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## FEEDING 5,000

“Now the day was ending, and the twelve came and said to Him, ‘Send the crowd away, that they may go into the surrounding villages and countryside and find lodging and get something to eat; for here we are in a desolate place.’ But He said to them, ‘You give them something to eat!’ And they said, ‘We have no more than five loaves and two fish, unless perhaps we go and buy food for all these people.’ (For there were about five thousand men.)” Luke 9:12-14. It was a startling move by Jesus, it seemed, to the disciples for Him to demand that they actually feed the hungry crowd surrounding them. Jesus actually put them on the spot a bit at first asking them how they would even attempt to feed a crowd of this magnitude as He knew full well what the answer would be. “Therefore Jesus,

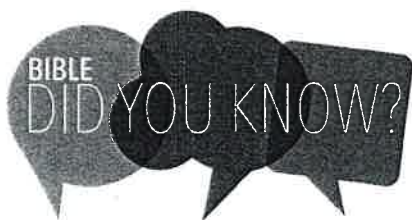
lifting up His eyes and seeing that a large crowd was coming to Him, said to Philip, ‘Where are we to buy bread, so that these may eat?’ This He was saying to test him, for He Himself knew what He was intending to do,” John 6:5-6. You can sense the exasperation as the disciples begin to take inventory of their meager supplies and plainly state how futile it would be to use anything of their own to actually go very far at all in addressing the need of the hungry crowd. “Philip answered Him, ‘Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, for everyone to receive a little.’ One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, said to Him, ‘There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are these for so many people?’” John 6:7-9. The

intended lesson Jesus has in mind for them when He resolves the problem is, for the most part, completely lost on them and necessitates a follow up lesson immediately after this incident. It occurs when they get into a boat to cross the sea to Capernaum and they find Jesus walking on the water in the midst of a storm. "When it was evening, the boat was in the middle of the sea, and He was alone on the land. Seeing them straining at the oars, for the wind was against them, at about the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea; and He intended to pass by them. But when they saw Him walking on the sea, they supposed that it was a ghost, and cried out; for they all saw Him and were terrified. But immediately He spoke with them and said to them, 'Take courage; it is I, do not be afraid.' Then He got into the boat with them, and the wind stopped; and they were utterly astonished, for they had not gained any insight from the incident of the loaves, but their heart was hardened." Mark 6:47-52. Having the intended lesson of the loaves essentially gone right over their heads, Jesus demonstrates the lesson further by getting into the boat after seeing them struggling

against the wind. The text in John's account adds one more detail which really brings the lesson home. "So they were willing to receive Him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going." John 6:21. In both situations we see the disciples struggling when entirely on their own to make any progress or headway. Left to their own devices and tools and inventory, it is just as the disciples point out, not even worth trying for how inefficient these methods would be. But when Jesus enters the picture in both occasions, this changes everything. With the feeding of the 5,000, they never even consider handing the small amount of food they have over to Jesus with the faith that He could multiply it. They were completely stunned in the same way they were stunned by His ability to quiet the storm simply by entering the boat and immediately getting them to their destination. The text says their hearts were hardened having not gained any insight from the incident of the loaves, meaning it never dawned on them that Jesus was trying to teach them in that moment what he visually teaches in the boat. We will be able to get so much further ahead and much faster in

the struggles and difficulties we face when we trust by faith to let the power of Jesus be the answer. Just like the disciples, we immediately take inventory of what we alone possess. When faced with an overwhelming trial or struggle in life, it only makes the problem seem worse or even impossible when attempting to work through it with our meager supplies of life. Just like the disciples struggling against the wind, only able to go a couple of miles, even when seeing Jesus miraculously walking on the water, they completely dismiss this as a rational possibility and conclude it must be a ghost. How often do we completely dismiss the powerful capabilities of Christ to address the overwhelming challenges we face in life? We must strive to learn the lesson Jesus was trying to teach His disciples that while the natural remedies we instinctively rely on will ultimately fail, it is the supernatural capabilities of Christ which is able to intervene and bring us further ahead. "Looking at them, Jesus said, 'With people it is impossible, but not with God; for all things are possible with God.'" Mark 10:27. "We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all

wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ. For this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me." Colossians 1:28-29. "...and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God. Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen." Ephesians 3:19-21. – Daniel Ruegg



***The lion, rooster, goat and king are stately when they walk. "There are three things which are stately in their march, even four which are stately when they walk: The lion which is mighty among beasts and does not retreat before any, the strutting rooster, the male goat also, and a king when his army is with him." Prov. 30:29-31***



# MONTHLY CHALLENGE

**DIRECTIONS:** Each first Sunday of the month, we will have challenges that you should attempt to complete by the end of the month. If we all, as members, complete these challenges, our church will grow in spirit and in number.

## 1) Growing In Knowledge Challenge

**Eph. 3:4-5** "...when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit." When comparing the miracles of Jesus feeding the 5,000 and Jesus walking on the water, it reveals how often we need the same lesson taught in different ways before we really get the point. Jesus often cited the need to understand key passages and events from the Old Testament in order to fully appreciate and understand His words and actions. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life," Jn. 3:14-15. Are there any books of the bible that you are a bit unfamiliar with or have not read or studied as much as others? Pick 3 this month to become better acquainted and more familiar with to study in depth. As you read, ask what lessons that you may already know become more evident. Enjoy reading!

## 2) USING YOUR BIBLE IN THE WORLD

Share the following verses with someone who does not attend this congregation at least twice this month:

### *Luke 6:27-38*

"But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. Whoever hits you on the cheek, offer him the other also; and whoever takes away your coat, do not withhold your shirt from him either. Give to everyone who asks of you, and whoever takes away what is yours, do not demand it back. Treat others the same way you want them to treat you. If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. If you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners in order to receive back the same amount. But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. Do not judge, and you will not be judged; and do not condemn, and you will not be condemned; pardon, and you will be pardoned. Give, and it will be given to you. They will pour into your lap a good measure – pressed down, shaken together, and running over. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return."