

# Sufficiency Found in Christ: The Feeding of 5,000

## Matthew 14:13-21

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Preacher: Dustin Bengé

[ 0 : 00 ] I would invite you to please take your Bible and turn with me to the Gospel of Matthew, Matthew chapter 14. Matthew chapter 14.

And as you are turning in your copy of God's Word, let me say this morning what an absolute privilege and joy it is for me to be with you.

I send greetings from a lot of dear friends that you have at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. It doesn't take long after I open my mouth and begin to speak that you can tell that I'm from the southern states of the United States.

And so it's been a great privilege to get to know many of you last October, and I'm looking forward to the module starting tomorrow.

We have an exciting week ahead as we begin in the apostolic period, just in the apostles, and go all the way to the Reformation. So lots of rich, glorious history.

[ 1 : 08 ] But this morning, we look at a marvelous story in God's Word, Matthew chapter 14. I would like to draw your attention this morning, beginning in verse 13.

If you will have your Bibles open to this passage, you'll find it extremely helpful as we look at God's Word together. Matthew chapter 14, beginning in verse 13.

When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns.

When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick. As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, This is a remote place and it's getting late. Send the crowds away so they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves. Jesus replied, They do not need to go away.

[ 2 : 24 ] You give them something to eat. We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish, they answered. Bring them here to me, he said.

And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves.

And he gave them to the disciples and the disciples gave them to the people. They all ate and were satisfied.

And the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. The number of those who ate was about five thousand men besides women and children.

Well, this beautiful account of the feeding of the five thousand is probably one of the most familiar stories in all of Scripture.

[ 3 : 33 ] This story is immortalized, as it were, for us in children's Bibles and storybooks. And has become in our minds and in our thinking one of the great pastoral miracles of Jesus.

As we can picture him in our mind's eye, sitting on a rock on a grassy hillside with families and lovable children kind of surrounding him.

But with closer examination into the text that's before us, it's easy to allow that stereotypical scene really affect the way that we read the context of the passage that we're examining this morning.

And so I want you to notice at the beginning of Matthew 14, something that is very devastating that has just occurred. Namely, the execution of John the Baptist.

Who we all know, of course, as the forerunner of the Messiah. The son of Zacharias and Elizabeth. Who was in fact the cousin of the Lord Jesus Christ.

[ 4 : 50 ] Now if you remember the event that was surrounding this horrific execution and the murder of John the Baptist. The event surrounding this was the birthday celebration and a banquet that was

being held by a man by the name of Herod Antipas in his fortress palace in southern Israel around the Dead Sea.

During this lavish event, the crowd became so worked up into a scene of drunkenness and lust at the dancing of a young girl that Herod promised the young girl to give her absolutely anything that she asked for.

acting as a puppet on a string controlled by her mother who had been preached against by John the Baptist because of her adulterous affair.

She asked for the head of John the Baptist on a platter. Look with me in Matthew 14 in verse 10. And had John beheaded in prison.

His head was brought in on a platter and given to the girl who carried it to her mother. John's disciples came and took his body and buried it.

[ 6 : 26 ] Then they went and told Jesus. We could really call this the first banquet of Matthew 14.

A banquet of wickedness and murder and drunkenness. But in verse 14, we come to a banquet of another kind, don't we?

The banquet that Jesus Himself presides over. This banquet is not held in a fortress or a palace or a castle, but it's in the open air of the rolling hills of Galilee.

The invitation to this banquet is not restricted to the intelligentsia of the day or the high political leaders or the kings of the day.

But this particular banquet is open to all crowds without any discrimination at all. Unlike Herod's banquet, the preeminent purpose of which was to brag about his position among the crowds, Jesus' banquet is not provided to boast of his standing to the crowds, but is meant to be a reminder to us of the love and compassion that Jesus has on people.

[ 8 : 04 ] Unlike Herod's banquet that was self-serving and deadly, the compassion of Jesus is so vividly seen in this manner in which He satisfies the vast multitudes that are before Him.

There are only two miracles that are recorded in all four Gospel accounts. The feeding of the 5,000 and the resurrection of our Lord.

All four Gospel writers saw the great importance of the miracle of the feeding of the 5,000, and so they include it in all of their accounts.

And what I want to do with you this morning is to simply walk through very slowly this text as we begin to see five very simple truths.

Five things that I would like to say to you this morning that we can hang our thoughts on that helps us walk through the text before us.

[ 9 : 22 ] The very first thing that I would like to mention to you and draw to your attention is separation from the crowds. Separation from the crowds.

In the parallel account of this event as recorded for us in Mark's Gospel, chapter 6, Mark says in chapter 6, verse 30, the apostles returned to Jesus and told Him all they had done and taught. Now, this very interesting verse tells us something else that's going on here just prior to the great miracle of the feeding of the 5,000.

We have to go back a bit to discover what that is. In Mark chapter 6, verse 7, Mark says, Jesus called the twelve to Himself and began to send them out two by two and gave them authority over unclean spirits.

And so here we are, the disciples who have now been ministering in the towns and villages of the surrounding area are now coming back to Jesus to report everything that has taken place in their individual ministries among the people in the surrounding areas.

[ 10 : 56 ] You see, Jesus has sent them out two by two into all the surrounding area to teach and to preach and to work miracles.

And now they are coming back, reporting back to Jesus all that has taken place. And because of this, the crowds of people are following the apostles back to Jesus.

And the crowds are growing numerically into an uncontrollable frenzy of people. Mark tells us, the disciples are reporting to Jesus all their ministry activities and the crowds are growing so large, they don't have time to get anything to eat.

And so because of this great commotion, Jesus and the twelve withdraw from an undisclosed location on the Sea of Galilee to what Scripture tells us is a deserted area.

Now Luke, in his story of the feeding of the five thousand, tells us that Jesus and the disciples withdraw from this massive crowd of people into an area known as Bethsaida.

[12:31] Now look with me in Matthew 14, verse 13. When Jesus heard what happened, He withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place.

Now when we read this verse, Matthew seems to indicate that Jesus is alone by Himself. Even though that we know He is among the other twelve disciples.

But what I love about Matthew's account is I think Matthew is emphasizing here something so intimate and personal about our Lord in verse 13.

We see something here of the tenderness and the grief and the love of our Lord for John the Baptist who has just died.

If you can think back upon your life and consider times when you've heard about the death of a dear loved one or a death of a dear close friend and how you've just simply wanted to withdraw from the noise and the hustle and bustle of the crowds just to withdraw and reflect and to pray and to go into another room or go somewhere simply to be alone.

[14:08] And so what I think Matthew wants us to see here in verse 13 is simply Jesus' heartfelt grief over the death of John.

Perhaps it's a time for Him to think and to pray and to contemplate as the news of the death of John has reached His ears.

John, of whom Jesus said, among those born of woman, none has been greater. And I also want to point out that I see this as a turning point in the ministry of Christ which we'll talk about later.

And so here we are. Jesus has just heard that John has been executed. He gets into a boat along with the twelve disciples who have just come back from all the surrounding villages and they set off onto the Sea of Galilee this one afternoon.

That brings us to our second point. Sheep without a shepherd. Would you look at the end of verse 13? Hearing of this, the crowds followed Him on foot from the towns.

[15:36] When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, He had compassion on them and healed their sick. The people recognize Jesus and His disciples get into the boat.

And from all the surrounding towns and villages, they follow Him on foot.

And Jesus and His disciples set sail on the Sea of Galilee. They see this massive crowd of people forming on the shoreline.

Now, there are about 200 villages and cities and towns in this area of Galilee. And Matthew says they come from the towns.

This indicates, my friends, that everyone from every town, every village, every city come out to see Jesus. This speaks to us, doesn't it?

[16:46] Something of the great fame of Jesus during this period. He never could get away from the crowds of people.

May I put it in a perhaps very American terminology, Jesus is a rock star. And every time He speaks, every time He performs a miracle, literally the entire town goes to see Him.

And this enormous crowd is following Jesus on the shoreline, but the other Gospel writers say they not only are walking, the other Gospel writers tell us they ran to see Him.

This is not just some ordinary person that you meet on the street. They're running after Jesus because they want Him to do something for them.

And even when seeking privacy, Jesus cannot hide. Look at verse 14. When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, He had compassion on them.

[18:10] I just love that verse. Jesus is not some brash, harsh man who cannot be approached or who's trying to avoid people.

No, He looks upon them as He did Jerusalem and He mourns for them. Their condition, their need, their spiritual blindness.

Jesus is the complete opposite of unapproachable. He's tender. And He's loving. And He's full of compassion.

And the compassion is so great that He's no longer concerned over His own rest or His own time or His own grief. But He's most concerned with the need that is before Him.

Mark 6, verse 34 says that He looks out over the vast multitudes of people as sheep not having a shepherd.

[19:26] Numerous times throughout Scripture we see that this is a theme that's picked up that the people of Israel and others are seen as vast multitudes of people without a shepherd.

For instance, in Numbers chapter 27 when Moses is praying for the Lord to send Israel a leader, it says, Moses said to the people, may the Lord the God who gives breath to all living things appoint someone over this community to go out and come in before them and one who will lead them out and bring them in so the Lord's people will not be like sheep without a shepherd.

After the death of Moses, the children of Israel were sheep without a shepherd. And Moses' prayer, of course, is answered in the man by the name of Joshua.

And now according to Matthew 11, John the Baptist was the greatest of the prophets. This privileged messenger sent to prepare the way of the Messiah.

And so in a sense, John the Baptist is a shepherd of the people pointing them to the Messiah. But here we are and what has just happened?

[ 20 : 55 ] John the Baptist has been executed. He's just been killed. Do you see how this is the closing of one chapter and the opening of a new chapter?

That final Old Testament prophet, John the Baptist, has now died and he's just passed off the scene after fulfilling his God-called commission to prepare the way of the Messiah.

And here we have Jesus who is stepping ashore as the one true shepherd of Israel. And in Matthew 14, we see this as a turning point.

Jesus is now the new Moses. Jesus is now the new Joshua. Jesus is now, if you will, the new John the Baptist who will lead his people down straight paths of repentance and faith.

Jesus Christ, the Supreme Shepherd of Israel with great compassion and tenderness and love in his heart now steps ashore to the people.

[ 22 : 17 ] What a marvelous scene this must have been. The apostles tell us that in his compassion, Jesus sees this vast multitude without direction, without purpose, without a leader, and so he comes ashore.

And I love this. Mark chapter 6 tells us he begins to teach them. In Jewish literature, the feeding of Israel is often associated with their being taught the Word of God.

And so here is the Supreme Shepherd of Israel coming forth beginning to feed His people by teaching them the Word of God.

The sheep who have no shepherd now have a shepherd and He begins to feed them.

What a beautiful picture. Now we move on in the text that we find physically there is scarce provision for the multitude.

[ 23 : 44 ] The synoptic Gospels Matthew, Mark, and Luke refer to this miracle as taking place in the evening. It's supper time.

It's the evening meal time. It's dinner time as my grandmother would call it. Notice verse 15.

Now when it was evening. So here we are. Jesus and His disciples. We know there's somewhere around the city of Bethsaida on the northwestern shore of the Sea of Galilee.

This hillside is covered in grass. So this is taking place at some point between March or April. The disciples are seeing this enormous crowd.

They come to Jesus and make at what appears to be a very reasonable request. Jesus send the crowds away into the villages that they may buy food for themselves.

[ 24 : 47 ] themselves. However, with a bit of closer examination, we see that this statement by the disciples loses fact that Jesus standing before them is the Good Shepherd.

And all the miracles that proceeded in the days ahead showing and demonstrating that He would provide, the disciples seem to forget.

And they're looking at the physicality of the situation. And in contrast to the disciples' suggestion that the people should go buy food for themselves, verse 16, Jesus looks at them and says, no, you give them something to eat.

This simple command assumes the disciples should serve as extensions of His miracle working power.

Oh, how easily the disciples had forgotten just a few days ago when they went into the villages and performed miracles.

[ 26 : 15 ] But the disciples understand Jesus' command in terms of what they themselves are capable of doing. What do the disciples say?

What's their response? Jesus, should we leave and purchase 200 denarii worth of bread? They're automatically thinking in physical terminology.

It would take 200 denarii to feed this many people. Jesus, one denarius was the equivalent of one day's wages.

So, 200 denarii would be worth about eight months worth of wages. We don't know if they had this much money with them, or it's a hypothetical question, as was often given to Jesus, Jesus, you've lost your mind.

Can you just see Peter shaking his head and throwing up his arms in the air? Jesus, you've lost it. You've gone crazy. We don't have enough money to feed these people.

[ 27 : 25 ] Now, just to be clear, there's not 5,000 people here. But the numbers qualified in the statement that there are 5,000 men.

So, it obviously does not include the women, the wives, the mothers, the sisters, etc., who were there among them, which probably equaled around 5,000.

It also doesn't include the vast multitude of children who also would have been there, which would have numbered around 10,000 to 15,000. In other words, my friends, this is an enormous crowd and the disciples are looking out over at what is probably about 25,000 people and they're saying, Jesus, you've lost your mind.

We do not have enough money to feed them. And so in the story, we leave the disciples with their hands in their empty pockets, trying to figure out how are we going to provide for these people.

And that brings us to the fourth point of this event, sufficiency found only in Christ. Notice verse 17.

[ 28 : 51 ] The disciples come back to Jesus with a boy's dinner. dinner. We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish. Immediately, Jesus says, organize the people and have them sit down on the grass.

Now, I want you to notice verse 19, this phrase, he directed the people to sit down on the grass. to sit down in this culture for this type of meal, pointed to the fact that this was going to be a banquet meal.

This is not a usual meal. Jesus is preparing for them a banquet. This is a celebration meal. meal. The banquet meal given by their king in honor of the arrival of his kingdom. And then verse 19, our Lord takes five loaves of bread and two fish into his hands and he gazes into the heavens. We're told not to the content of his prayer. We can imagine with our imagination that perhaps it's the common table prayer of Judaism.

[ 30 : 22 ] Praise be to you, O Lord our God, King of the world, who makes bread to come down from the earth and who provides for all that you have created.

Perhaps that was what he said. We don't know. But what I love, if I could give a footnote here, is I love the parallel between this banquet meal and the one he will share in the coming days with his disciples in the upper room before he is crucified.

Both accounts take on the same sequence of events. Taking bread, blessing bread, breaking the bread, and giving the bread to the disciples.

And so with these five loaves and two fish, which are completely inadequate to feed the thousands of people, in the hands of Jesus, sufficiency is found.

After blessing the food, notice what it says in verse 19, he gave them to the disciples. Which is best seen as Jesus is continually, constantly, unceasingly giving bread to the disciples.

[ 31 : 54 ] As they distribute what has been given, they come back and return for more and more and more and more. Listen, my friends, Jesus is a bottomless well of sufficiency, mercy for every single need that we have.

Isn't the story of Scripture that our Lord again and again lavishes grace upon grace and hope upon hope and love upon love and bread upon bread upon His children.

children. Here is their king, their shepherd, spreading a banquet celebration meal on this grassy hillside.

Not in the glittering halls of a palace, but among ordinary, common, ordinary people.

Why? Why? Because He wants them to know that their shepherd has arrived.

[ 33 : 14 ] Now, I want you to notice the conclusion here. It involves three statements as we see satisfaction fulfilled in Christ.

What does it say happens next? Verse 20, they were satisfied. They were satisfied.

One of the great biblical images of joy in the eternal kingdom is a banquet where the people eat as much as they wish to eat.

Don't you wish you could do that now? There is a marvelous passage in Isaiah chapter 25 verses 6 through 9.

On this mountain, the Lord Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine, the best meats, and the finest of wines.

[ 34 : 30 ] On this mountain, He will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples, the sheet that covers all nations. He will swallow up death forever.

The sovereign Lord will wipe away the tears from all faces. He will remove the people's disgrace from all the earth. The Lord has spoken. In that day, it says, they will say, surely this is our God. We trusted in Him. And He saved us. This is the Lord. We trusted in Him. Let us rejoice and be glad in His salvation.

compassion. Listen, my friends, the meal here that Jesus provided is not a snack that tides them over until they can go into the villages and buy for themselves food.

The bread that Jesus gives satisfies the soul and is an expression of His compassion and it's given in such measure that there are baskets left over.

[ 35 : 43 ] Notice verse 20. The disciples pick up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. I think it's perhaps a bit misleading if we try to go into the symbolism of why there were twelve baskets and all of the rest of it.

I think the emphasis here in the text is on the superabundance of the sufficiency and satisfaction that is only found in Jesus Christ.

Do you remember in the wilderness wanderings, as we've already heard this morning, the children of Israel wandering around for forty years, every single morning they would go outside of their homes and they had to pick up manna off of the ground.

Every single morning. And if they did not eat that, it began to grow old and stale and moldy and bugs would consume it. The next morning, they had to go out and gather the manna again.

But the bread that Jesus provides, the abundance Jesus supplies in knowing Him is enough. What is He saying to these people in Galilee?

[ 36 : 58 ] He's saying, I am better than Moses. I am better than Joshua. I am better than Ezekiel and John the Baptist.

I am enough for every need that you have. And then notice verse 21, there were five thousand men. The women and the children ate right along with the men. Sometimes what's interesting, friends, is what's not in the text.

And here we see something missing. There's no mention as to the crowd's reaction. Throughout the Gospel accounts and all the miracles that are recorded for us by our Lord, there always seems to be a reaction of amazement, it says, or astonishment, it says.

But you see, this miracle is not confirmed by the crowd's reaction, but by a description of what happened. Here, you have five thousand men are fed and satisfied, and there were leftovers.

[ 38 : 24 ] Very quickly, now that we're at the end, let me just simply give you a couple themes here that we've picked up on. First of all, this massive miracle reveals to us something of the greatness of Jesus.

all the miracles of Moses and Joshua and Elijah and Elisha and John the Baptist, even if you will, they pale in comparison.

Do you remember what I told you at the beginning? John the Baptist had been executed as a signal of the closing of one chapter and the opening of a new. Jesus is seen here as Israel's final, complete, great shepherd.

Jesus is seen here, my friends, as our great shepherd. Hebrews reveals to us that he's God's final word.

God has promised to send a shepherd for his people, and now he's giving his people bread and fish. Another theme that we learn from the disciples is simply this, I am always inadequate for the task that Jesus has for me.

[ 39 : 54 ] Always. Sometimes we're overwhelmed, aren't we, at the task that Jesus has for us, or the calling to which he has called us to.

And just like the disciples, when asked to do something, or to say something, or to go somewhere, on behalf of our Lord, we stand with our hands in our pockets trying to find the money to do it. Jesus, I can't speak, Moses said. I can't go back to Egypt. I stutter when I speak.

Isaiah, woe is me, for I'm a man of unclean lips. God, I can't go tell them. David, have mercy upon me.

Oh God, I am a sinner. The Apostle Paul, I am the chief of sinners. Every person God calls in Scripture recognizes themselves as inadequate for the task to which they are called.

[ 41 : 03 ] But oh, the Apostle Paul reminds us in 2 Corinthians 3, not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything is coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God.

Listen, folks, if God has called you to do something, if God has called you to say something, if God has asked you to go somewhere, I promise you, on the authority of His Word, that He will super abundantly be sufficient and supply for whatever you need.

And finally, Jesus is always, always, my friends, more than adequate in every task and in every challenge that we face.

Ephesians chapter 3 verse 20 tells us, now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we can ask or think according to the power at work within us.

We are completely inadequate for every single thing to satisfy the people. Do you want to share the Gospel with Kerageline and to go out from here to the surrounding villages and towns and areas?

[ 42 : 33 ] Do you want Kerageline Baptist Church to make a difference in the community and among the people? I dare say we would all say amen to that desire.

Let me tell you, you are completely inadequate to do any of it. But oh my, the glorious good news is that Jesus Christ the Son of God has come in flesh, robed Himself like us to make us sufficient for every task that we have to which we are called to.

He has went to the cross and substituted Himself. He has risen from the dead and now He reigns as the glorious sovereign of the universe.

He is soon returning for His people to set up His eternal kingdom. My friends, we win. So we go with the good news of the gospel.

Depend upon Him. Look to Him. Cling to Him. Trust Him. and He will satisfy you with eternal pleasure and eternal joy.

[ 44 : 06 ] What a beautiful story of His sufficiency and His adequacy for all of our lives.

Let's pray together. Our Father, we thank You for our time this morning in Your Word. what glorious good news that we have in the gospel.

What glorious good news we have in the sufficiency of Christ for all of our needs. Father, what a privilege it is to be here this morning and to worship You with brothers and sisters in Christ.

And I pray, Father, that the good news to us this morning would so equip us for the task ahead that we would find and discover our complete sufficiency is only in You.

We thank You this morning for our time. We pray in Jesus' name and for His sake. Amen. Amen. Amen. Thank you, Dustin.

[ 45 : 24 ] and what an encouragement it is to us when we leave today. Thank you. ... ..