

## WHEN WE STEP OUT GOD STEPS IN (5)

*Taking the five loaves and the two fish he looked up to heaven and blessed them and broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples to set before the people. And he divided the two fish among them all. And they all ate and were satisfied (Mark 6:41, 42, ESV, modified)*

### Introduction

The miracle of the feeding of the five thousand is the only one recorded in all four gospels. There are many lessons in it.

- Primarily it is a parable about Jesus
- The world is a desolate place (30-33)
- The world's fundamental need is the word of God (34)
- Even though there were physical needs, Jesus gave priority to teaching. See the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20)
- Mother Teresa comment: 'The greatest need of the poor is faith.'
- Only the church can meet this need: no other organisation on the face of the earth can do it.

### 1. We have everything that is needed (35-37)

- The disciples saw how little they had; Jesus saw the potential of what it could become
- What do we have? It may not seem much but who knows what Jesus can do with it when we give it away?
- Time, money, talents, gifts, abilities

### 2. It's what we do with what we have that is important (41-43)

Jesus did four things with the bread. What can God do with us?

#### 1. He takes us

- He cannot do anything with us until we are in his hands (Mark 1:17)
- Unlike a loaf of bread, we have a choice of whether we will allow him to take us or not.
- Are we willing 'to let go and let God'?

#### 2. He blesses us

- Bless = *eulogeo* = to speak well of. See Ephesians 1:3
- To belong to him is to be blessed with every spiritual blessing
- Whatever God takes he more than restores (Mark 10:30)

#### 3. He breaks us

- Only when the bread was broken could it be distributed
- Until he breaks us we cannot be used (Mark 10:35-45)
- Breaking is part of God's dealing with us. See 2 Corinthians 4:10

#### 4. He gives us

- Now we are ready to be given to the needs of the world. See Mark 16:15-20

### 3. When we give what we have, we have what he gives (41-43)

- We may think we don't have much—it never will be much until we give it.
- Only when we give it can it be multiplied. So we give by faith.
- Then we are blessed in return (43)

**4. Jesus is known in the breaking of bread**

- This miracle foreshadowed the death and resurrection of Jesus. See almost identical words in Mk 14:22
- It was when he broke bread that the two disciples recognised him (Luke 24:30,31)

**5. The table of the Lord**

At the table of the Lord—

- We are reminded of what Jesus did for us
- Are we willing to be broken for God like the communion bread we hold in our hands?
- Let's dedicate ourselves and our possessions today to his calling

**SOMETHING TO THINK OR TALK ABOUT**

**Remember:** You don't have to answer all the questions. First do those that seem most helpful to you.

**Read** Mark 6:30-44

Biblical

1. Jesus was trying to elude the crowds. How might he have felt when they were waiting for him when he arrived?
2. How did he actually feel and what did he do? (34) What can we learn from this? (By the way, in the gospels, the word 'compassion' is used only by Jesus or about Jesus. Paul applies it to us – Col 3:12)
3. Was Jesus serious when he told the disciples to give the people food? (37) If so, what does this tell us about [1] his attitude to them and [2] his expectations of them?
4. Note how Jesus organised everyone while he still only had five loaves and two fish. What does this tell us about positioning ourselves for a miracle?
5. When did Jesus give thanks—before or after the bread was multiplied? (41). What faith principle can we learn from this?
6. Jesus later fed a crowd of 4000 (Mark 8:1-10). He tried to teach the disciples a couple of lessons from these two events. What were they? (Mark 8:14-21).

Personal and practical

7. If someone had given you or me five loaves and two fish to feed a crowd of thousands, what might we have done? (Compare John 6:9.)
8. By the way, nowadays we mostly pray with heads bowed and eyes closed. How did Jesus do it? (41; John 17:1). Any comments?
9. John tells us that a little boy offered the loaves and fish to Jesus (6:9). What do you think the boy told his mother when he got home!
10. On a scale of one (little) to ten (much), where would you place your faith if you had been one of the disciples? Why? What can you do about it?
11. What is the major lesson you have learned from this story?

**Prayer:** Lord, it is easy for me to be critical of the disciples for their unbelief, but help me to recognise my own need to use my faith to believe that you can do the impossible in my circumstances and for those in need around me. In Jesus' name, Amen.

### **About Dr Barry Chant**

Barry Chant is Senior Pastor of the Wesley International Congregation in Sydney, Australia. He is a regular speaker at church services, seminars, conferences and conventions. Hundreds of thousands of his books have been sold around the world. He has degrees in arts, theology and ministry, a diploma in education and a PhD in history. He was the initiator and former president of Tabor College, Australia.

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