Pentecost 10 John 6:1-15
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Jesus Feeds the 5,000 – A "Sign" for Us
I. It shows we need Jesus.
II. It shows Jesus' love for us.

Dear Christian friends,

The feeding of the 5,000 is one of the few miracles reported in all four gospels. This miracle is also classified as a ***"sign."*** In the gospels miracles are sometimes called ***"miracles"*** or ***"signs"*** or ***"wonders."*** Each term emphasizes a CERTAIN POINT. ***"Miracle"*** points to the DIVINE POWER in what's just happened. ***"Wonder"*** refers to the EFFECT the miracle **had on** the people – "WOW!" ***"Sign"*** points beyond the **miracle** to the MESSAGE and MEANING of the miracle.

Jesus feeding the 5,000 is a ***"sign."*** It has an IMPORTANT MESSAGE for us. This miracle SHOWS 1)we need Jesus and it **also shows** 2)Jesus' love for us.

I. It shows we need Jesus.

Life had gotten pretty hectic for Jesus and the apostles. They were trying to GET AWAY and have some time **by themselves**. But they just weren't going to get it right now. As they headed out to ***"cross over to the other side of the Sea of Galilee"*** the people saw them leave and followed them. **By the time** Jesus landed some people had already arrived. And MORE KEPT COMING! They wanted to be with Jesus ***"because they saw the miraculous signs He was performing on those who were sick."***

John tells us, ***"When Jesus looked up and saw a huge crowd coming toward Him, He asked Philip, 'Where can we buy bread for these people to eat?'"*** Notice that Jesus asked this question AT THE START of the day – several hours before the miracle **actually happened**. Jesus basically gave Philip and the other apostles ALL DAY to figure out **what to do**.

It didn't take Philip long to **come up** with an answer. There was no definite count yet but it was PRETTY OBVIOUS that there a **lot of people**. The 5,000 only counts the men so we must add to that the ***"women and children."*** WHATEVER the final figure the apostles didn't have the money to feed them. Philip told Jesus, ***"Two hundred denarii worth of bread would not be enough for each of them to have just a little"*** (a denarius was a **day's pay** back then). Notice the HELPLESSNESS and HOPELESSNESS in his answer. ***"Eight months wages"*** wouldn't provide even a LITTLE BIT for all these people – let alone FILL THEM UP.

John tells us that Jesus did this ***"to test (Philip), for He Himself knew what he was going to do."*** All this was a TEST for Philip and the other apostles. It was an OPPORTUNITY for them to show their faith in Jesus and to grow in their faith. **This day** was meant to teach them a VERY IMPORTANT LESSON – they needed Jesus!

This miracle is also a SIGN FOR US – showing us **our need** for Jesus. HOW OFTEN doesn't Jesus confront us with **seemingly** HOPELESS **situations** and DESPERATE **problems** and then ask us, "So HOW are **you** going to handle this? WHAT are **you** going to do about it?" It can be major health problems – financial problems – problems at work or in the **family**. It certainly includes our SPIRITUAL problems – our sin – guilt – **temptations** – death. Our Lord who knows ALL things – **who knows** what's BEST for us – He already knows what **He's going to do**. He is ***"testing"*** us – giving us an OPPORTUNITY to show our faith in Him and to grow in that faith.

This situation – the hassles and **headaches** of life – are all opportunities **for our faith**. We TALK about Jesus. We KNOW His love and **power**. We read our Bibles and know God's **many** beautiful, comforting promises – ***"Lo, I am with you always – call upon Me in the day of trouble and I will***

deliver you. Cast all your cares upon Me." We talk about HOW MUCH Jesus means to us and WHAT A DIFFERENCE Jesus makes in our lives. The ***"tests"*** of life are OPPORTUNITIES for us to apply all that to our lives. Our faith dare not be ONLY TALK. We are to live **what we believe**.

Jesus sat down and began to ***"teach the people many things."*** He healed many sick people. The DAY PASSED QUICKLY. The **apostles** were getting panicky. They had an answer to **Jesus'** question – the only answer that MADE ANY SENSE to them. ***"When evening came, (Jesus') disciples came to Him and said, 'This is a deserted place and the hour is already late. Send the crowds away, so that they can go into the villages and buy food for themselves.'"*** The way they figured it there was JUST NO WAY they could take care of this many people. But Jesus didn't buy it! ***"They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat." "Andrew… said, 'There's a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what is that for so many people?'"*** Andrew's answer was NO BETTER than the others.

The **disciples** had done their figuring but they FAILED the test. They had LOTS of people. They didn't have ENOUGH FOOD or **money** to feed them. What they failed to do was FIGURE JESUS into the situation. They had Jesus RIGHT THERE with them! They were talking with Him! They knew Jesus' ALMIGHTY **power**. Jesus had even done some miracles that day! But they didn't take any of that INTO ACCOUNT. They saw everything and **everyone** BUT Jesus! They miserably failed their test.

HOW WELL do **we do** with our tests? We NEED JESUS to understand **life** and handle **life's problems** yet look how many people FAIL TO FIGURE Jesus into their **lives** and **plans**. They define a GOOD LIFE **in terms** of good health, good times, money, possessions, instead of HAVING Jesus – His power and **forgiveness** and **promises**. Then when life TURNS SOUR – when they have to deal with **disappointments** and problems – they LASH OUT at Jesus and WALLOW in self-pity. Instead of turning **to Jesus** they look to drugs or **alcohol** or **suicide** for their help and answers.

By themselves there was NOTHING the disciples could do to **feed all** these people. Jesus wanted them to realize that AND that He was right there **to help** them. **So** our Lord tests us to SHOW US that we can't handle life **on our own**. WE NEED Jesus!

The disciples failed the test. But Jesus didn't JUMP ALL OVER them – yell at them for their **lack of faith** – ridicule them for **being so stupid**. This miracle is a ***"sign"*** –

II. It shows Jesus' love for us.

CALMLY and QUIETLY Jesus took charge. **Actually** Jesus always was IN CHARGE. He had been busy all day ***"teaching"*** the people.

Unlike we **so often** do Jesus didn't have His PRIORITIES MIXED UP. Jesus took care of FIRST THINGS first. **Many** people don't realize that our GREATEST NEEDS are **spiritual**. **For many** people making a living – GETTING AHEAD – HAVING FUN are more important than God and His Word. So they don't HAVE TIME for Jesus. They're too busy or TOO TIRED for **church** or **a daily devotion**. When they finally do have TIME OFF they still don't take time – MAKE time! – for Jesus.

Jesus however shows us that there is really only ***"one thing needful."*** FULL STOMACHS and BIG BANK ACCOUNTS can never take care of sin or keep anyone alive forever. BEFORE FEEDING the 5,000+ people Jesus took care of their souls – and WHAT A FEAST **He spread** for them! **With all our sins** we need Jesus' help BIG TIME. **With all those times** we've ignored and avoided and OUTRIGHT DEFIED God – with all our FLIMSY EXCUSES for why we just can't do what **God clearly tells** us to do – we've made a mess of our **lives** and **our relationship** with God. There was no way we could ever MAKE IT UP to God for the **way we've treated** Him. An open grave stands at the end of our lives. A death leading to an **eternity in hell**.

But WHAT A SIGN of God's love Jesus is! The **eternal Son** of God became one of us to TAKE THE PLACE of all people under God's law. Jesus GLADLY and perfectly obeyed His heavenly Father **all the time** and He gives us all the credit for it. Jesus willingly sacrificed His own life on the cross to PERSONALLY PAY for the sins of the whole world. Jesus beat death with **His own resurrection** from the dead and He shares His victory with us. Jesus bids us come TO HIM – to count on **Him** – for the forgiveness of all our sins – for peace with God – for eternal life in heaven when we die. You won't find those blessings **anywhere else**. MONEY can't buy them. We can't earn them by CLEANING UP our lives. God FREELY GIVES us **all** those blessings through faith in Jesus.

So Jesus had been busy teaching these people. NOW it was time to eat. Jesus told the disciples, ***"Have the people sit down. Then Jesus took the loaves and, after giving thanks, He distributed pieces to those who were seated. He also did the same with the fish — as much as they wanted."*** Actually there are two miracles here. ALL 5,000+ people had plenty to eat. There were even LEFTOVERS – ***"twelve basketsful"*** – MORE than what they had started with!

Oh what a sign this miracle **is for us** – a SIGN of our need for Jesus AND of Jesus' great love for us! So often we pray, "COME, Lord Jesus, be our guest, and let these gifts to us be blessed" – and HOW our Lord has blessed us and taken care of us!

There was NOTHING the disciples could do to **feed all** these people. But they had Jesus – ***"with whom nothing is impossible."*** Learn well from this miracle never to COUNT JESUS OUT of the picture. WE HAVE our problems – we NEED help – we HAVE Jesus – more than able and **willing** to help us.

Let's learn one more thing here. This reading ends with the people trying to **make Jesus their king**. They were even ready to FORCE Jesus to do that. How dumb could they be? We can't DICTATE to Jesus or FORCE Him to do anything. But let's learn to acknowledge Jesus AS OUR KING with our **lips** and **daily lives**. Instead of Jesus doing OUR BIDDING may we all seek to do HIS WILL and follow Him in **all our ways**. May our everyday lives be a RESOUNDING, ***"O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good; and His mercy endures forever!"*** Amen.

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