Feeding The Multitudes

**Matthew 14:15-20** NKJV **15** When it was evening, His disciples came to Him, saying, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is already late. Send the multitudes away, that they may go into the villages and buy themselves food." **16** But Jesus said to them, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat." **17** And they said to Him, "We have here only five loaves and two fish." **18** He said, "Bring them here to Me." **19** Then He commanded the multitudes to sit down on the grass. And He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke and gave the loaves to the disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitudes. **20** So they all ate and were filled, and they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments that remained.

**Matthew 15:32-37** NKJV **32** Now Jesus called His disciples to Himself and said, "I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now continued with Me three days and have nothing to eat. And I do not want to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way." **33** Then His disciples said to Him, "Where could we get enough bread in the wilderness to fill such a great multitude?" **34** Jesus said to them, "How many loaves do you have?" And they said, "Seven, and a few little fish." **35** So He commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground. **36** And He took the seven loaves and the fish and gave thanks, broke them and gave them to His disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitude. **37** So they all ate and were filled, and they took up seven large baskets full of the fragments that were left.

In both of these accounts from Matthew we see where Jesus has compassion on a great multitude of people who have gathered to hear His message. The disciples are concerned about the late hour and location of Jesus’ teaching this large group of people.

When the disciples suggest He send the crowds away so that they can go into to the closest towns to purchase food, Jesus tells them there is no need to send the multitude away but that the disciples provide food for them to eat. (This occurs in the first incident.)

When the disciples take inventory of their food they tell the Lord "We have here only five loaves and two fish."

Jesus takes the meager amount of food and instructs the disciples to have the people sit down and He then looks up to heaven blessing the food He begins to divide the food and have the disciples distribute it among the many who are there.

After everyone had eaten his fill they take up the leftovers and filled twelve baskets.

In another similar time the Lord again has compassion on the many that have been following listening for three days. He tells the disciples He does not want to send the crowds away fearing they will “faint on the way." He then takes the small amount of food they have, seven loaves and a few little fish, and having offered thanks He begins to divide the food and have the disciples distribute this to the large gathering.

After they were all filled they again gathered up the remains and filled seven large baskets.

Here from the gospel according to John is the result of both of these mass feedings by our Lord and the lesson that is taught.

**John 6:25-27** NKJV **25** And when they found Him on the other side of the sea, they said to Him, "Rabbi, when did You come here?" **26** Jesus answered them and said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. **27** "Do 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 states that the reason some were following Him was “because you ate of the loaves and were filled.”

Today many people are attracted to a “church” because of the non-spiritual activities they are being offered and not specifically because of a desire to assemble with those of like precious faith and to hear the good news of the gospel with a desire to know all that God has to say to us.

Some people try to make social events equal to spiritual centered gatherings.

While all associations with people of like precious faith are profitable in providing comfort and encouragement, Christ teaches that the spiritual is far above the temporal. Temporal; meaning that which has no lasting effect.

While we are together we are lifted up and encouraged. But, when we depart from each other we go back into an environment of worldly influence and that begins to wear on our stability as Christians.

**Romans 12:2** NKJV **2** And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

**Ephesians 6:12** NKJV **12** For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

**1 John 2:15-16** NKJV **15** Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. **16** For all that is in the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life--is not of the Father but is of the world.

Jesus knew that some who followed Him were motivated by worldly desires, free food.

“Jesus answered them and said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled.” **John 6:26**

Another lesson that can be taken from this statement of Jesus is that they were not noting the miracles as signs of His deity and spiritual authority. Had they heeded the signs they would have been motivated to do the things Jesus was teaching as to how to live pleasing to God and gain the promise of eternal life. Instead they were motivated by their desire to be fed and satisfy their flesh.

The biggest lesson of all is that we should be spiritually centered in our lives and place emphasis on the flesh secondary to our living.

**Matthew 16:24** NKJV **24** Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.

**2 Timothy 2:10-13** NKJV **10** Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. **11** This is a faithful saying: For if we died with Him, We shall also live with Him. **12** If we endure, We shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us. **13** If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself.

**Titus 2:11-14** NKJV **11** For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, **12** teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, **13** looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, **14** who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.

And finally:

**John 6:27-29** NKJV **27** "Do 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." **28** Then they said to Him, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?" **29** Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent."

**John 6** recounts a similar incident as revealed in **Matthew 14** wherein twelve baskets of leftovers were gathered after the feeding a large gathering to hear Jesus. (This may have been the same occurrence as described in **Matthew 14,** the context of the accounts are valid.)

John is a little more detailed in recounting the feeding of a multitude and Jesus says;

"Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled.” **John 6:26**

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