

Sam Storms  
Bridgeway Church

### Sermon Summary #17

#### Jesus is Necessary, but is He Enough? Mark 6:30-44

A truly *defining moment* in my life (January 5<sup>th</sup>, 1976) . . . *If I have Jesus, I have all I need. No material loss should ever pose a threat to who I am and what I have in Christ. No personal tragedy, no matter now painful or inconvenient, can separate me from the love that God has for me in Jesus.*

Virtually every problem we create for ourselves is the product of a lie, a falsehood embedded deeply in our souls which says that some “thing” or some person other than Jesus Christ can quench the thirst in our hearts. **We are by nature determined to make life work without him.** St. Augustine famously spoke of a God-shaped vacuum in every heart, one which only God himself can fill. But we steadfastly refuse to believe it is true. **We fervently try to stuff our souls and to fill that vacuum with anything that will make us feel full.**

Jesus comes to us in the gospel with an invitation to sit at a feast and to **glut ourselves** with all the blessings of the kingdom of God and to drink of water that will forever quench our spiritually parched souls. But we persist in eating fast food and slaking our thirst at the shallow water wells of a fallen world. Our sinful flesh refuses to feed on Christ, leaving us painfully empty and ever more determined to find satisfaction in something or someone else.

Whatever else we may learn from this story, **its central theme is the perfect and glorious sufficiency and over-abounding spiritual supply that we have in our Lord Jesus Christ.** When human resources are scarce or begin to run dry, Jesus is our supply.

Are the stories of the feeding of the 5,000 in Mark 6 and the feeding of the 4,000 in Mark 8 one and the same or are they two separate miracles?

Similarities –

Differences –

The answer is found in what Jesus said in **Matthew 16:9-11** . . .

Another question that often comes up concerns **whether or not this was a genuine miracle** –

Let me mention a few important parts to this story before we consider its application to us today.

**First**, in vv. 30-33 the zeal of the people is evident: they ran on foot around to the other side of the Sea of Galilee and actually got there ahead of Jesus. In John’s gospel we are told that they followed Jesus there because of the many healings they saw him perform (6:2).

**Second**, according to v. 34 it was a “great crowd.” In v. 44 we are told that 5,000 men were present, which means the total would have been around **20,000** when you include women and children.

**Third**, Jesus was again moved with “**compassion**” (v. 34)

**Fourth**, the disciples are getting worried: it’s late and there isn’t a McDonald’s anywhere to be found. It’s a “desolate place” (v. 35) and there’s nothing to eat.

**Fifth**, Jesus turns the tables on them. In an effort to awaken in them a sense of need so they will learn always to turn to him as the one who alone can supply, he says: “You give them something to eat” (v. 37).

**Sixth**, it’s only in John’s gospel that we discover that the five loaves and two fish were supplied by a young boy.

**Seventh**, did the miracle occur when Jesus looked to heaven and said a blessing? Did it occur when he distributed it to the disciples? How did it happen? Was new food caused to arise out of the old? Was it created out of nothing? We don't know. But consider the unavoidable surprise of the disciples . . .

**Eighth**, sometime after the feeding of the 5,000, they find themselves in almost the same situation (Mark 8:1-10). The disciples couldn't have already forgotten what Jesus did for the 5,000. How is that now they wonder how anyone can feed so many in such a desolate place? (1) The feeding of the 5,000 in chapter 6 was of Jews in Bethsaida; here the 4,000 are almost all Gentiles in the Decapolis. Perhaps the disciples never dreamed that Jesus would be willing to do for Gentiles what he had for Jews? (2) According to John 6:26, after feeding the 5,000, Jesus rebuked the crowds for following him only to get food. Perhaps the disciples thought better of bringing up the subject again. (3) And we must never lose sight of man's vast capacity for unbelief and spiritual dullness.

So what's this all about? Is it just a wonderful miracle story about overcoming hunger in the wilderness? Or is there something deeper and more spiritually profound at work? Yes!

(1) Miracles are wonderful. But don't think that they will result in the instant conversion of all who witness them

(2) This story is also about learning to trust God to supply what by human measurement seems impossible. Our needs, no matter how desperate, can never outstrip God's power or purpose to provide. "And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:19).

(3) God takes what is small and insignificant and accomplishes great things. He takes Moses' shepherd's staff and uses it to deliver a nation out of bondage in Egypt! He supplies David with a few small stones to slay a giant! He gives Samson the jawbone of a donkey to slay an army! And he takes one boy's pathetic little lunch to feed thousands!

(4) This story tells us much about the miracles of Jesus in general. Miracles are a sign of what is to come, a preview of coming attractions. Miracles are an appetizer of the full banquet that is to come in the new heavens and new earth.

(5) But most important of all, Jesus was using a physical experience to illustrate a spiritual reality: **nothing ultimately satisfies except himself!** Look closely at **John 6:25-29; 6:48-51**.

Jesus: "Don't you all get it yet? Yes, I was happy to feed you with physical bread because I knew you were hungry. I didn't want you to go without anything to eat. But I had hoped that you would recognize in the process that your greatest need isn't physical, it's spiritual. I had hoped you would see that the real blessing isn't bread, but me. I am the bread of life; not just physical life. You can eat the best bread on the planet and you will still, some day, die. But if you eat the bread that I give you, if you will ingest spiritually and believe in who I am and what I am doing on the cross, though you die physically you will never perish spiritually."

"One of the reasons God created bread—or created the grain and the water and yeast and fire and human intelligence to make it, . . . is so that when Jesus Christ came into the world, he would be able to use the enjoyment of bread and the nourishment of bread as an illustration of what it means to believe on him and be satisfied with him. . . . Bread exists to help us know what it is like to be satisfied in Jesus" (John Piper). Piper goes on to point out that it's the same for water (John 4:14) and light (John 14:6) and every other good thing that God has made. Nothing exists for itself. "All things were created through him and *for him*" (Colossians 1:16). Every honorable pleasure that we have in the created world is designed by God to give us a faint taste of heaven and make us hunger for Christ. Every partial satisfaction in this life points to the perfect satisfaction in Jesus who made the world.

"The pleasures of warm bread should send our senses and our spirits to Christ as the bread of life. The pleasures of cold water when we're hot and thirsty should send our senses and our spirits to Christ as the living water. The pleasures of light making all other natural beauties visible should send our senses and our spirits to Christ as the true light of the world" (Piper).

Listen again to John 6:51 - "The bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh." His death on the cross for sinners is the offer of bread to starving souls! Will you come and eat?