Lesson 7 [Chapter 6]”Feeding the 5000”

Remember:

Last lesson in chapter 5, Jesus healed a paralyzed man at the Pool of Bethesda on the Sabbath, triggering conflict with religious leaders. Jesus defended His actions by declaring His unity with God, asserting authority over life, judgment, and the Sabbath.

Lesson Goal:

Evaluate what you are seeking from Jesus (e.g., miracles/benefits vs. knowing Him)

Lesson opener:

Remember the story that happened in the small town of Gander, in Newfoundland, Canada, after the terrible terrorist attack on 9/11. Thirty-eight planes in the air were diverted to this small town: almost seven thousand passengers and airline crew members, equivalent to two-thirds of the local population. So, what did they do? Did they panic, thinking they would not have enough food or shelter for these stranded passengers? Did they look at this problem through the lens of scarcity? No, they simply got to work, feeding the seven thousand, housing them, and entertaining them. It was an inspiring, modern day “feeding of the five thousand story,”

Lesson Body:

Feeding the Five Thousand 6:1-15

In this chapter we see the Lord Christ feeding the multitude with two fish and five barley loaves offered by a lad.

It is now almost impossible for Him to avoid crowds of people following Him in their desire to witness His sign.

Jesus lifted up His eyes and saw the hungry multitude. He did not wait for someone to ask for food or someone to feed the crowd; He looked out for the people's needs. As He gives food to the people, He accepts the offering of a small boy. Just as He gives, He takes; this is a sign of mutual love between God and humanity.

The two fish symbolize the two Testaments, the Old and the New. The five loaves are symbolic of the five Books of Moses.

Jesus often asked questions, not for the purpose of obtaining information, but to make a point [to test their faith]. He asked if they could provide food for the people. Philip's answer proves that he has not really learned the lessons of earlier teachings. "We don't have enough money"

Andrew said, There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish, (apparently enough for his own lunch). But he was convinced this was nothing considering the size of the crowd. There were about five thousand men, The text in St. Matthew adds, besides women and children, who might possibly amount to an equal number or more, way more than 5000.

This boy had an unselfish attitude. Others would have thought, "Who am I among so many?" "What can I do when the need is so great, and I am so small?" But this is not an excuse. God is great and can use even weak creatures like us to accomplish great things. Look how God used the lad! He used him to feed thousands of people! That boy must have been unselfish and gave his food to be used by God. Do not think you are too small to be used of God. He used the lad and He can use you too. The key for us is to have a willing heart.

He distributed them to the disciples, and the disciples to those sitting down.

What Jesus did with the physical food is what He did with the spiritual food [communion]. He is the source of the truth, but it is distributed to the people through His servants, the Clergy.

To make the miracle more evident to the multitude, Jesus Christ showed, that not only their present wants were supplied, but the leftovers were many times greater than the original amount. There were twelve baskets left. Perhaps one basket per disciple.

The people concluded that Jesus was the Prophet [who Moses prophesized about, the Messiah].

Jesus miraculously fed the multitudes like at Moses time when God sent Manna, this is to prove Jesus and God are one.

The multitude wanted to take Him by force to make Him a king on earth according to their wish. However, He disappeared from among them and departed to the mountain alone. They did not understand the nature of Christ's kingdom, and they wanted to honor Him in accordance to their thinking, not to divine thought. The multitude wanted to liberate themselves from Caesar and Roman occupation.

Jesus Walks on the Sea 6:16-21

It may be through the direction of the Lord Christ that the disciples took a boat to go toward Capernaum so that they may not be preoccupied with the useless dialogue about making Jesus king. He wanted to withdraw them from this test, but they face another test, which is the raging sea because of a great wind.

A storm had begun to come up and when they were halfway across the sea they saw a figure walking across the top of the water. They were scared to death as most of us would be. When Jesus saw them, He calmed them down and told them it was Him. Once again Jesus showed His power over this world by defying gravity. Also, when He got in the boat it immediately arrived at their destination.

If you ask, why did He leave them and did not appear to them sooner? I shall answer: to make them have a greater effect. Saint John Chrysostom.

He allows that His children have tribulations, but He does not leave them in the middle of their trial. He rather announces His presence to grant them rest and peace.

The Bread from Heaven 6:22:40

The next morning the crowd was perplexed. Jesus and His disciples were gone. They saw the disciples go, but they hadn't seen Jesus leave and there were apparently no boats that He could have taken. No one expected that maybe He would walk! They also got into boats and cross the lake to find Jesus. When they arrived, they asked Him how He got there.

In verse 26 Jesus reveals their motives. At this point they are following Jesus around because they got a free meal. Why do many people follow Jesus these days? Their attitude is no different than most people today. They want to benefit.

As though He says to them: I have fed your bodies so that you may ask for the other food that endures and feeds your spirits. But you hurried to take earthly food and, therefore, I will not guide you toward earthly food, but rather toward that food which does not give temporary life, but everlasting life: food to nourish your spirits, not your bodies.

The Lord Christ instructed them not to ask for food which perishes, but for food which endures to everlasting life. Therefore, the multitude asked Him, 'What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?' [28] meaning 'How can we practice this instruction?' The answer came: to believe in Him whom He sent.

The Jews demanded of the Lord a sign so that they may believe in Him. Did they consider feeding the multitude among whom were about 5000 men, with five barely loaves and two fish, a trivial sign?

The true manna is Christ Himself understood as regarding God the Father gave Him in the sign of the manna to those who were in ancient times.

Verse 35: What, then, does Christ promise? He does not promise a perishable thing but rather promises that mystery-—The Eulogia—in partaking of His Body and Blood.

When we approach that divine, heavenly blessing and ascend to the holy communion with Christ, by that only do we vanquish Satan's deception and as we become partakers of the divine nature (2 Pet 1:4) we rise to life and incorruption. Saint Cyril the Great

Verse 36: They saw His miracle of feeding the 5000 but did not believe because of the blindness that covered their understanding.

Verse 39: God desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. But He does not force them to be saved as though they were pieces of rock. He treats them like rational beings having complete freedom.

Is the will of Jesus different from God's will?

In order that no one may think that way, we read what follows. What He said was this: "I came not to do anything but what the Father wills. For, I have no will of My own that is different from that of the Father. Everything that is for the Father is for Me; and everything that is for Me is for the Father.

Rejected by His Own 6:41-59

The Jews still did not know His miraculous, wonderful birth. They, therefore, called Him the son of Joseph.

Despite the prophecies which affirm that the Messiah will come of David's descendants, and that He is born of a virgin, the Jews criticize Christ looking on Him with contempt as the son of Mary and Joseph who are perfectly known to them. On the other hand, He gently draws their attention to His heavenly Father who alone can reveal to them the Son Incarnate who grants the resurrection.

Verse 53: because the Jews said it was impossible to give them His flesh to eat, Christ answers them by telling them, that so far from being impossible, it is very necessary that they should eat it.

For, now with the declaration of the LORD Himself and our faith, this is true Body and true Blood and what we eat, and drink take us across so that we exist in Christ and He exists in us. Saint Hilary Bishop of Poitiers.

Many Disciples Turn Away 6:60-71

At this point, even some of those who were disciples thought this was a hard saying that they could not understand. Many of His followers who were more or less fully accepting His teaching, left Him.

Verse 64: The statement here concerns Judas who betrayed Him and also concerns those who left Him. He declares that what will happen is not strange to Him because from the beginning He knew everything.

Judas was present there…The LORD did not mention his name.

Even though some people did not accept the words of the LORD Christ and they went back, some approached Christ even more and realized, with the apostle Peter, the power of Christ's words that grant eternal life.

Lesson Delivery Idea:

Factor Jesus In:

Sometimes, we are like Philip in those moments when he was exhausted and Jesus asked him to feed the people. We're facing utter need and zero resources, and everyone is looking at us for answers. What do we say? What did Philip say? Look at verse 7. He said, "Two hundred denarii worth of bread would not be enough for each of them to get a little." In other words, "Jesus, there's nothing we can do. We can't possibly buy enough bread for them. Eight months' salary wouldn't be enough to pay for it. We don't have enough money to give everyone even just a slice. Forget about it."

Now, what's wrong with his statement? Wasn't it true? Do you see anything wrong with it? Here's what's wrong with it. It's what's wrong with so many of our reactions to the seeming impossibilities of life. We don't factor Jesus in. Philip didn't factor Jesus in. He looked at the situation and looked at the resources he had, and he said, "Nope. Can't do it."

What if Phillip had turned to Jesus and said: "I think maybe You have a plan, let us be part of it"

Christianity is not about God sprinkling His wisdom on our little brains to help us through our days. Christianity is about reality with Jesus. It's about factoring Jesus into every situation. It is about coming to God through Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit to live a

life fully open to Him such that the impossibilities of life are no longer threats to us but opportunities for us. So that's the first thing we need to see—our insufficiency.

Andrew also failed the test. The little boy gave his lunch to Jesus, and Jesus gave him back a feast. Isn't that just like Jesus? Isn't that how He always works? So why don't we trust Him more? Why do we cling to things as we do? When we have this kind of God who does this kind of thing, why can we not let go of our little loaves and fish?

Remember in Matthew 6 when Jesus said to consider the birds? they don't have to worry about tomorrow, so we don't either. There's like 50 billion birds in the world. Why? Partly because that gives us 50 billion reasons to trust Him for our lives.

Jesus might ask you to give something up, but if He does, He gives it back to you in more fullness than you could ever imagine. We might grumble and complain. We might not see the way forward. But if Jesus is there, what else do we need? We can trust Him. The birds do.

We have two options. We can be like Philip and Andrew, who looked at the situation before them and doubted anything could be done, or we can be like that little boy who handed Jesus his little lunch and watch Jesus feed a city. We can factor Jesus into our lives, or we can forget about Him. We can be the channels through which Jesus works His power in this world, or we can close our lunchboxes and go home.



Memory Verse: 6:35 And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.

References: Bishop Youssef: https://www.suscopts.org/diocese/bishop/bible-study/new-testament/holy-gospel-according-to-st-john

Fr. Tadros: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1USxNacY0RpvkchQRIe1mq9bQwrhld3cn/view?pli=1