

Mark 6:30-44 Jesus Feeds the 5000

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[0 : 00] We're in the book of Mark, and we've made it to Mark chapter 6. And today we're going to be looking at this account that most people are familiar with, if you're familiar at all with the Bible.

This is Jesus feeding 5,000 people. So, this is, interestingly enough, the only account in the Bible, the only story, if you will, outside of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus that is found in all four of the Gospels.

So, this is one of the stories, one of the only stories, if you will, that is found in both Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

And the details match up very, very closely. We're going to be looking at some of the connections in this account with the Old Testament.

We've seen that over and over again as we've been studying through this Gospel of Mark. Who Jesus is and how it relates to what prophets have said in the past, what the Scripture has said in the past about someone who is coming.

[1 : 19] And then we're going to be looking at prayer, and specifically, praying when it comes to our meals. That comes up in this story of the feeding of the 5,000, so we'll talk at least briefly about that.

But let's go ahead, we're going to read Mark chapter 6, and we're going to start at verse 30. Then the apostles gathered to Jesus and told him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught.

And he said to them, Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while. For there were many coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat. So they departed to a deserted place in the boat by themselves.

But the multitude saw them departing, and many knew him, and ran there on foot from all the cities. They arrived before them and came together to him. And Jesus, when he came out, saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them.

Because they were like sheep, not having a shepherd. So he began to teach them many things. When the day was now far spent, his disciples came to him and said, This is a deserted place, and already the hour is late.

[2 : 34] Send them away, that they may go into the surrounding country and villages, and buy themselves bread, for they have nothing to eat. But he answered, and he said to them, You give them something to eat. And they said to him, Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give them something to eat?

But he said to them, How many loaves do you have? Go and see. And when they found out, they said, Five, and also two fish. Then he commanded them to make them all sit down in groups on the green grass.

So they sat down in ranks in hundreds and in fifties. And when he had taken the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to his disciples to set before them.

And the two fish he divided among them all. So they all ate and were filled. And they took up twelve baskets full of fragments and of the fish.

And those who had eaten the loaves were about five thousand men. So, in this account of the feeding of the five thousand, this is a follow-up to a different event.

[3 : 45] Last week, or I guess two weeks ago, we talked about Herod. And we kind of took a little bunny trail in the storyline of Jesus' ministry.

It briefly spoke of Herod. And Herod had heard some things about Jesus. And then it took this bunny trail talking about John the Baptist and his interactions with Herod.

And ultimately, John the Baptist lost his head. But when we start off here in verse 30, it says this, Then the apostles gathered to Jesus and told him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught.

And so this actually goes back to earlier in this sixth chapter of Mark, when Jesus sent his twelve disciples out to preach, to teach, to do miracles, to heal the sick, to cast out demons.

And this is the account of them coming back from their short mission trip, if you will. They talked about what they had done, the miracles they had performed, the demons they had driven out, and what they had taught.

[4 : 57] And what were the things that they were teaching? Well, they were things concerning the kingdom of God. It was the things that Jesus had taught them. That's what Jesus had told them to do.

And interestingly enough, this was an opportunity for them to come back, and they were excited. You can kind of hear the excitement as they came back and were telling about all the things that they had done.

For many of them, I think, this was the first time they had ever performed a miracle. I mean, I'd be pretty excited about that. But then they were explaining, well, these are the things that we taught. And I can imagine that during this opportunity to tell about the things that they taught, Jesus was encouraging them, but also maybe bringing a little bit of correction.

And well, actually, you know, not quite like that. I know teaching is one of the best ways to learn anything. If you talk about learning and how to learn things, they'll tell you that the best way to learn something is to become a teacher, to teach it.

[6 : 05] Teach a class on something. You want to really learn something well, you teach it. And so Jesus had been teaching his disciples for a while now, and this was their opportunity to take what they had learned and share it with others.

And it's a great way to learn something for yourself in the best way. In verse 31, he said this, and he said to them, come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while, for there were many coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.

There were crowds everywhere. They had gone out to the cities and villages, and I don't know if people had followed them back or what, but the fame of Jesus and his disciples along with it had gone out abroad, and people were hearing, and they knew about Jesus and what he was doing, and people were coming for different reasons.

Many came just to be healed. I've been dealing with this sickness or disease all my life, and here's an opportunity to have some relief. Others were curious what he had to say.

He was talking about the kingdom of God and the kingdom of God that had been prophesied and promised for centuries to Israel, but because of all the crowds and the people constantly demanding from his own disciples who had sent out to heal, and they were constantly coming to him, and they didn't have any time to rest.

[7 : 29] So he said, hey, let's take an opportunity. You all look tired, and I'm sure they were, so let's find a deserted private place to allow you an opportunity to rest for a while.

Verse 32, so they departed to a deserted place in the boat by themselves. As we've noticed here in the book of Mark, a lot of the ministry of Jesus, at this time anyway, was going back and forth across the Sea of Galilee to different towns right there on the Sea of Galilee.

And so they have this boat that they've been going back and forth in. They get into the boat, and they're going to go to a more private place, a place where there's no people. And then it says this, but the multitudes saw them departing, and many knew him and ran there on foot from all the cities. They arrived before them and came together to him. Notice when Jesus told his disciples, let's go to a private place, that he didn't invite the crowds to go with them.

But regardless, they noticed, hey, I see Jesus getting into the boat. Let's go. And so I imagine the distance from where they were to the place they were going was probably shorter by boat, you know, a straight line.

[8 : 45] And these people, they saw where they were going and ran around. They took the long way, but they actually got there before Jesus and his disciples. I guess they were motivated. And it says this, and Jesus, when he came out, saw a great multitude.

And it says this, he was moved with compassion for them because they were like sheep, not having a shepherd. So he began to teach them many things.

You can imagine you're ministering to all these people, doing miracles, serving them, teaching them, these huge crowds, and then you just need a break.

Have you ever been, you know, just, you've been doing things for days on end, maybe serving others, and then you just need a break and you just need a chance to get away.

And then you try to and another need shows up. More people show up. And what's the, what would you likely feel? I'd probably feel kind of annoyed, right?

[9 : 50] Come on, guys. I've just been with you for days, for weeks. But it says here, this is so interesting, he saw the multitude and instead of being annoyed, said he was moved with compassion for them because they were like sheep, not having a shepherd.

And this really shows the heart of Jesus, the heart of the Father. His compassion for not just those people there, but his compassion for all people.

In Hebrews chapter 5, it talks about Jesus, specifically, being our high priest, the high priest of his people, the one who represents us to the Father.

And it talks about why he's such a great high priest. It says this in Hebrews chapter 5, verse 2, it says this about Jesus. He can have compassion on those who are ignorant and going astray since he himself is also subject to weakness.

Jesus looked around and he saw people who were weak, who were going astray, who were looking for a guide, somebody to show them the way. And he had compassion.

[11 : 12] And it says here in Hebrews that Jesus actually has more capacity than even his Father, even Father God, to have compassion.

And we think, well, how could that possibly be? But it says here, why? Since he himself is also, or also, was subject to weakness.

Jesus knew what it was like. He knew the frailty that we live as human beings. The weaknesses that we experience in life.

And so he can be a compassionate Savior, a compassionate Lord. And he is. Then it talks about them being like sheep, not having a shepherd.

The people needed someone to lead them. And we all need someone to lead us. We need God to show us the way.

[12 : 14] And this is really the whole story of the Bible. It's that we need God. That's the whole, if you sum up the whole story of the Bible, that's what it is. Is that we need God.

We need him. It says this, that he began to teach them. He began to teach them. So, these were sheep that needed a shepherd.

And they didn't need just somebody to take care of them. And ultimately, right, he meets their physical needs. But the most important thing, and we'll look at this more in a minute, is meeting their needs for knowledge, for guidance, for wisdom, to know which way they should go.

One of the things I think about in reading this is this whole back and forth. there's two lessons here. One is, hey, whether it's doing ministry, and this is, they're serving others through ministry, and preaching the gospel, preaching the words of the kingdom, presenting people the kingdom of God. But you can serve people in all kinds of different ways. And we need to be willing, ought to be willing, to spend ourselves in service to others.

[13 : 33] just like we see here with Jesus and his disciples. We need to be willing to spend ourselves, not just to be focused on ourselves and making sure that we're always taken care of, but spend ourselves taking care of others, serving others, especially when it comes to the gospel.

But on the other hand, to provide a little bit of balance to that, we see Jesus being concerned for his own disciples, saying, hey, you need an opportunity to rest as well.

We have to be concerned for our own rest and making sure that through the long term, we're able to serve well. And as we've talked about, in the ministry of Jesus and his 12 disciples, their ministry wasn't a lifetime ministry, even though with the disciples, it ended up being a lifetime ministry, but there was this three years of intense ministry ministry that they had.

And they were on the go for three years, constantly. But even with that kind of hectic schedule, they really needed to rest. So we need to make sure that both we're spending our lives in service to others, but also taking care of ourselves as needed.

I think that's especially an important message to moms. Moms tend to spend a lot of energy and time, especially when you got little ones.

[14 : 59] Lots of time and energy and it seems sometimes like it never ends. 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Dad gets to go to work and get a little bit of a break.

And so the importance of rest as we're spending our lives serving others. Verse 35 says this, when the day was now far spent, his disciples came to him and said, this is a deserted place and already the hour is late.

They're saying, hey, it's past dinner time. I'm hungry. I'm sure these people are hungry. And this is a deserted place. There's not like food trucks or restaurants around here.

So let's go ahead and tell the people, get out of here, go get some food. food. In verse 36 he says that, send them away that they may go into the surrounding country and villages and buy themselves bread for they have nothing to eat.

But he answered and said to them, you give them something to eat. Can you imagine being one of the disciples? We're actually going to look at the account of this in John. And in John it says that it was actually Philip, his disciple Philip, that came up to him and asked him, imagine you're Philip and you're saying, hey Jesus, I've got a great idea, let's send the people away so they can, you know, it's dinner time, it's past dinner time, let's send these people away so they can get some food.

[16 : 31] And Jesus says, well you give them something to eat. Now we find out later how many people there were. It says there were 5,000. Now it doesn't say in Mark, but in Matthew, I think in Luke, it says there were 5,000 besides women and children.

That means the 5,000 was just the men. So I can imagine it was probably likely double, maybe even more. 10,000 people.

And that's difficult for us. Do you ever have a hard time imagining when somebody says, oh this church can seat like 250 people? I'm trying to imagine and visualize that.

But 5,000 people is a lot of people. That's a small stadium. 10,000 people is kind of a medium-sized stadium.

In fact, I looked it up. I was trying to think of some large venues here in our area. Anybody ever been to the Dayton Dragons field? Yeah? Any guesses?

[17 : 32] How many people can sit there? Shout it out. Any guesses? 8,000. Okay. All right. You're pretty close actually, Sarah.

I looked it up. It was about 7,000 plus I think if you sit on the grass, they have a grassy knoll out there. It's another thousand I think or something like that.

So you're right about it's just about 8,000 that can sit there. And then I also looked up the Nutter Center. Anybody ever been to the Nutter Center? Yeah?

That's bigger. Right? And the Nutter Center can seat about 11,000 people. So imagine all the people at max capacity in the Nutter Center.

That's how many people were surrounding Jesus and his disciples. That is a lot of people. And there's a benefit to them going out to get some food.

[18 : 27] Hey, maybe we can get some time to just relax and maybe get some food for ourselves as well. All right, where are we at? Go back to verse 37.

He answered and said to them, you give them something to eat. So imagine all these people filling up the size of a stadium. What? And so his disciples responded to him and said, shall we go and buy 200 denarii worth of bread and give them something to eat?

What are you talking about, Jesus? And so my first question is, why would Jesus say this? I mean, it seems like Jesus wasn't really expecting them to feed these people.

in fact, it says so explicitly. If you turn to the book of John chapter 6, we're actually going to be looking at John quite a bit. So if you want to keep a finger and mark chapter 6, we'll look at John chapter 6 several times here.

John chapter 6, verse 5 and 6 says this, Jesus lifted up his eyes and seeing a great multitude coming toward him, he said to Philip, where shall we buy bread that these may eat?

[19 : 37] But this he said to test him, for he himself knew what he would do. And we kind of got that idea from this account, but here it says so explicitly, Jesus knew what the plan was, but he still asked the question.

And it says here in John that he said it to test him. And I'm thinking to myself, well, what exactly is the test here? Was the test maybe that Philip was supposed to come up with this idea himself, or does Philip think that this is possible?

really, I think this is just a way for Jesus to kind of put into the minds of his own disciples the magnitude of the need for feeding all these people, and what he was about to do, and really how the magnitude of the miracle that he was about to perform.

This is a lot of people, and just thinking through the idea of me, or us, twelve, feeding all these disciples, on the face of it is absurd.

And he actually says this, he says, shall we go and buy 200 denarii worth of bread and give them something to eat? And so he talks about a specific amount of money.

[20 : 57] A denarii was a Roman coin, and it really represented about a day's labor. So if you were a day laborer, you worked in the fields, let's say, you would earn typically one denarii.

And so it says, he mentions having 200 denarii to spend. 300 denarii was about a year's income. Again, in John chapter 6, verse 7, it says that Philip answered him and said, 200 denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may have a little.

He's saying with 200 denarii, we could only buy enough food for everybody to have a little snack, basically. And that's it. I imagine he probably looked into his purse, remember that Jesus and his disciples had a treasury.

They actually had money that they carried with them, which is useful when you're trying to travel. You remember who the treasurer was, it was Judas Iscariot, who it says would dip into the treasury and steal from it.

[22 : 12] But I imagine that probably what's going on is, hey, he knows how much they've got on them. They've got about 200 denarii, and he said, you want me to exhaust the whole of our treasury?

And even if we do that, it's not going to completely feed these people. It might curb their hunger a little bit. But what are you talking about, Jesus? Verse 38, but he said to them, all right, how many loaves do you have?

Go and see. Go out and see if you can find some food from among the people. And when they found it, they said, five loaves and two fishes. We find out in another account that they found it from a young boy who had these five loaves and two fishes.

Verse 39, then he commanded them to make them all sit down in groups on the green grass. So they sat down in ranks in hundreds and in fifties.

So Jesus had them sit down. Why would he do that? Well, he's getting ready to feed them. And I'm not sure if the people, did the people know what was going on?

[23 : 24] Jesus just asked them to sit down. I don't know if he mentioned it was sitting down for a meal or what. Interesting, this word sit actually is the same word.

It's used for sitting but also used for laying. And when it says that they laid Jesus in the manger when he was a babe, it's the same word, to lie down. And this was actually the posture where the Jews, the people of the time, would eat their meals.

Instead of sitting at a table on a chair like we do, you know, chairs are actually expensive furniture. It takes people a lot of time to make them. We can mass manufacture them today, a lot easier. Most people have chairs but back then you would just lay down, you kind of recline with a mat in front of you where you would serve the food.

And so he had them lie down, sit down, lie down on the green grass, reclining in preparation for a meal. The other thing it says is that he put them in ranks.

And that word rank is actually the word for square. And it was a word used when it came to farming, really vegetable gardening. And that same word was actually used for the beds of your vegetable garden, rows, if you will.

[24 : 51] And so it seems he organized them into these rows for them to sit down in preparation for a large distribution of food.

You know, we went to two weddings these last two weeks and they were feeding a lot of people, not 5,000, not 10,000, but, you know, a couple hundred. And typically in both of these weddings you had people go through a buffet line, you know, that's a good way to do it.

But they didn't have a buffet table here, so they just had to distribute the food in kind of an orderly manner. And so in order to do that he was setting them in groups so we can know, all right, this group already got some, but this group hasn't, maybe get some help from some of the people in the crowds.

And so he's just trying to provide some order here. Another thing you'll notice is it says that he had them lie down in the green grass.

Isn't that kind of an odd detail? Isn't all grass green? Well, not always, right? Grass is only green when. Summer, spring, and then it starts to die off in the winter, right?

[26 : 08] It seems like an irrelevant detail, but it's interesting. You see so many of these details in the Bible that provide this air of authenticity. There's an interesting note in the book of John, John chapter 6, in verse 4, John 6, 4, it says this.

It says that this took place near the time of the Passover feast. Anybody ever been to Israel? A few? I was just talking to the Jordans.

And Israel is, what kind of climate is it? It's an arid type climate, right? A lot of desert. Is there a ton of green grass?

No. No, it's kind of like California. Have you ever been to California? California? There's actually a small window of time when you've got a lot of green pasture in a place like California or a place like Israel.

And what time of year is that? Well, it's in the spring, right? That's when you get spring showers, at least we get that here. You get more rain, and you get the weather that's great for green grass.

[27 : 21] And so there's this alignment of stories. You know, there's a lot of people out there who will look at the Bible and say, ah, these are just made-up stories. But you see these little details that provide this air of authenticity to the stories.

Hey, this was during the time of the Passover. When is the Passover? It's in the spring, March and April, around that time period, similar to our Easter, Resurrection Sunday.

And so these details, we find that they line up. There would have been green grass at the same time as the Passover.

Another interesting thing as I read about this green grass, there's this little, just this little small thing about this account that points to who Jesus is.

He's about to feed these people who are famished. It's past the time for a meal. A lot of these people are probably traveling. In fact, a lot of commentators say that these crowds are probably from a lot of people traveling to Israel for the Passover, to Jerusalem for the Passover.

[28 : 30] And there's major thoroughfares in this area for people traveling from their different homes to go observe the Passover feast in Jerusalem. So these are people who are traveling, a lot of them.

They're famished. And there's a popular psalm, Psalm 23. How does Psalm 23 go? It's talking about the Lord, God our creator.

It says this, the Lord is my shepherd. The shepherd who has compassion for the sheep. The sheep who need a shepherd.

The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside the still waters.

Remember, this is right on the Sea of Galilee. A still lake, at least most of the time, as long as there's not a storm brewing. He leads me beside the still waters.

[29 : 29] He restores my soul. I don't know how many people were thinking about this psalm when this whole thing was happening. Isn't that incredible?

Just all these little tiny connection points throughout the scriptures as we read about the account of Jesus, pointing them to the identity of who he is.

The Lord is my shepherd. Jesus is our great shepherd. Back to Mark 6 and verse 41. And when he had taken the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, blessed and broke the loaves and gave them to his disciples to set before them.

And the two fish he divided among them all. He took these two loaves, excuse me, five loaves and two fishes. And then it says that he prayed.

And so I wanted to just talk briefly about praying for meals. that's something very common, right, among Christians, among Jews, among a lot of different believers.

[30 : 41] But did you know if you go through the Bible and look for a commandment, whether in the Old Testament or New Testament, to pray for a meal, you won't find any. There's nowhere in the Bible that says that we ought to, whether it's Jews in the Old Testament or Christians in the New Testament, that is part of our kind of religious observance, that we should always pray before meals.

But at the same time, we see many examples of this, especially in the life of Jesus. We see it here. There's another account of Jesus feeding 4,000.

In Matthew chapter 15, verse 36, it says this, And he took the seven loaves and the fish and gave thanks, broke them, and gave them to his disciples, and the disciples gave them to the multitude. He gave thanks before they ate. Also, in the Last Supper, Jesus' last supper with his disciples, this is in Matthew 26, verse 26, it says this, And as they were eating, Jesus took bread and blessed it and broke it and gave it to the disciples and said, Take, eat, this is my body.

So he took the bread and he blessed it. Or it says he blessed and broke it. And then another account I found is Paul when he was shipwrecked.

[32 : 07] Remember when Paul was shipwrecked? Acts chapter 27, verse 35, And when he had said these things, he took bread and he gave thanks to God in the presence of them all.

He gave thanks. And when he had broken it, he began to eat. So here it says that Jesus, let me go back to it, he says he looked up to heaven, blessed and broke the loaves.

And so it seems to say here that he blessed the loaves before they ate. If you look in John's account, going back to John chapter 6, verse 11, it says it's the same thing.

It says this, it doesn't say that he blessed the food. It says here that when he had given thanks. But we see this kind of similarity. We see both things.

We see giving of thanks for food and also there's a blessing when it comes to praying for a meal. In our day and age, I can think of three phrases that we use when talking about praying for a meal.

[33 : 18] And they are giving thanks, let's give thanks, you know, for the food. Another one is let's bless the food, right? And another one is saying grace, right? You say grace. But I want to talk about this concept of blessing the food.

We sometimes say when we're praying, Lord, bless this food to the health and nourishment of our bodies. That's a common phrase.

But did you know that there is nowhere in the Bible where it actually tells us to bless our food? In fact, if we go back to the Old Testament, I'm just going to look at a couple of places where it actually talks about food and how we should acknowledge God and the eating of our food.

In Exodus chapter 23, verse 25, it says this, that God is the one who blesses our food and water. He's talking to Israel and he's talking about their obedience in the land. And he says, if you are obedient, then God will bless your food and your water.

[34 : 31] In Deuteronomy chapter 8, verse 10, it says this, this is part of the law of Moses, Deuteronomy chapter 8, verse 10.

It says this, and you shall eat and be full. You shall eat and be full. And you shall bless the Lord your God for the good land he has given you.

You shall do what? You shall bless what? Your food? No, you shall bless the Lord your God.

Bless the Lord your God for the good land that he has given you. So in this commandment to Israel, there's no commandment to bless the food, but to bless the Lord, to bless him.

And really, there is no need or reason to bless the food. God already has blessed. In fact, if we look back at the creation account, Genesis 1.29 says this, and God said, see, I have given you every herb that yields seed, which is on the face of the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed.

[35 : 46] To you it shall be for food. And then a couple verses later, Genesis 1.31, then God saw everything that he had made, including the food, and indeed, it was very good.

It was very good. God created food for us to enjoy. He created it. It is blessed because he has blessed it. There's also a verse in the New Testament in 1 Timothy chapter 4.

Paul's talking to some people who are being persuaded by some deceivers about how they should live their lives, and you need to pay attention to all these like fleshly things, and really, I think he's speaking to this concept of Gnosticism that was popular in the day where anything physical is evil, and we need to just avoid physical things, avoid certain foods, even avoiding marriage.

So in 1 Timothy 4.3, he's talking about this, and he's talking about those who are forbidding to marry, and those who are commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.

For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving. So when we eat, we should receive it with thanksgiving, giving thanks to God.

[37 : 19] And when we bless, when we say the blessing, we don't bless the food as if it's cursed, and we need to bless it and restore it to what it was.

Now, in our modern day of processed foods, maybe we do need to bless the food. The cheese whiz that we're going to put on our crackers, or the lucky charms.

But in all seriousness, we need to thank the Lord, and that's what a blessing was. And actually, if you look, there's many many Hebrew blessings.

That's a common thing among the Jews, is to say blessings in their prayer life. But they're always blessing, not the things, but blessing God and thanking Him.

Going back to what it says in Deuteronomy, and you shall bless the Lord your God for the good land that He has given you. There's a common prayer among the Jews, and it has been a prayer for thousands of years, at least up to the time, around the time of Jesus.

[38 : 31] In fact, it's likely that this prayer was around during the time of Jesus, and even likely that this is what Jesus actually said when it says here in Mark that He blessed.

That He blessed. And then He broke the loaves. He said a blessing. Not to bless the food, but to bless God the Father. There's a prayer called, let me see if I can get this right, bracha.

Bracha. Uchish means blessing. Bracha means blessing. There's a blessing for the food. It's been around for a long, long time. And Jews even today will say this, and I'll say it in Hebrew the best I can.

It goes like this. Baruch ata Adonai Eloheinu. Melech halaom hamotzi lechem men haaretz.

And in Hebrew what that means is, blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the universe, who brings forth bread from the earth.

[39 : 41] And for many Jews today and Jews back then, that is how they would start their meal. An opportunity to bless not the food, but to bless the Lord because of His provision as creator of the horror.

The other thing I want to bring up is kind of forms or postures of prayer. We have so many, right? And here we actually see Jesus.

Actually, it sounds like He's holding the food. And what does He do when He prays? Does He bow His head and fold His hands? No. Here, He actually says He looks up to heaven.

He's looking up to what's up in heaven. There's the birds up there. The Bible says it's the Lord God who is in the heavens. His throne is in the heavens.

Jesus today, it says, is seated with the right hand of the Father in the heavens. Jesus looked up.

You know, we, many times, traditionally bow our heads.

[40 : 40] We'll close our eyes. We'll fold our hands. Here He's standing. But there are other times in the Bible where we see Jesus kneeling. We see times when people are bowing their heads in prayer in the Bible.

We even see times where those people lay prostrate on the ground, their whole body on the floor as they're praying. We fold our hands a lot of times when we pray.

But there are times in the Bible Paul speaks of it and James does too. He talks about lifting up holy hands to the Lord. And so we traditionally fold our hands.

But I've seen some people when they pray, they lift up their hands like this. Certainly is biblical, isn't it? I don't think we should make too much of posture, right?

There's lots of different postures that we can take. The important thing is the posture of our heart, right? Where is our hearts?

[41 : 39] Whether we're lifting our hands, folding our hands, bowing our heads, lifting up our heads to the heavens, closing our eyes, opening them. It's okay to pray with your eyes open. Even though it's one of those funny, I don't know if you've ever had this.

You know, in our house at the dinner table, we teach the kids to close your eyes and bow your head. And inevitably, you know, the four-year-old is looking around during prayer time and they see somebody else with their eyes open.

And they're going to tell mommy and daddy, mommy, daddy, they had their eyes open. It's like, oh. They don't realize the hypocrisy in that.

It's cute. But the form of prayer, the physical posture that we take is not nearly as important as the posture of our hearts. A posture of humility towards the Lord, acknowledging him for all the blessings that we enjoy.

And a posture in our hearts of just tender affection towards him. He's been so good to us from the very beginning of creation. And we should, when we come to him in prayer, thank him to have a tender affection towards him.

[42 : 51] And, you know, in speaking of that, it's so easy, isn't it, to turn, especially mealtime prayers that are, you know, regular, to turn them into just religious practices, religious rituals that you just do.

It's so easy to do. And we really need to try to avoid that. We could say the same prayer over and over again, and that's fine. In fact, Jesus might have, like we talked about, said this blessing, which was something he may have said at every meal.

And that's totally fine to do that. But we need to be careful about turning our prayer life into just a ritualistic thing. You know, we don't have to pray at every meal.

I know, I've seen some people, I've experienced this in, you know, early years of my Christian life, feeling like if I didn't pray for a meal, maybe God will be upset at me. Or maybe the food won't, you know, it'll make me sick or something.

And that's certainly not the case. We should always have an attitude of gratitude towards the Lord. But be careful not to turn our mealtime prayers into a religious ritual.

[43 : 57] At our home, we typically pray at dinnertime for the meal. But a lot of times, breakfast and lunch, I mean, a lot of times those are kind of, people are doing things and we're not necessarily sitting down.

The family isn't sitting down. I'm not always there at breakfast and lunchtime in our household. And that's totally fine. The next thing it talks about is he broke the loaves. And so this is really describing a miracle.

But that's so subtle, isn't it? I mean, it's just like, oh, he's just passing out bread. But he had started with five loaves and two fishes. And so he said, all right, 12 disciples, we got people in their groups and we're just going to start passing out.

And so he'd break off a piece of bread and here you go, Philip. Here you go, Andrew. Here you go, Peter. Here you go, John. And just passing it out, passing out the broken loaves.

He just keeps going, keeps going. You know, this wasn't a demonstrative miracle like the parting of the Red Sea, even though, I mean, this is an obvious miracle to everyone.

[45 : 02] It just wasn't highly dramatic. And I think, I think God, you know, obviously there have been dramatic miracles in the Bible, but not always.

This one was subtle. It's similar to, I think, of some other miracles in the Old Testament. Remember the jar of oil for the widow? Was it Elisha or Elijah?

I can't remember. Elijah, with a J, performed with the widow and she was starving and he asked her to get a jar of oil and there was just a little bit in it, but she just kept going and going and going as they would use it, pour it out.

We'll continue on here, verse 42. So they all ate and they were filled. This wasn't just a snack. This didn't just curb their appetite. This was a full meal. Everyone got plenty to make them satisfied.

And they took up 12 baskets full of fragments and of the fish. Now, at Cicier, they took up 12 baskets. And these baskets were probably baskets that a lot of people had, especially if you're traveling.

[46 : 22] You would carry some kind of basket with you for your supplies and your food, especially. So a lot of people would, there's probably lots of baskets around. But it says there, when it was all said and done, when everybody had eaten, it seems anyway, that there were 12 baskets left.

Well, what's behind all this? Why 12 baskets? Why were there five loaves? Why were there two fishes? You ever wondered that? And it's interesting.

If you read all four accounts, the exact same numbers, 5,000 people, 5,000 men anyway, 12 baskets left over, 5 loaves, 2 fish, all of them, the exact same numbers.

And if you've ever wanted to know that, I do as well. I have no idea why those numbers, why 12 baskets left over. I mean, the best I can think of is, well, maybe this was just the baskets for the disciples.

I mean, they just served 5,000, 10,000 people. They probably didn't get to eat yet. Maybe they did. I don't know. After they served, maybe they sat down and ate two. Maybe this was extra.

[47 : 30] Who knows? I'm not sure. We'll read this last verse here. Now, those who had eaten the loaves were about 5,000 men. 5,000 men.

And like we said before, in Matthew 14, where it talks about this, it says that this was besides the women and children. So it's hard to know, right? Sometimes you have 5,000 men.

If they all have wives and families, it could be 20,000, 30,000. But probably not. I imagine there was a lot more maybe men traveling by themselves than there were families.

So I would guess maybe about 10,000 people. A lot of people that were fed. A few takeaways as we kind of wrap up here.

This, again, is just another opportunity in the scriptures, another opportunity in the ministry of Jesus to identify who he was.

[48 : 23] He's the shepherd that leads us beside the still waters, that makes us to lie down in green pastures, who restores our soul, who satisfies our soul.

Back again, and if you go ahead and turn now to John chapter 6, we're going to read a bit more from there. But in verse 14, John chapter 6, it says this, In this account, we read something we don't read about in Mark.

There are people who recognized because of this miracle, because of this and probably other things that they had seen, this is the guy, this is the Messiah that the prophets have told us about. Let's make him king right now. Jesus says, not the time, guys. It'll come, but not right now. And they mentioned it's the prophet, the prophet.

We talked about this in the last few weeks. I think most certainly they're talking about who Moses told them about. Who Moses told them about.

[49 : 47] Moses said, there's a prophet coming who will be like me. Him you must listen to. The other thing is that another point on who Jesus was we get from John chapter 6.

And this really comes a little bit after the fact. Jesus fed these 5,000 or 5,000 men anyway. And then a few days later, it seems, there's this other account in John where people come to him. And they were either there or they heard about what had happened with the feeding of the 5,000. And they come to him and they say this. This is in John chapter 6, 26.

I guess, I don't have it written down here, so let me look it up. John 6, 20. Where should we start? 22. And on the following day, when the people who were standing on the other side of the sea saw that there was no other boats there except the one which his disciples had entered and that Jesus had entered the boat with his disciples, but his disciples had gone away alone.

However, other boats came from Tiberias near the place where they ate bread after the Lord had given thanks. When the people there saw that Jesus was not there nor his disciples, they also got into boats and they came to Capernaum seeking Jesus.

[51 : 08] And when they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, Rabbi, when did you come here? And Jesus answered them and he said, Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek me not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and you were filled.

Did not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set his seal on him.

Jesus was frustrated with these guys because they weren't looking for the Lord. They were looking for a miracle or to fill their bellies.

This is the lesson for us. It's so easy for us, even as Christians, right, to focus on the temporal, to focus on the fleshly, the natural, and not on the eternal things, on the spiritual.

The next verse says this, Then they said to him, What shall we do that we may work the works of God? And Jesus answered and said to them, This is the work of God. They're talking about miracles. We want to see the miracles.

[52 : 18] This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he sent. You know, miracles, even in the time of Jesus, was a distraction to so many people.

It was. The miracles Jesus performed was a distraction to many people because they were interested in the drama, the excitement of it all.

And they missed the most important thing, Jesus himself and who he was. Therefore they said to him, What sign will you perform then that we may see it and believe you?

What work will you do? All right, we'll believe you, but we want to see a sign. We want to see a miracle. And they said this, Our fathers ate the manna in the desert.

As it is written, God gave them bread from heaven to eat. They're pointing back to the miracle of Moses in the desert. We want to see another miracle.

[53 : 20] Bread from heaven. Then Jesus said to them, Most assuredly I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. That bread that Moses gave you guys, I know it came from the sky, but that's not the real bread.

It's not the bread of life. Verse 33, For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.

Then he said to them, Then they said to him, Lord, give us this bread always. And Jesus said to them, I am the bread of life. And he who comes to me shall never hunger, and he who believes in me shall never thirst.

But I said to you that you have seen me and yet you don't believe. I'm the bread. Forget about the manna. Forget about the loaves. You've made it a distraction.

I am the bread that fulfills and satisfies your most important need. And this is a risk even today. You know, we have food ministries, we have compassion ministries as Christians that we serve other people.

[54 : 33] Christians have built hospitals and distribute food all over the world. And you know, the unbelievers out there are very happy to have Christians do these ministries of compassion.

And they're fine. They're wonderful. They're great. But if those same Christians start teaching the word of God, talking about sin and righteousness and judgment, and that Jesus Christ is the only way to the Father, you'll see their true colors come out.

They don't like that. You can feed the hungry. You can do all those things. Don't talk about Jesus being the only way. And there will be worldly pressure, pressure from the world on your life to just relegate your ministry, your Christian life towards feeding the hungry and doing nice things for people, serving them in those kinds of ways.

to turn our gospel into a purely social gospel where we're just being kind and nice and loving to people, which is good and which we ought to do.

But what is our primary focus as Christians is to proclaim the word of God as Jesus did here. The people came and said, we want food, we want miracles.

[56 : 00] Jesus said, it's a mistake. You're missing it. Our primary focus is the word of the gospel that Jesus Christ has died for the sins of the world.

The word of his grace. And we need to stay focused on that regardless of the pushback from the world. Regardless of the consequences. Back to John chapter 6, verse 47, most assuredly I say to you that he who believes in me has everlasting life.

I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness and they're dead. God fed millions of Jews in the wilderness.

He fed the manna from heaven and they're dead. Feeding someone a meal is tremendous.

It's great. It's compassionate. But what is the true need that we have? Manna sustained them in the wilderness for a while but they all dropped dead in the wilderness.

[57 : 13] Their mortality eventually caught up with them just as it will eventually catch up with us. Verse 50, this is the bread which comes down from heaven that one may eat of it and not die.

I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread he will live forever and the bread that I shall give is my flesh which I shall give for the life of the world.

The most important bread is Jesus himself. He's the most needful kind of bread and it's important that we partake of him.

Christianity is not just a social religion though so many people want it to be just that. Christianity is life from the dead.

Eternal life. Life forever. So many people see religion and Christianity grouped in with it as just a way to soothe our souls because, you know, to make us feel better about the briefness of our lives and the pain that we experience in life.

[58 : 21] And religion is just a way for us to kind of be distracted by that or to give a little bit of comfort. Christianity is not that. Christianity is life from death.

And that is the word that we preach to the world. And we can fill some stomachs along the way and that's good that we ought to do that but bring with it the ever living word of God to satisfy men's souls.

Amen? Let's finish up there. Father, we love you. Thank you for your word. Thank you for the word from heaven. Thank you for all that you have done for us.

Father, I ask that in light of these scriptures that we would continually focus not just on the temporary, not just on the fleshly, but on the spiritual, on the eternal, that we would not just fill people's stomachs, not just meet people's needs through compassion, but have compassion on their souls and show people the way to have eternal life in you.

Thank you for your word and for the bread of life that you gave for us in Jesus Christ. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. All right.
[59 : 41] Thanks, everyone. Amen.