

JOHN 6:1-14
Rome Ga.
February 15, 1987

November 24, 2013 and December 1, 2013

Cf. Matt. 14:15-21; Mk. 6:32-44; Lk. 9:12-17

Other than the Resurrection, this is the only Sign/Miracle recorded in all 4 Gospel records. The significance of the miracle is obvious as we continue to study Jn. 6, for Jesus applies the truth revealed in this Miracle to Himself in VV.22-71

Subject: The feeding of the 5,000 men and innumerable women and children.

Theme: The sufficiency of Christ.

Proposition: Are you prepared to give the Lord the five loaves and two fishes that you have? Can you trust Jesus to enable you to meet the needs of others? Are you willing to get involved in the lives of others and in the meeting of the needs that they have, or is it easier simply to send them away?

We are told repeatedly in God's word that He will supply all our needs.

Matt. 6:25; Phil. 4:19. His supply is not dependent upon anything except His grace and this He gives without measure. His grace is not limited to His children alone. He is at liberty to bestow His grace wherever He desires. In the feeding of the 5000 there were undoubtedly many whom we would consider unworthy of God's care. Thieves, prostitutes, beggars, etc. But in accordance with God's common grace, He sends the rain on the wicked as well as the righteous. He will bless the heathen in order to make sure that His children are cared for.

READ Jn. 6:1-14

"After these things." is an indefinite period of time. It was after Herod Antipas had killed JTB, it was after the disciples had preached throughout Galilee, large numbers of people, (including Herod Antipas,) were seeking after Jesus. The **events of chapter 6 most likely took place about 6 months after chapter 5 ended.** (also, the mention of the Passover, which is the second of the three Passovers mentioned in John, puts the date about **1 year before His crucifixion.**)

Jesus and his close disciples had crossed the lake to find a solitary and remote place for them to rest. But even in this location, the masses sought Him out.

The fact that the Passover was near and that it is mentioned that Jesus was on a mountain are significant in understanding the mind and the mood of the people. With the Passover at hand, their mind naturally turned to thoughts of - blood, flesh, lambs, and unleavened bread. The people longed for a new Moses to come and deliver them from Roman bondage. (cf. v. 14 where the men recalled Moses promise of a coming deliverer.)

Deu 18:15 "The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear,

But this was not the purpose of Jesus at this time. He came to deliver FROM SIN and not FROM ROME at the first Advent.

I. CHRIST IS AWARE OF OUR NEEDS

A. HE IS CONCERNED NOT ONLY WITH OUR SPIRITUAL NEEDS BUT ALSO OUR PHYSICAL NEEDS.

Jesus had been instructing, spiritually feeding, the people who had gathered.

Mark 6:34 says "And Jesus when He came out, saw many people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd; and He began to teach them many things."

When He recognized that there was not only a spiritual hunger but also a physical hunger among the people, His response (unlike that of His disciples) was to meet the physical need as well. It is generally easier to send someone away than it is to meet their needs!

Matt. 14:15 "**send the multitudes away**, that they may go into the villages and buy themselves food."

Mk. 6:36 "**Send them away...**"

Lk.9:12 "**Send the multitude away...**" Jesus' reply in each case was the same, "Give them to eat!"

B. HE IS CONCERNED WITH SPIRITUAL GROWTH AS WELL AS PHYSICAL GROWTH.

V.6

Jesus asked Philip "where shall we buy bread that these may eat?" Philip was from the town of Bethsaida which was the closest town to where they were and he would therefore know if there were in fact resources that could be drawn upon to feed the people. Philip's pessimistic response that it would take eight months wages (200 denarii @ 1 denarii per day's wages) to give each one a bite showed that he was thinking and reacting on a purely physical and not a spiritual plane.

But look at **v. 6**

"And this He said to test him; for He himself knew what He would do."

Christ often allows us to face seemingly insurmountable dilemmas in order to increase our faith in His ability to care for us as our shepherd. We often must come to the end of our human ability before we are willing to let God demonstrate His sufficiency. Such was the case in the text before us today.

The comforting thought that is expressed in v. 6 has proved to be a source of comfort for many of God's servants through the years. One such servant was **George Mueller...**

DB March 17, 1973. "This man of God cared for as many as 2,000 orphans at one time in Bristol, England, during the middle of the 19th century. NO REGULAR MEANS OF SUPPORT WAS AVAILABLE, AND NO APPEALS FOR MONEY WERE EVER MADE, YET THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS CAME FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD. The orphanage personnel often faced desperate situations, but their leader always said, "THE LORD IS TESTING US. I DON'T KNOW WHAT WE'LL DO, BUT HE KNOWS, AND THAT'S ENOUGH." On each occasion the problem was met, sometimes in a miraculous way."

Some of us here are facing difficulties in our life today. We feel unable to do anything to solve your own problems. That's good. Let the Lord have His way with you as He did with Philip and the apostles. He already has the solution. It will rarely be the same solution that we work out in our own reasoning's!

The **disciples were unanimous** in their desire to "**send them away** that they may buy to eat." It was logical, and seemed the reasonable and expedient thing to do. But God does not operate by man's logic. He does that which is best for us, even when it seems to make no sense at all to us.

One year, during Moody's Founders Week celebration they had Joni Erickson give her testimony. She shared how that she had been involved a little to heavily with the boy that she was dating and that things had gotten out of control. She came in one night after a date and threw herself on the bed and cried out to God to make her into someone who Loved Him above all else. She related that it was only a short time before her unfortunate accident which left her paralyzed. Never in her wildest imagination could she have guessed how God would accomplish His will in her life! It was not her plan, but His that drew her close to Him and has made her a vessel of honor unto the Lord.

As I look at the situation facing our church today and our need to grow, there seem to be some very obvious solutions to the problem. But, that which is obvious is not always that which is expedient in the work of the Lord.

My reasoning's and solutions are not always God's plan. Does this mean that we do not need to bother with trying to solve our problems? No. On the contrary. Christ put the problem to Philip in order for Philip to try and come up with a solution so that he might grow spiritually through the experience. **James 1:2** tells us that the "testing of your faith worketh patience"

And **Romans 5:3** tells us that "tribulation worketh patience and patience, experience; and experience, hope. And Hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the H.S. who is given unto us."

GOD TESTS PEOPLE IN ORDER TO REFINE THEIR FAITH, NEVER TO TEMPT THEM TO DO EVIL

There is a purpose in every difficulty of life that we face. **Rm. 8:28**

II. CHRIST IS ABLE TO SUPPLY ALL OUR NEEDS. 9-14

A. HIS METHOD OF SUPPLY

1. He caused the people to be arranged in an orderly fashion. V. 10.

This had a tendency to put a lid on any unruliness. Most of these people probably went to bed hungry with great regularity. Jesus wanted each of them to receive His provision and so He saw to it that things were done neatly and in order.

2. He linked the spiritual aspect (praying) with the physical aspect (providing the food.

We too need to be careful as parents and ambassadors for Jesus to let people see that our spiritual and physical life are so intricately joined that every provision is acknowledged as to its source.

B. His manner of Supply

1. HE SUPPLIES FROM HIS WEALTH

Often our needs are supplied from that which we already have.

In the case before us, Christ supplied a need for many out of the provisions of a few.

In the case of **Elijah** and the widow of Zaraphath God supplied out of a near empty barrel.

- ❖ In the case of **Elisha** and the 100 sons of the prophets we read in (2 kings 4:44) that he was able to feed 100 men with 20 loaves of bread and some grain. Again, using that which was at hand to meet the need.
 - But, never forget that God brought forth water from a rock when there was no water, he sent meat where no meat had been, he fed **Elijah** with food from the ravens of the air, he opened rivers and seas where there were no bridges or boats.
 - He rained down **manna** for 40 years on a daily basis. He sent meat from thin air and the abundance was more than the people could stand.
 - He fed a shepherd boy (**David**) with the **showbread of the priest** and made a powerful monarch (Nebuchadnezzar) to **eat the grass of the field like a beast.**

The provisions of God are without measure and beyond our ability as humans to understand, YET HE DESIRES FOR US TO UNDERSTAND THIS ONE THING, "**Our God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.**" **Philippians 4:19!**

1. HE SUPPLIES FROM HIS WEALTH

2. HE SUPPLIES FROM HIS WISDOM

The provisions of Christ are usually more than what is needful but never less than what it takes to get the job done. When **Noah** built the **Ark**, it was not only large enough to hold the animals and his family, but also large enough to hold provisions, and the resulting waste products and still **could have held hundreds of more animals! Provision Plus!**

I read about a new cruise whip that they are hoping to build. Freedom Ship. It will be built primarily so that rich people can get away from the masses of peons who made them rich.

A: The Freedom Ship should be 4,500 feet (1,317m or 0.818 miles) long, 750 feet wide, and with a height of 350 feet. It would be more than 4 times longer than the famous cruising ship Queen Mary.

No [cruise ship](#) that has ever been built can compare to the enormity of Freedom Ship. Imagine a mile-long stretch of 25-story-tall buildings in New York City; now imagine that floating on the water. If you can picture that, then you get the general idea of Freedom Ship's size. At 4,320 feet (1,317 meters) long, 725 feet (221 m) wide and 340 feet (103 m) tall, the ship is taller than the length of a football field and wider than two football fields put together. And not only can a ship that size float on water, but it may be navigating the world's oceans as early as 2005.

Freedom Ship will dwarf any ocean-going vessel operating today -- it will be more than four times longer than any current cruise ship. Here's a comparison of Freedom Ship to **Royal Caribbean Cruise Line's** Explorer of the Seas, the largest cruise ship as of December 2000:

Specifications	Freedom Ship	Explorer of the Seas
Length	4,320 ft / 1,317 m	1,020 ft / 311 m
Width	725 ft / 221 m	157.5 ft / 48 m
Height Above Sea Level	340 ft / 104 m	200 ft / 61 m
Weight	2.7 million tons 2.4 million metric tons	142,000 tons 128,820 metric tons
Passenger Capacity	50,000 residents 20,000 visitors	3,000
Crew	15,000	2,000

Freedom Ship will be built on top of 520 airtight [steel](#) cells that will be bolted together to form a sturdy base. Each cell will be 80 feet (24 meters) tall, between 50 and 100 feet (15 and 30 m) wide and between 50 and 120 feet (15 and 37 m) long. These cells will be assembled to form larger units that are about 300 x 400 feet (91 x 122 m). These larger units will then be taken out to sea, where they will be put together to form the ship's nearly mile-long base. The rest of the ship will be constructed on top of this base. Norman Nixon, who developed the idea of a floating city, has said that it will take about three years to finish the ship once construction begins.

It will take a tremendous amount of engine power to push the gigantic ship through the water. The vessel will be equipped with 100 [diesel engines](#) that can generate 3,700 [horsepower](#) each. Developers project the cost of each engine to be about \$1 million. That may give you an idea of how expensive the project is, although the total cost of Freedom Ship has not been released. The ship's high construction cost will be passed on to residents, who will pay up to \$11 million to purchase living space on the floating city. In the next section, you'll find out what these residents will get for such a price.

Now the thing that interested me, was not the dimensions per se – but the ratio of the dimensions. 6 times as long as it is wide. **Just like the Ark!**

From an internet article: <http://carm.org/could-noahs-ark-hold-all-animals>

Could the ark really contain all the animals of the world? Again the answer is "Yes." But let's look at the last question in more detail. The ark took about 120 years to build. Noah was 480 years old when he began the work and he had the help of his wife, three sons, and his son's wives. He probably hired local people to help in the construction.

The dimensions of the ark have a ratio of six to one. The Ark was six times longer than it was wide. This is the best ratio for modern ship building. Model stability tests have shown that the design is stable for waves up to 200 feet high and that the ark could have rotated 90 degrees and still righted itself.

The volume of the ark would be 450 feet long by 75 feet wide by 45 feet high. This equals 1,518,750 cubic feet and is comparable to **569 modern railroad boxcars**. Therefore each boxcar, by comparison, would be 1,518,750 divided by 569, or 2,669 cubic feet of space. **The average size of an animal on the earth is smaller than a cat.** But, just to keep it safe let's consider the average size of an animal to be a **sheep**. The average double deck **stock car holds 240 sheep**. The Ark capacity would be about 569 x 240 equaling **136,560 animals of that size**. However, that still is not accurate for our needs. Since most birds, reptiles, and amphibians are much smaller, let's double the boxcar capacity for them. Therefore, the boxcars could each hold 480 different kinds of birds, reptiles, amphibians.

Noah had to **take two or seven of every kind of animal** on the earth. Though it is not really known exactly what is meant by a biblical kind, it is generally considered to be **animals that are fertile within their own groups**. Any dog can breed with any dog, therefore, **dogs are one kind**. It would only be necessary to bring representatives of each kind since the parents could produce offspring that would carry the genetic information for all variations within their kind.

- **Classification Number of Species Number of Kinds on the Ark**
- Mammals 3,700 3,700 (a few live in water).
- Birds 8,600 60,200 (seven pairs according to Gen. 7:3)
- Reptiles. 6,300 6,300
- Amphibians. 2,500 2,500

- Fishes.20,600.zero
- Other marine life . . . 192,605.zero
- Insects 850,000 . . . (Since insects are very small, and a great many could be stored in a small area, calculation would be difficult.)
- Total1,072,30572,700

The total number of mammals would be 3,700 times two pair which equals 7,400 animals. 7,400 divided by 240 = **31 boxcars used.**

Since Gen. 7:3 says to take **seven pairs of every bird** then the total for birds would be 8,600 times two pair times 7 or 120,400 animals. $120,400 \times 480 = 250$ boxcars. The reptiles and amphibians would be 6,300 plus 2,500 or 8,800. 8,800 times two pair equals 17,600 animals. 17,600 divided by 480 = 37 boxcars.

The total number of boxcars used would be 318 with a total number of animals at 145,400. There would be 251 boxcars left over. That means that only 56% of the ark would be used for storing the animals. Obviously, then, **the rest of the space would be used for food for the people and animals and sleeping quarters.** In addition, considering that insects are extremely small, it is easily conceivable that they could be housed in part of the remaining space.

It should also be considered that **many animals can hibernate.** Additionally, predators and prey have been known to live peacefully together during situations of stress like fire, flood, or earthquake. In the Ark, animal behavior probably would have been different from normal daily life. **Specialists in animal behavior have noted that animals can sense danger and have often migrated to escape it.** Perhaps God used their migratory instincts to get them to the Ark.

Though this is only a brief analysis, it should present enough evidence that the Ark account is certainly within the realm of possibility.

The ark was a type of the salvation that was yet to come through the Redeemer.

When God provides, He provides in copious measure! John said in **I Jn. 2:2** "And He is the propitiation for our sins, **and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world!**"

HIS SUPPLY EXCEEDS THE DEMAND. ALL WHO COME TO HIM WILL RECEIVE OF HIS HAND.

Yet He does not supply that which we are able to do for ourselves! He does not do miraculously that which man can do without His intervention!

****Noah** still had to labor to build the ark.

****When Christ raised Lazarus** from the dead, the **stone was moved by the**

hands of men and men were told to remove the napkins from his face.

And though **Jesus was able to speak the words of life unto the daughter of Jarius "damsel arise", His next word was "**Give her something to eat!**"

****Jesus** when thirsty asked the **Samaritan woman** for a drink though He Himself was the true Water of Life.

While this took place, his **disciples were gone to town to buy **bread**, although Christ surely could have fed these few miraculously.

In the story before us this morning it has already been determined that there was no way that the disciples could feed the people. Yet the people **NEEDED** to be fed. Jesus had fed them **spiritually and now desires to meet their physical needs** as well so that He might continue to minister to them.

*******READ 10-11**

Joh 6:10 Then Jesus said, "**Make the people sit down.**" Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand.

Joh 6:11 And Jesus took the loaves, and when He had given thanks He distributed *them* to the disciples, and the disciples to those sitting down; and likewise of the fish, as much as they wanted.

Jesus had the people to sit in the grassy pastures in groups that could easily be ministered to. And then they were fed. As much as each one wanted! They ate until they were full. (Not a symbolic meal with each one taking a nibble!)

*******READ 12-13**

Joh 6:12 So when they were filled, He said to His disciples, "**Gather up the fragments that remain, so that nothing is lost.**"

Joh 6:13 Therefore they gathered *them* up, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves which were left over by those who had eaten.

Why do you suppose they were told to gather the "broken pieces." After all, why should they be encumbered with baskets of food for future distribution when they had Christ with them? Could He not have provided miraculously each meal that was needed? Yes, of course HE **COULD** but the **FACT IS THAT HE DID NOT.**

Nor does He do so now. Much is said about the life of faith and rightfully so for it is to be the hallmark of every true believer. The problem arises when we allow **LAZINESS** to masquerade as faith.

When my parents were first married they lived in Athens Ga. and my dad worked as a fireman for the Seaboard Railroad. He spent 18 - 20 hours per day shoveling coal into the boiler of a engine in order to provide for his small family. In the apartment upstairs lived a couple who were **Jehovah Witnesses**. **Neither of them worked and they claimed that God would supply all their needs.** The problem was that it seemed that all their needs were in my mother's food cupboard. Daily they would come down to "borrow"

DB 1/21/82 "I read one time about a lady who fell from a second story window and landed in a garbage truck that was slowly moving past her house. Half buried in the litter, she tried without success to get the drivers attention. A **foreign diplomat** standing on the sidewalk saw her and commented indignantly, "Another example of how wasteful Americans are! That woman **looks like she is good for at least another 10 years!**"

That which the Lord gives, He intends to have it put to full use! "**Gather up the fragments.**"

We waste the knowledge of His word, AND we waste the TIME He has given us.

(Of all the waste products that can be re-cycled, TIME is not one of them! Once it is squandered it is gone.)

The usable food fragments that were leftover could be gathered for later distribution, but time that is used unwisely is lost forever. In spite of the many hours that we often work in this country, we still have more leisure time than almost any civilized nation on earth. We go to "WORK" and then have to come home and spend our money in order to get some exercise! Much of our income goes for T.V.'s, VCRs, sports equipment, entertainment, swimming pools, etc. just so we can enjoy all our leisure time...

WHAT IF WE WOULD LAVISH ON JESUS THAT WHICH WE SQUANDER ON OURSELVES!

How wonderful it would be if we could be accounted as worthy as **Mary who came and anointed the feet of Jesus with a costly ointment.** When she was ridiculed Jesus rebuked the disciples who spoke against her. "And Jesus said let her alone....She hath wrought a good work on me.....SHE HATH DONE WHAT SHE COULD. **Mk. 14:6-9**

This was to be a memorial for her throughout the ages!

Can it be said of you and I today that we have "done what we could."

Have we taken those miraculous gifts that Christ has given us and put them to full use for Him. Do you have 5 loaves and 2 small fishes that you think are to insignificant to mention? GIVE THEM TO THE LORD AND SEE WHAT HE CAN DO WITH THEM!!!!!!

Are you tired of people coming to you with needs that you feel inadequate to meet. Do you feel like the disciples and find it easier to send them away than it is to try and meet their needs.

Have we gone as far with the Lord as is humanly possible and are we anxiously waiting to see what miracle He will work and are we then willing to take the fragments that are in our reach and to continue serving the Lord by serving others? Are we willing to "gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost" and give Him all the glory for that which is wrought in our lives?