

Mariemont Community Church

Practicing the Presence of Jesus No Reserves, No Retreat, No Regrets

Text: John 6:1-15

Introduction:

It is just like the Lord to bring us (without advance planning) to today's fabulous text in our study of John, just as we celebrate his similarly great work in this beautifully renovated Chapel.

The feeding of the five thousand is probably the most important miracle Jesus did during his public earthly ministry. Why?

Because it brought him, at the timing of the second Passover of his earthly ministry, to a hillside in the wilderness of what is today known as the Golan Heights, to perform a miracle in which he would embody all the great themes of the original Exodus. On this hillside, Jesus would teach, test, and then feed the crowd as he began to unveil himself as the Bread of Life.

Today's Main Idea

Jesus is all we need, all the time. We don't need reserves - he provides, we don't need to retreat - he is our path, and we can live a life without regrets because he covers every bad thing in his grace. Living in dependence on his provision will never leave us wanting, and more than that, will open us up to experiencing the kind of life and adventure that will fill the deepest desires of our hearts.

Things to see in this miracle

1. The mighty provision of God for his people. A wilderness hillside, teaching them to escape their lives of captivity (to sin, not to the Romans!) through life-giving faith.

2. When added to the water into wine miracle (2:1-11), it is a great picture of the coming establishment of the Last Supper and the Messianic Wedding Banquet.

3. The testing of Philip - the challenge of every disciple to perceive the spiritual realm, and to trust.

4. The absolute enormity of the miracle and the abundance of the leftovers is a sign to the endless supply of God (Philippians 4:19) He is endless and lavishly generous.

Illustration - the life of William Borden

No reserves

No retreat

No regrets

Study Notes for further reflection and small group discussion

1. This is the only miracle recorded in all four Gospels - 4 different eyewitness reports. Read each account and discuss the main differences in the details. Why do you think these differences are included?

- Matthew 14:13-21 (see also 16:8-12)

- Mark 6:30-44 (see also 8:17-21)

- Luke 9:10-22

- John 6:1-15 (see also the rest of chapter 6)

2. Jesus tests his disciple Philip (who was from that area) - what was he trying to accomplish with Philip? How has God tested you lately? What happened?

3. The report of 5000 men means probably 10-15,000 people were fed that day, with 5 barley loaves and two dried fish (probably sardines). Imagine the US Bank Arena full. How would you feel if Jesus told you to have the people sit down to eat and all you had was two fish and five small loaves?

4. Elisha performed a similar miracle - see 2 Kings 4:42-44. How would Jesus' miracle be seen in the light of this wonderful Old Testament story and hero?

5. At the end of the story, the crowd plans to make Jesus King by force. This is similar to the temptation Satan offers him to by-pass the Cross. Luke ties into that in his account. Jesus will not be forced to do or be who we want him to be - he is sovereign. How do you try and force Jesus?

Practicing His Presence:

Enjoying the Bread of Life