and children. They could go buy food, but that would be extremely expensive. Mark records them saying, ‘That would take eight months of a man’s wages!’ (Mark 6:37) Certainly, the disciples felt totally unable to do what Jesus required.

## He Who Provides

- ❑ Jesus knew the disciples were unable, but he wanted to teach a lesson. Read Luke 9:14b-17.
- ❑ The disciples listened to Jesus, and then followed his instructions.
  2. What resulted from the actions of Jesus and his disciples?<sup>7</sup>



## He Who Teaches

- ❑ The obvious result was the feeding of the crowd. “They all ate and were satisfied” (9:17a). The provision of Jesus was more than adequate, for “the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over” (9:17b). But Jesus’ primary purpose was not the filling of bellies (that is, the physical satisfaction of the people). Jesus wanted to teach something.
  3. What can we learn from this story? What can we learn about Jesus? What can we learn about following Jesus and serving him?
- ❑ Jesus is the provider. In this situation, Jesus provided for the material needs of the crowd, which is important. But there are deeper needs, and Jesus provides at a much deeper level. In John’s gospel, this story sets up Jesus teaching that he is the “bread of life” (John 6:1-15, 25-59).
  - 📖 “Jesus declared, ‘I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty... Very truly I tell you, the one who believes [in me] has eternal life. I am the bread of life.’” (John 6:35, 47-48, NIV)
  - 4. What kind of hunger and thirst is Jesus talking about? To what extent can the “Bread of Life” bring satisfaction to our lives?<sup>8</sup>
- ❑ In this needy world, Jesus calls his followers to serve. We may feel that our resources<sup>9</sup> are inadequate, but Jesus takes the little we have to offer, and increases it to accomplish his purposes. Our part is faithfulness. Jesus provides the sustenance and ability to do his will.
  5. God can take our “inadequate resources” and use them to accomplish great things. What are examples of the “little” we may have to offer? What do we (as believers) need to do?

## Reflection/Application

- Are you hungry in the deepest part of your being? What can satisfy your hunger? Jesus said, “I am the bread of life.” Only he can satisfy our deepest needs. Come to Jesus. Believe in him.
- If you are a believer, think about question 5. Is there something you believe God wants you to do, but you feel you have little to offer? Step out in faith, and trust the Provider.

<sup>7</sup> The crowd was fed by a miraculous multiplication of food, though the details of the miracle are not provided. Some who are biased against miracles have proposed naturalistic explanations, but such explanations are not convincing.

<sup>8</sup> This hunger and thirst is not physical; it is spiritual. It is the hunger and thirst of the inner being for spiritual life. It is a hunger for meaning, purpose, fulfillment, peace, and joy. The person who comes to Jesus will find his hunger satisfied and thirst quenched. This does not mean that there is no need for continued ‘feeding’ on him, but the source of refreshment and life has been found. There are many things we pursue in this world – family life, academics, career, sports, projects, etc. The realization of these things, and the achievement of goals, brings satisfaction. However, as only food satisfies physical hunger, only the Bread of Life (Jesus) satisfies spiritual hunger (at least ultimately).

<sup>9</sup> Our ‘resources’ include things like money, possessions, time, knowledge, abilities, gifts, etc.