

“Do You Want To Be Used By God?”

John 6:1-15

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John 6:1-15

Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand

6 ¹ After this Jesus went away to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias. ² And a large crowd was following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing on the sick. ³ Jesus went up on the mountain, and there he sat down with his disciples. ⁴ Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand. ⁵ Lifting up his eyes, then, and seeing that a large crowd was coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, “Where are we to buy bread, so that these people may eat?” ⁶ He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he would do. ⁷ Philip answered him, “Two hundred denarii worth of bread would not be enough for each of them to get a little.” ⁸ One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, said to him, ⁹ “There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are they for so many?” ¹⁰ Jesus said, “Have the people sit down.” Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, about five thousand in number. ¹¹ Jesus then took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated. So also the fish, as much as they wanted. ¹² And when they had eaten their fill, he told his disciples, “Gather up the leftover fragments, that nothing may be lost.” ¹³ So they gathered them up and filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves left by those who had eaten. ¹⁴ When the people saw the sign that he had done, they said, “This is indeed the Prophet who is to come into the world!”

¹⁵ Perceiving then that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by himself.

Introduction

In general, people want to live a good life. When people grow old, they can have regrets. The Bible does not guarantee a happy life in this world but a worthwhile life for the rest of eternity. The only way to live a worthwhile, happy life in this world is *to be used by God*.

There are two prayers I frequently pray: (1) Humble me, Lord, and (2) God, use me. When we think we have to be good enough, the idea of being used by God can be so far away. But God knows we are sinful. He chooses us to be His instruments anyway. He is powerful and loving. He can use anything: animals, angels, etc. However, He wants to use His people.

I will be addressing five questions people ask when they question if God can use them. It will be through the Feeding of the Five Thousand.

When writing this account, the men were only counted. However, there were also women and children. There were more than five thousand fed in this story.

I. What do I do when I feel useless? The sick – Jesus uses all sovereignly [1-4]

A. Miraculous sign?

John 6:2 - "...a large crowd was following him, because they saw the signs..."

People *were following Jesus* because of the sick.

Signs were physical miracles that held a *deeper meaning*.

Visually, Jesus is showing us that He can heal us. This healing is not just physical. He also heals the heart and the person.

B. They saw...He had performed

When people saw what God was doing on the sick, they were amazed by Him. They were not looking at just the work. They were looking at Jesus.

In John 5, there was a paralytic who was healed. When people saw what Jesus had done on the paralytic, they came to Him. Testify what He has done: when you were weak or were strong. In your testimony, in whatever state you are in, you can show off Jesus.

God is greater and bigger than any problem.

Here are a few verses to help strengthen you when you are sick:

- Be hungry: Psalm 81:10 - "I am the Lord your God who brought you up out of Egypt, open wide your mouth and I will fill it."
 - He is constantly pouring His grace. He cannot help but to give what He has.
- He is pouring: Isaiah 6:3 - "And they were calling to one another 'Holy, Holy'"
 - This is a glimpse of heaven. Those in heaven cannot help but praise and worship God. God is so amazing, holy, gracious, beautiful. When it says He is pouring down, the whole Earth is full of His glory. Receive it.
- He will never run out: Ephesians 3:20 - "Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine according to his power that is at work within us"
 - Meditate and waste your time on imagining how great and awesome God is.

A kid I ministered to 20+ years ago had recently contacted me. For the last 10 years, he has been in jail. As soon as he got out, he called me. I remembered he once told me, "I want to be used by God. So, Pastor Min can you pray for me?" So I said, "Don't worry about the past. God can use you. I believe God has a plan for you." God is not through with that

kid.

God can use us, anyone, the sick, and even you. Be healed and show off the healer.

II. What do I do when what I have is not enough? Phillip – Learn to Count [5-7]

A. Why ask the question?

John 6:5 - “Lifting up his eyes and seeing that a large crowd was coming towards him, Jesus said to Phillip ‘Where are we to buy bread so that these people may eat?’ He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he would do.”

“Test” shows up in two different contexts in the Bible:

- (1) When “test” is associated with Satan, it is meant as something that can take us farther away from God.
- (2) When “test” is associated with God, it is so that we can grow to be closer to God.

In this context, Jesus is testing Phillip in order to help him to grow.

B. Why Phillip?

According to John 1:44, Phillip is from Bethsaida. Bethsaida was a town that was close by. Thus, Phillip was familiar with the area. He knew what resources were around to help calculate what and how to get was needed. However, Phillip fails.

C. Why did he fail?

John 6:7 - “Phillip answered, 200 denarii worth of bread would not be enough for each of them to get a little.”

A denarii was a ½ years work of labor. Feeding people takes a lot of money.

Phillip was a practical person. He calculates. However, the problem is not that he calculated. *The problem is that he calculated his plans without factoring in Jesus.*

John 15:5 - “Apart from me you can do nothing”

When we are doing something, we need to do it with Jesus. Anything without God is insufficient, but anything with God is sufficient. Learn to look at not only the problem, but to also look at the God who is with you. God is greater than any problem.

Proverbs 3:5-6 - “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding”

It does not say do not have understanding or do not think. In your thinking process and planning, you need to lean on God as you trust in him for the future. God can use whatever it is for His glory.

When CFC was first beginning, I was with a group of pastors. However, we were all poor. One pastor was crying because he could not provide for his wife as he would have liked. I told them I wanted to establish a church on campus. Even though it was a small church, I believed that God was working in it and lives were going to be changed. I was about to come home when this one pastor ran to me. He put a wrinkled \$100 bill in my pocket. (This was the same pastor who was crying because he felt sorry for his wife.) I took the money because it had the love and power of Jesus. That founded CFC.

God will provide everything you need. Learn to count with Jesus in mind.

III. What do I do when I cannot change others? Andrew – Bring others to Jesus [8-9]

A. But what are they for so many?

Next, we learn from Andrew, a relational person.

John 6:8 - “One of the disciples Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, said to him ‘Look there is a boy who has five loaves and two fish, but what are they for so many?’”

Side note: If Andrew had not said, "but what are they for so many?", he would have been better off. Sometimes, we have to talk less.

B. There is a boy here

John 6:9 - “There is a boy who has five loaves and two fish...”

Andrew thinks about people. In fact, he is the one who brought Simon Peter, who is known to be an amazing servant of Christ, to Jesus (John 1:40 - “One of the two who heard John speak and followed Jesus was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother.”).

When you do not know what to do with people, (a) take them to Jesus so that they would have a personal encounter with God or (b) take them to someone else who can bring them to Jesus.

If they won’t go, pray for them. One day when they want to go to Jesus, the prayer will push them to the cross.

Lives change Jesus was brought to them. All the glory to Jesus. Only Jesus can change them.

IV. What do I do when I have nothing to give? The boy – Give them all to Jesus [9-11]

A. He gave it all

When we feel inadequate, there’s a simple lesson from the boy.

John 6:9 - "Here is a boy with five loaves and two fish"

The boy *gave it all* to Jesus.

A liberal view interprets this as not a miracle. When the boy gave his food, everybody was moved. They all gave their hidden lunches, and everyone was fed that way. But this was a miracle. When the boy gave all he had - five loaves and two fish - Jesus used it *all*.

John 6:10-11 - "...the people sit down...Jesus then took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated. So also the fish, as much as they wanted."

Jesus is the source. Sometimes Jesus takes something from you, but it is not because He needs it. He takes it because He is going to do something amazing for you as well as others.

B. He used it all

The bread and the fish touched the hands of Jesus. Whenever Jesus touches something, it becomes powerful and multiplies for the glory of God. The power is not in the things we are given but the person that gives the gift.

There is a mentality that says: "I don't have much, but I'll give you this."
However, it should be: "I don't have much, so I'll give it to Jesus."

Whatever goes through Jesus' hands gets stained with His heart and His love. Whatever we give to Him gains power through Him. He will use it all for His glory.

John 6:11 - "...as much as they wanted..."

There is this book called: "The Boy who Gave his Lunch" that I used to read to my children. It was a simple story. The end said, "and the little boy gave his lunch, gave all he had, and Jesus used it to feed many people and he was fed too."

Q: When did the bread multiply? Was it when Jesus was giving to the disciples? Or was it when the disciples carried it? Or was it when the disciples gave the food? Or was it when the people were eating?

A: The passage doesn't say. That's the point. Sometimes as He gives, He gives us a lot into our hands. Sometimes, He gives us a little, but as we hold them it multiplies in our hands. Sometimes as we are giving, more is given. Sometimes as we give a little and they take it, it multiplies. But what we know is that God uses His resources. Those resources never run out.

The band I was in 30+ years ago used to sing this song:

*Are you tired of chasing pretty rainbows?
Are you tired of spinning round and round?
Wrap up all the shattered dreams of your life
at the feet of Jesus lay them down.*

*Give them all, give them all, give them all to Jesus.
Shattered dreams, wounded hearts, broken toys.
Give them all, give them all, give them all to Jesus.
And he will turn your sorrow into joy.*

*He never said there'd only be sunshine.
He never said there'd be no rain.
He only promised a heart full of singing,
about the very things that once brought pain.*

*Give them all, give them all, give them all to Jesus.
Shattered dreams, wounded hearts, broken toys.
Give them all, give them all, give them all to Jesus.
And he will turn your sorrow into joy.*

Give it all to Jesus. He will use it for His glory.

V. What do I do when I run out of things to give to others? Disciples – If we receive, we can give [11-15]

A. They received

John 6:11, 13 - "he distributed them to those who were seated...so they gathered them up and filled twelve baskets"

Simply, the disciples received what was given to them.

B. They gave

If we receive, we can give.

Q: Who can't do that? If somebody gives you something, can you give to others?

A: Every single one of us can, whether it's forgiveness, strength, love, material things sometimes.

Here is the secret of not getting burnt out in life and to ministry: always go to the Lord to receive what He gives. Give that to other people.

C. They gathered

John 6:13 - "...they gathered..."

Q: Why leftovers?

A: There needed to be a meal for Passover time, for Sabbath. This is an allusion to the time when the Israelites were wandering in the wilderness. When God provided

manna, they had to gather twice as much food the day before Sabbath (Friday) so that they would not work on Sabbath day (Saturday).

Through this allusion, Jesus is saying:

- I am the bread of life.
- I will give you Sabbath / rest.
- One day, war will be over, and we will forever be rejoicing in a feast.

We can give our time, energy, grace, Word of God, Jesus Christ, material things, etc. Through all those things, they can be a sign to see Jesus.

This boy's life was probably forever changed. He obtained a testimony that he could tell his grandchildren:

“One day, I heard the noise and fuss of a carpenter turned into teacher. They called him, Jesus of Nazareth. I wanted to hear about him. While I was running out of the house, my mom called me and packed my lunch before I could go. I snuck under the legs of people and went as close as possible. I wanted to eat too, but my mom told me to not eat during the sermon but to eat when everyone else is eating. I was listening, but I was also hungry. Then there was a break time. I could finally eat. But, I heard Jesus talking to Phillip about how they had no food for the crowd. I wanted to have my lunch but maybe I could give the little I have to Jesus. I spoke to Andrew because he always said ‘hello’. I told him, ‘I’m going to give this lunch to Jesus so he can use it to feed people.’ So, Andrew took me to Jesus. I said, ‘I don’t have much, this is all I have.’ And Jesus took all that I had. And he fed so many people. And I was fed too.”

Conclusion

We’ll see a video about a man named Sir Nicholas Winton. He is now 105 years old. When he was 29 years old, he rescued 659 (mostly Jewish) children from Nazi persecution in Czechoslovakia. He hates being labelled as a hero. His story wasn’t known to many people until it was discovered. This video is the first time he’s going to meet a person that he saved during that time. He does not realize that this encounter will happen. [The link to the video is here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6_nFuJAF5F0]

My question to you: is there anyone who owes their life to Jesus Christ? Could you stand up please? Look around at what Jesus has done.

Praise be to him. Let’s pray.