

Third Presbyterian Church
Midweek Bible Study
Miracle Series
Miracle Feeding of the 5000
Lesson 2 – Jesus I Can’t, But You Can!!

John 6:1-15 (NIV)

¹ Some time after this, Jesus crossed to the far shore of the Sea of Galilee (that is, the Sea of Tiberias),
² and a great crowd of people followed him because they saw the miraculous signs he had performed on the sick.
³ Then Jesus went up on a mountainside and sat down with his disciples. ⁴ The Jewish Passover Feast was near. ⁵
When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread
for these people to eat?" ⁶ He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do. ⁷
Philip answered him, "Eight months' wages would not buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!"
⁸ Another of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, spoke up, ⁹ "Here is a boy with five small barley
loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?" ¹⁰ Jesus said, "Have the people sit down."
There was plenty of grass in that place, and the men sat down, about five thousand of them.
¹¹ Jesus then took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed to those who were seated as much as they wanted. He
did the same with the fish. ¹² When they had all had enough to eat, he said to his disciples, "Gather the pieces
that are left over. Let nothing be wasted." ¹³ So they gathered them and filled twelve baskets with the pieces of
the five barley loaves left over by those who had eaten. ¹⁴ After the people saw the miraculous sign that Jesus
did, they began to say, "Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world." ¹⁵ Jesus, knowing that they
intended to come and make him king by force, withdrew again to a mountain by himself.

1. For what reasons do people follow Jesus today?
2. Why is it hard to have compassion for those who just follow Jesus for selfish benefit?
3. What makes you want to follow Jesus?
4. Why do we face a difficult situation and initially leave God out?
 - a. How does this thinking cause us to suffer more and longer than we should?
5. The Sermon stated that Faith is not a Synonym for wishing. Please explain and include in explain the definition of faith and wishing as outlined in the sermon.
6. The Sermon States that “Jesus cuts to heal.” Explain this statement and give personal example if possible.
7. God is the Giant Killer. What giant in your life has God slayed that you can give testimony about?
8. If something is not transferred to Jesus it will not be transformed by Jesus. Explain this truth by giving testimony of something you have transferred to Jesus and witnessed transformation by Jesus.
9. How can you explain total Dependence on God?
10. With what situations in life do you have a difficult time trusting God?
11. Share your main takeaway from the sermon and the lesson?

DIVISION OVERVIEW: Man, Needs of— Christ, Bread of Life: John 6 reveals Jesus to be the Provision for every human and material need. Jesus first demonstrated the truth, then He began to preach and teach it. He showed that He was...

- concerned with every need in life (even a missed meal, John 6:1-15).
- concerned with every overpowering need (the calming of a storm, John 6:16-21).

No matter how small the need or how stormy the problem, Jesus is the Provision, the Bread of Life, and the power to meet man's every need. He can provide a single meal and He can calm the most stormy problem.

(6:1-15) Introduction: Jesus Christ is the Bread of Life, the Provision for human and material needs. (See outline—Matthew 6:25-34 and notes—Matthew 6:25-34.) Note two significant facts.

First, trying to meet human needs by any other source than Christ is doomed to failure and will not satisfy.

Second, faith and trust are essential for God to meet human need. However, there are several levels of faith and trust. This is the lesson man must learn in order to see that Christ is the Bread of Life, the Provision for human need.

1. The setting (v.1-6).

2. Lesson 1: there is a pessimistic faith (v.7).

3. Lesson 2: there is an optimistic but questioning faith (v.8-9).

4. Lesson 3: there is a positive, unswerving faith (v.10-13).

5. Lesson 4: there is a materialistic profession (v.14-15).

1. (6:1-6) Jesus Christ, Concerns— Ministering: the setting is descriptive. Jesus crossed over the sea or lake of Galilee (see Deeper Study #1—Mark 1:16 ; note—Luke 8:22). The lake was about thirteen miles long and eight miles wide. The feverish, surging crowds saw where He was heading, so they rushed around the lake by foot. The journey was about nine miles.

Note the words "followed" (*ēkolouthei*^{PWS:1549}) and "saw" or beheld (*etheōroun*). The two words mean that the people *had been following* Jesus for a long time and *kept on following Him, beholding the ministry* of His miracles upon people (the Greek imperfect active tense).

Jesus was tired and weary from the pressure of facing the crowd day after day. He sought refuge across the lake on the top of some unknown mountain. He needed time to be alone with God and with His disciples. It was the Passover season, a time when thousands of pilgrims flooded Jerusalem and the surrounding suburbs.

The picture is that of Jesus sitting on the mountainside, lifting up His eyes from resting upon His knees and seeing "a great company" of thousands streaming across the fields and up the mountain toward Him. The "great company" included both those who had followed Him around the lake and pilgrims who were caught up in the excitement of hearing about Jesus, the proclaimed Messiah.

Jesus used the occasion to demonstrate two concerns.

1. His concern for meeting the needs of man, even the most minute need of missing a meal. There is no need that Jesus does not want to meet. The multitude that had been following Him for days had just made a nine mile journey, having rushed ("followed," *eklouthei*) to keep from losing Him. They were not only hungry and apparently out of food, but they were in mountainous country, an area without any possibility of purchasing food. The point is this: the people were so desperate to find and keep up with Him that they just forgot about eating. As usual, Jesus was filled with compassion for those who so desperately sought Him out. He used the occasion to teach the great lesson: He will meet even the most minute need of men. He asked His disciples, "Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?"

2. His concern to strengthen the disciples. He knew what He was going to do, but He used the occasion to test and strengthen the disciples, teaching them a tremendous lesson on faith. They were as we are, full of needs; and their greatest need was the same as ours, to grow in faith.

DEEPER STUDY #1 (6:1) "After These Things"

DEEPER STUDY #2 (6:5-15) Faith

2. (6:7) Faith— Pessimism: there is a pessimistic faith. This is seen in Philip. Philip needed to see his faith for what it was—pessimistic. Philip was from Bethsaida, so he was the natural disciple to question Jesus (John 1:44). The disciples either had two hundred denarii in their treasury or else Philip was just pulling a figure out of the air stressing that even such a large amount would not feed the crowd (see Deeper Study #3, Denarii—John 6:7).

1. A pessimistic faith sees money and human resources, and that is all. A pessimistic faith...
 - sees only the available resources. It stresses the hopelessness.
 - stresses the impossibility of the situation.
 - despairs of such meager resources.
 - is swamped by the hopelessness of an answer. (Note the tone of Philip's answer, John 6:7).

2. A pessimistic faith does not see God nor the power of God. A pessimistic faith *professes* God and *professes* Christ to be the Son of God. It professes the belief that Christ has the power to meet the needs of man. It even witnesses the miraculous working of Christ in other instances. But when a problem arises, the immediate response of a pessimistic faith is to see the problem, not the power of God. It does not see the opportunity for the power of God to be demonstrated in conquering the problem and bearing a strong testimony to His name. In the crises of the problem, the power of God seems forgotten.

- a. A pessimistic faith forgets God's glorious power in the past.

"And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish? And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?" (Mark 4:38-40).

"Which when Jesus perceived, he said unto them, O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread? Do ye not yet understand, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up?" (Matthew 16:8-9).

- b. A pessimistic faith fails to think of God's power. It's mind is on earthly things, not on spiritual things. It is carnal, not spiritual.

"For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Romans 8:5-6).

- c. A pessimistic faith feels that the problem is too big for God's power or either too little for God to be interested in.

"And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved? But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible" (Matthew 19:24-26).

- d. A pessimistic faith fears that God's power will fail and the person's faith will be weakened. Therefore, the person is safer to pray weakly, "Lord, if thou will, handle this problem."

"But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. A double minded man is unstable in all his ways" (James 1:6-8).

- e. A pessimistic faith fails to see God's care and love, interest and concern over every little thing that happens to a person.

"Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?" (Matthew 6:26).

"But the very hairs of your head are all numbered" (Matthew 10:30).

- f. A pessimistic faith gives thanks and praise to God for what one has (health, money, things); but fails to trust God for the miraculous (healing and multiplication of resources so that one can better serve and help others).

"Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out? And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you" (Matthew 17:19-20).

- g. A pessimistic faith looks to others for help instead of looking to God and depending upon Him alone.

"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:6-7).

"O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jeremiah 10:23).

"Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain" (Psalms 127:1).

"Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?" (Isaiah 2:22).

- h. A pessimistic faith fails to see that God is glorified when He provides and meets the need.

"But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity" (Phil. 4:10).

"But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God. But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus. Now unto God and our Father be glory for ever and ever" (Phil. 4:18-20).

DEEPER STUDY #3 (6:7) Denarii

3. (6:8-9) Faith— Optimism: there is an optimistic, but questioning faith. This is seen in Andrew. Note three things.

1. An optimistic, questioning faith loves the Lord and is committed to the Lord. Andrew saw Christ's concern, so he went among the crowd and searched for food. He found and gathered all the resources he could.

2. An optimistic, questioning faith lays what it can find before the Lord. No matter how little the resources or how poor the quality, it is all laid before the Lord. The barley bread was the bread of the poor, the very cheapest bread that could be made or bought. It was anything but a delicacy. The two fish were even "small." Note the simple, optimistic faith of Andrew. He had searched and could find nothing but five small barley cakes and two small fish, but he offered what he had found—the *boy* and his *food*—to the Lord.

3. An optimistic, questioning faith does question: "What are they among so many?" The questioning faith often deteriorates into...

- complaining about the problem.
- being anxious about meager resources.
- grumbling over the small provision.
- griping over the poor quality.

A questioning faith looks at the need and then looks at the *meager resources*, both how little and how poor the quality of the resources are, and it questions God. It questions instead of believing God to take care of the problem. The need may be what it is in this event, the need for food; or it may be the need for health, money, deliverance, and a myriad of other human needs. Whatever the need may be, the fundamental need is for one to learn to trust Christ and not to question and doubt His love and care, wisdom and power.

"Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?" (Matthew 6:25).

"Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly father knoweth that ye have need of all these things" (Matthew 6:31-32).

DEEPER STUDY #4 (6:8-9) Andrew

4. (6:10-13) Faith— Positive— Provision— Supply— Necessities: there is a positive, unswerving faith. This is seen in Christ. Christ Himself demonstrated for His disciples the kind of strong faith they were to have in God.

1. Note Jesus' faith.

a. Jesus took what He had and gave thanks to God for what He had. He had only a meager supply of bread. In fact, He could hold all He had in the palm of His hand. But note...

- He did not stand there looking at the meagerness of what He had, questioning, being gripped with despair and hopelessness, wondering how the need was going to be met.
- He looked up and gave thanks to God. The small supply and poor quality did not matter. What mattered was that He had something; there was some provision. A gift, a sacrifice, a resource—small though it was—had been given and laid at His feet for Him to use as He willed. So He took it, being ever so appreciative, and lifted it up to God, giving thanks to God and trusting God to meet the need of the hour. Note how positive and unswerving the act of Christ was. He knew beyond any question that God would meet the need and multiply the resources.

b. Jesus gave what He had, and note: all He could do was distribute what was in His hands and trust God. This He did. He simply gave what He had and God did the rest.

Thought 1. All any man can do is give what he has, what he holds in his hands. But he can do that, and he is expected to do that. If a man so gives, God does the rest. The need will be met. (Note: the needs of the whole world can be met only if we will give what we hold.) So many are holding and grasping after more and more, that the world is reeling in the desperation of hunger and disease, war and death, sin and evil, doomed to live apart from God eternally.

"For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matthew 6:21).

"Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me" (Matthew 19:21).

"And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matthew 22:39).

"He answereth and saith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise" (Luke 3:11).

"I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).

c. Jesus used others to help Him in meeting the need. Note that He gave to the disciples and the disciples gave to the people. His *disciples were essential* to the task. They were the ones made responsible for feeding the people.

⇒ Christ received the offering of the resources, meager as they were.

⇒ Christ trusted God to multiply the resources.

⇒ Christ then gave the supply to the disciples, not to consume, but for the purpose of distributing. This is critical to note.

⇒ The disciples distributed the food and fed the people. They were a vital part of the Lord's plan.

2. Note that God met the need *because* of the positive, unswerving faith of Jesus. God met the people's need and filled them. In fact, and this is extremely important, He *more* than met their need. There was provision *left over*. How much? Twelve baskets full. Why twelve baskets? There were twelve disciples, twelve servants who had so obediently and trustingly helped Christ. Each servant had a supply that would last him for days. God always provides abundantly for His true servants (Phil. 4:19). Note: not a morsel was to be wasted. Every ounce of provision was to be used at some future date.

Thought 1. While a man is giving what he has, he must trust the power and provision of God.

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33).

"For with God nothing shall be impossible" (Luke 1:37).

"But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:19).

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1).

"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Hebrews 11:6).

"Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone" (James 2:17).

"Both riches and honor come of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all" (1 Chron. 29:12).

"I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee" (Job 42:2).

5. (6:14-15) Messiah— Profession: there is a materialistic profession of Jesus. The people professed Jesus to be the Messiah, but they were thinking of an earthly, materialistic king, a Messiah who could meet both their personal and community or national needs (see Deeper Study #2—John 1:20; note—John 1:23).

Jesus had fed and healed them. He had done what every man wanted, met their need for health and food. Therefore, they wanted to set Him up as the King of their lives. They did not want to ever hunger or be sick again, not as long as they lived. They saw in Jesus the possibility of an earthly, human Messiah, One who could provide...

- food for their hunger.
- healing for their sicknesses.
- deliverance from their trials.
- comfort for their sorrows.
- plenty for their wants.
- peace through their disturbances.
- victory over their enemies.

Jesus, of course, can help any person through anything. But the problem with the crowd was their desire for earthly and worldly satisfaction. They thought in terms of the physical and material, not the spiritual. Even when Christ meets physical and material needs, the physical and material are only temporary. They pass away. The Lord's concern is primarily spiritual—spiritual strength and spiritual blessings, the strength and blessings that last forever (see note—Ephes. 1:3). This is the reason most men forsake Christ. He demands the...

- denial of self.

"And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" (Luke 9:23).

- separation from the world.

"Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed" (John 6:26-27).

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Romans 12:1-2).

"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (2 Cor. 6:17-18).

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world" (1 John 2:15-16).

DEEPER STUDY #1

(6:1) "**After These Things**": this is a reference to the closing days of the Galilean ministry, the events covered between Matthew 4:12-14:12. These events are not covered by John. His concentration is the Judaeen ministry of Jesus; therefore, He simply moves over the Galilean events by using the words "after these things."

DEEPER STUDY #2

(6:5-15) **Faith**: Jesus was showing that He was concerned with every little need in life (even a missed meal), and that He was able to provide for every need—if man would just believe Him. Therefore, He taught a necessary lesson: there are four ways to respond to needs. (See note—' Mark 11:22-23.)

DEEPER STUDY #3

(6:7) **Denarii**: one denarii was the average pay for a day's work. The amount in any generation's coinage would be equal to that generation's average daily wage.

DEEPER STUDY #4

(6:8-9) **Andrew**: little is said about Andrew in the New Testament, but what is said shows a faithful and humble follower of the Lord. (Also see Deeper Study #6—Mark 3:18.)

1. Andrew was a follower of John the Baptist (John 1:35-40).
2. Andrew willingly took the second place. He was one of the very first to follow Christ, and he was also one of the very first to bring another person to Christ (his own brother, Peter). However, Andrew was called to take a back seat. He was to live under the shadow of Peter. Throughout the New Testament Peter is always mentioned first, but from all indications Andrew never resented his place. To be with Jesus and to do what Jesus wanted was enough for Andrew.
3. Andrew was the man who was always bringing others to Jesus. He was the focus of attention only three times in the New Testament, and in all three cases he was seen bringing someone to Jesus: Peter (John 1:41), the small boy with the loaves and fish (John 6:8-9), and the Greeks (John 12:22).
4. Andrew was an approachable person. He was able to approach his brother Peter without difficulty, and the small boy with the loaves and fish felt comfortable enough with him to follow him to Jesus. The Greeks also felt comfortable enough to approach Andrew first in seeking an interview with Jesus.