

“Five Loaves for 5,000”

John 6:1-14

Hello friend and welcome to *Hope for Today*. My name is J. Mark Horst; I’m your friend and Bible teacher. The program you’re listening to is produced by Heralds of Hope, an international Gospel radio and literature ministry.

Each week the Bible teaching broadcasts of *Heralds of Hope* circle the globe in English and 21 other major languages. And our Bible teaching programs in several languages are available all the time and any time at the website, twr360.org. That’s twr360.org. Thousands are logging on to the sight for spiritual nourishment and blessing. You can join them and be blessed too!

The Bible is the only source of lasting hope. It is God’s Holy Word. You know as well as I do that we cannot rely on the words of men because men change. But God is unchanging, His Word is the same yesterday, today, and forever. The Psalmist, David, said in Psalm 119:89, *“Forever, O Lord, Your Word is settled in Heaven.”* My friend, you can depend on God’s Word.

Because God’s Word is dependable, we share this teaching with many people around the world in different languages. One language we’ve added recently to our broadcast schedule is the Telugu language of India, spoken by about 84 million people. Here’s a testimony from a man who listens to our Telugu language programs, “Living Hope.”

“Dear Radio Pastor, what a comfort it has been listening to the precious Words from Romans! My soul has been aching as I go through the harassment of my neighbor. He has encroached on my land and claims it as his. He constantly picks a quarrel with me, although I try to keep quiet and leave the justice to the Lord. He oppresses me a lot in several ways. I could have lost my peace but for the encouragement from the Word of God. You prayed with me several times on the phone, and I testify that it has been a great source of comfort to me. I am aging and I take refuge in God’s solace from His word. Thank you for standing by me.”

Let’s pause right now and take a moment to pray for this listener. And if you’re going through similar trials, you tell God that as I pray.

Heavenly Father, we come to you in the precious name of Jesus, your Son, and our Savior. We thank you for this testimony from our Brother Jayapaul. Thank you that His trust is in you. We do pray for the salvation of his neighbor who is oppressing him. Father, would you touch this man’s heart and soften it as he sees Jayapaul’s gentle responses to the evil treatment he receives.

Father, I pray for all my brothers and sisters in Christ in India. They are going through much hardship right now because of the effects of Covid and also because of the opposition they face from militant Hindus. Help them to find hope and encouragement in your Word just like Jayapaul has found.

And now, Father, as Dr. Yoder shares his teaching from the Word, and I pray that you will open my heart and the heart of my friend who is listening to receive that Word. And I pray this in His name, Amen.

Now, here's Dr. Yoder.

We all have faced great difficulties in life. Since you have come for some time along your life span you know what I mean. We have had great difficulties. Perhaps right now you are having such a difficulty. You hardly know how to examine it, how to solve it. You look at it. As you look, it gets bigger, doesn't it? How do you plan to deal with that difficulty you are in now?

Let me offer a suggestion: to deal with difficulties you must examine each one to find where it's solution is and how you can work with it. I have noticed that when stone masons want to break a stone they examine that stone and decide where to strike it with the hammer so that it will break at the right place. They must know how to strike that stone so that it will break with the proper angles at the best place.

A difficulty is like that. Your difficulty has a solution if you look at it carefully. Examine it from all sides and you will find your difficulty can be solved. Right here in John 6:1-14 there is a difficulty that had its solution as Jesus examined it and dealt with it.

- 1 *After these things Jesus went over the sea of Galilee, which is the sea of Tiberias.*
- 2 *And a great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased.*
- 3 *And Jesus went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples.*
- 4 *And the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh.*
- 5 *When Jesus then lifted up his eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?*
- 6 *And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do.*
- 7 *Philip answered him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that everyone of them may take a little*
- 8 *One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him,*

- 9 *There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?*
- 10 *And Jesus said, Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand.*
- 11 *And Jesus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would.*
- 12 *When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.*
- 13 *Therefore, they gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten.*
- 14 *Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, this is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world.*

Isn't that an exciting text from the Bible? The Bible recorded there a difficulty and how Jesus solved it. Let us examine the DETAILS of this unusual experience when Jesus used five loaves of bread to feed five thousand people.

Here is one detail we should examine: **The Multitude.**

We are told that a great multitude followed Him. Jesus and the disciples were gone over the Sea of Galilee or the Sea of Tiberias. This little sea is located in the northern part of the Holy Land. It is a nice little freshwater lake being fed by springs at the base of Mt. Hermon which form the headwaters of the Jordan River. It is a very lovely little lake, and many villages were settled on its shores in Roman times. So it was that a great multitude followed Jesus.

They were following Him because they had seen the miracles which He had performed for those who were sick. So, everyone wanted to be near Him. Well, we can understand that, can't we? Who would not want to be near someone who would be able to heal the hurts we all have or will have?

But Jesus and His disciples went up into a mountain and there He sat to rest with them. There was also a very important religious holiday near, a feast of the Jews called the Passover. It

comes in March or April of each year. Well, you see the multitude gathered there around Jesus. They were really very much interested in Jesus, so much so that they had not provided food. So you have the multitude as one detail in this experience.

A second detail is **The Mystery**.

You read that Jesus asked Philip, one of His disciples, where to go to get bread for all this multitude. He said, "Where shall we buy bread that these may eat?" Certainly, they were not close to any baker. It would be impossible for them to make little fires and bake their own cakes over those fires. There was no way as far as Philip could see. He answered Jesus, "Well, even if we bought two hundred pennies worth of bread it would not be enough." Now a penny in the days of Jesus was a day's wages. Think of the earnings of a full day's work and then multiply that by two hundred and you can understand what Philip was saying. Of course, he was right. Certainly, it would take more than two hundred days of work to feed five thousand people.

Then Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, came to say, "There is a lad here who has five loaves and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?" We can understand that if two hundred days of work would not pay for the bread that these people would eat, certainly five loaves would come nowhere near feeding the five thousand people.

You read though that Jesus knew what He was going to do. He asked Philip that question in order to test him. So, when Andrew brought this boy to Jesus with five barley loaves and two small fish, Jesus knew exactly what He was going to do. To Philip and Andrew there was no solution, but to Jesus there was. Do you see what I'm saying? Your difficulty has a solution.

We have these two details: the multitude and the mystery. Jesus knew what He would do even though Philip and Andrew did not know how to handle this particular difficulty.

There was the third detail: **The Miracle**.

In the first step in this detail Jesus said to these disciples, "Make the men sit down." You see, there needed to be some preparation. Get ready, we're going to solve this difficulty. So the men sat down. In second part of the miracle Jesus took the loaves and gave thanks to God for five loaves and two fish to feed five thousand people. He took what He had and gave thanks to God for

it. Then He began to distribute it to the disciples and the disciples began to give it to those who were seated.

The Bible says that they did the same with those two small fish. They gave the people as much as they would eat. In other words, everybody ate until he was satisfied. From five loaves of bread five thousand people ate as much as they would! That is not the end because Jesus then said to the disciples, “Gather up the fragments (crumbs) that remain that nothing be lost.” Did you notice that from five loaves of bread they had twelve baskets of crumbs? I call that a miracle, don’t you? “Little is much when God is in it.”

Ah, yes, you see how this difficulty was solved. These details speak to us of conditions today. There are multitudes everywhere, everywhere. How can their needs be met? There is a mystery, too. We do not always know and sometimes we don’t know at all how we are going to meet the difficulty. Then comes the barley bread. Jesus performs miracles. In this story He took five loaves of bread and two fish and fed five thousand people. That tells me that Jesus cares about your difficulty.

While this exact situation may not be repeated, to have a multitude fed with five loaves of bread, yet the Lord does care for you. That much we can learn from this experience. The Lord cares for you. He knows what He wants to do for you and to you, but you must trust Him!

Thank you, Dr. Yoder for that helpful teaching. My friend, how has Jesus cared for you? Do you have a testimony of His miraculous provision? If you do, we’d like to hear it. We’d like to join you in giving glory to Him!

You can send your testimony to us by e-mail using this address, mail@heraldsofhope.org. That email address again is, m-a-i-l@heraldsofhope.org. Or you may write to *Hope for Today*, Box 3, Breezewood, Pennsylvania 15533. And, when you send your testimony you can also request a printed manuscript or an audio CD of this teaching, “Five Loaves for 5,000.”

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Now friend, I urge you to tune in next week as we continue study in the Gospel of John. In his teaching, Dr. Yoder will speak to us about “How to Conquer Fear.” And until then, keep looking for that blessed HOPE.