

Feeding the 5000 and waking on the water

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Date: 10 November 2019

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[0:00] You can hear me okay? Yes? So, let me use this to get where we're going. I want to just remind you of where we have been. Some of you have just read this and you're wondering what's happened before.

And where I'm actually wanting to go is I want to give a little bit of broader context, just remind us where we've been the last few weeks. Then we'll go through this story of the feeding of the 5,000 and also of the walking on the water.

And I want to touch briefly on what I read at the start of the meeting about John 6, the bread of life. I think there is some relevance of that. And then I want to pick out some lessons.

But there's so much in here. I'm probably on seven or eight lessons, so I'm going to have to skip through some of those. But I think one or two of them are probably pretty important. And I just hope that God will help me to pause where they are more important because there is a fair bit to flick through.

So, Jesus, after the time when he was rejected by those in Nazareth, he had spent most of his time around Capernaum, which I'll show you a map in a minute, but it's up on the north and west coast of the Sea of Galilee.

[1:19] And we have been going through these parables. Don't forget, before we went into these five parables, in fact, after the parable of the sower, they were asking Jesus, why are you now speaking in parables?

And it was very clear that this had a definite purpose, because these truths are revealed to you but hidden from others. Do you remember that? And all the way around this, there are these religious leaders who really aren't getting this.

They're seeing miracles. They're seeing astonishing things from Jesus, but they're resisting. They're not believing. And Jesus is now using a technique which is not crystal clear to everybody, but only to those who really are seeking him.

And last week, with Ben's able help, we were looking at a difficult story about a rather stupid party and stupid promises from probably a drunken king and the death of John the Baptist.

So that's where we got to last week. And news of this, of course, would have got to Jesus. And his reaction, if you just look at verse 13 in Matthew 14, is that he withdrew by boat to a solitary place.

[2:38] The disciples actually, we find from the other, this story is, the feeding of the 5,000 is in all four of the Gospels. And we do pick up that the disciples are with him as well.

And I think the disciples have just been on a round of doing some ministry themselves. So just picture for a moment, Jesus is weary. Yeah? Weary and tired. He's just had shattering news about John the Baptist.

And he is getting in a boat and he's heading east across the water to get away from the crowds. Yeah? But they work out where he's going.

Is this on, by the way? I think that could be wound down, maybe. They've worked out where he's going, the crowds, and they sneak round the shore. They're trying to follow him.

And the location is on the east here. Now, if you see this map, I think I can use this pointer a bit.

[3:39] So here is the Sea of Galilee. There's Capernaum I mentioned, where Jesus was mostly based. And to get away from the crowds, we believe he's going somewhere across here to get away from them.

But, of course, the crowd's probably going round the top here. Because they know what this man can do. They're bringing their sick. Yeah? So Jesus and his disciples are trying to get away and they're all trying to follow him round.

Right? So now you picture... What have we got here? Yeah.

And I'm thinking ahead just so that you know the direction of things. But there is... I'm telling this story before we go through it in detail. But it just shows the movement. If you look at the arrows across the sea, you see that where they start to head back afterwards and get troubled by the storm and end up over at Gennasseret.

And soon after this, and it's beyond our passage, the other arrows show you Jesus moving on to Tyre and Sidon and then down to the Decapolis, which is a Gentile area.

[4:45] And that's where the feeding of the 4,000, a different miracle, happens in a Gentile area. But who are these people who have just come round on foot?

These are Jewish Galileans. Do you know anything about Galileans? These are not very educated people. These are farming type people, simple souls. But they see someone who can heal sick and they're following him like anything.

But interestingly, and I think it's an important point to pause here on verse 14, it says, you've pictured this, Jesus weary, just landed on the boat, and all these crowds, he didn't want them to be there, but they're there.

But he looks out on them and it says he had compassion on them. And it says he healed their sick. So he just got straight to work.

He might have had other original plans, but he got straight to work ministering to them. And we will pick up a few extra bits of information from the other Gospels.

[5:52] It's rather lovely. In Mark 6, it describes this compassion because they were like sheep without a shepherd. And so he began teaching them. So he wasn't just healing sick.

He just saw this crowd and he wanted to teach them. And he took his time to do it. So you picture this going on. The plan isn't working for Jesus to get away from it or with his disciples.

This is a remote place now. It's away from the town. It's away from shops. It's away from anywhere you can get food. It's getting late. So the disciples start to think practical things about, hmm, no one's eaten in a while.

This is a remote place. It's getting late. And they start saying to Jesus, can we send the crowds away? Because I mean, you know. But Jesus says in verse 16, what does he say?

They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat. And I'm just imagining myself as one of the disciples here. Gulp, you know. What is Jesus thinking here?

[6:56] You give them something to eat. Here we are in a remote place. Where am I going to get this food from? You give them something to eat. Very cryptic, isn't it? We get a little bit more from John's gospel.

You don't need to turn to it. But in John, we hear specifically about Philip and Andrew. And in the context of how it's reported there, Philip says, Jesus looked at the crowd.

He says to Philip, where shall we buy bread for these people to eat? But it says that he asked this only to test Philip.

Because he already had in mind what he was going to do. So the disciples respond to this question. You know, you feed them. We have only five loaves and two fish. That's what they've sussed out. And do you remember the number? And if you remember some of the details of what we read, 5,000.

[7:56] But that was the men. So there were more there. Possibly in that they'd traveled a few miles. Maybe not. I mean, maybe double. It's only a guess, isn't it?

But there were at least 5,000. And probably nearer 10 by the time you counted some of the others. Five small loaves. One of the other gospels tells us small loaves and small fish.

That's what they have. Philip answers in John, It would take six months' wages to buy enough bread to feed this lot. And Andrew says, And again, confirming the five loaves and the two fish, But in John is where we find out there is a small boy.

And you could even make quite a lot of that on its own, That there is a boy with enough faith to say, Here you are. Have my lunch. Five small barley loaves and two small fish.

But, says Andrew, How far will that go among so many? So you pick up the first reaction from the disciples. Don't forget in the context of this, They have seen many miracles that Jesus does.

[9:03] But here, Are they expecting a miracle? It doesn't look like it, does it? Just, How are we going to do anything with this? And then Jesus leads through this story.

He has the people sit down. In groups of 50 or 100, We're told that in Mark. And we picture Jesus taking the loaves, Giving thanks.

The Greek word is Eucharist. And we're from where the Eucharist word comes from. Giving thanks. And then he broke them and divided the fish as well. Gave it to the disciples.

And off they go. Now, We can skim over this, But can you just imagine for a minute That you are one of these disciples. And, Jesus has accepted this small offering.

Five loaves and two fish. And perhaps you're amongst the disciples. And you've got to organise this crowd of 10,000 people. And you've just been told, Can you get them to sit down?

[10:03] So they've got to believe, Haven't they? That something's about to happen here. And they're going to go out and tell these rather simple Galileans, Right, 50 of you sit there. 50, 100 over there. Organising these people.

No sign of any food. Imagine, We've got a group in here, And there's nothing happening in the kitchen. And we're promising a meal. Yeah? And the disciples must be, Goodness me, What on earth must be going through their heads As this is going on.

But then, Humbly following Jesus' instructions, They come up to him after he's broken this bread. And they're taking this basket off, Wondering how on earth it got filled up. And then they come back. And these baskets keep on getting filled. And all these people are getting fed. And in the end, Everyone's satisfied. And the disciples pick up the waste afterwards, Which I think was the normal practice with Jewish things anyway.

12 basketfuls of leftover. Now you can at least work out that that is a lot more than five small loaves and two small fish. And some people do read into that.

[11:10] This is amongst Jewish people. Not learned Jewish people, Primarily, But 12, Perhaps a symbol of the 12 tribes of Israel. Perhaps Jesus saying, There is enough here for the whole nation.

In what he's doing. In terms of figurative speaking. But what an astounding thing. That these disciples would never, Ever forget. To have been that close.

To God Doing mighty, Mighty things. That they Wouldn't have understood. Or imagined. So That's the end of that one.

We'll come back and pause on bits of the details As we pick out some things I think we want to learn from this. But let's just move on To Jesus walking on the water. But that miracle, Just remember as we move on from it, That was in front of crowds And his disciples.

And now we see In verses 22 onwards That Jesus Is sending his disciples Away in the boat. In fact it is towards the north coast Of the Sea of Galilee.

[12:19] And we pick up from Looking at the different accounts That it was It was getting dark. Jesus dismisses the crowd. Now you might think Why is he doing that?

Well I suppose it is late. They've been fed. So You could say he's finished. But there's a bit more going on here. And John tells us That Jesus knew that They intended to come And make him king by force.

Now Other gospels will tell us This is near the time of the Passover. This is a time Of great national feeling For the Jewish people. And this man Jesus Doing things like this And them feeling quite oppressed By the Romans.

And being quite a rough and ready lot. They just wanted to make this man king. That's what they wanted to do. But Jesus wasn't having that. Because he knew that his kingdom Was not Of this world.

Not what they were thinking. So he dismisses the crowd. He sends his Disciples away in a boat. Probably because he doesn't want them To get too much pressure From the crowd either. And then what does Jesus do?

[13:29] He goes up on a mountain. Verse 23 By himself To pray After all that's been going on. He wants to go up on a mountain By himself to pray.

And then we hear That these disciples in a boat Heading back to the other shore Perhaps they get Two or three miles offshore And the wind Stirs up And it's pretty dark And the disciples are struggling.

In the boat. Doubtless very afraid. They're trying to work out What on earth to do. Whether they're going to survive this. And then we hear in the story All very matter of fact That Jesus In fact it comes out Near a dawn The third or fourth watch Of the night.

But some hours later Jesus walks out on the water. And again You just have to pause a minute. And we've been told About this rough sea. This isn't This isn't Jesus walking across A flat Quiet piece of water.

I mean you know That would be quite impressive Wouldn't it? But this is This is the sea doing this. And somehow Jesus Has walked Probably two and a bit miles I don't know Out to his disciples On this boat Jesus walks on the water To them.

[14:49] And of course When they see him They're not expecting A miracle here either really. So they look out And they think This is a ghost But Jesus says Take courage This figure Doubtless bobbing up And down on the water And then doing the same Yeah Take courage It is I Don't be afraid And then Peter We read in verse 28 He begins to understand Who this is Lord if it's you Peter replied Tell me to come To you on the water Come He said And you know this story well Peter gets down And he starts Walking on the water But then After a moment He's starting to look At the waves He's looking away from Jesus And it all starts to go wrong And he's sinking But Jesus catches his hand Doesn't he Helps him And then they get into the boat

Catching up where I got to Climb into the boat And immediately we hear The storm calming And then those in the boat Who have now recognised Jesus And welcomed him in What do they do? They're beginning to swallow the pill That Jesus really is Quite special Aren't they? They're beginning to understand That truly He is the son of God And they worshipped him As they understood What had happened And we read in Mark Just another comment On this What was going on At this time Because they were Completely amazed In this boat Because they had not Understood About the loaves Their hearts were hardened Even though they'd seen So many miracles They hadn't yet got to Learn that they might Have to expect The unexpected From Jesus Who was God And very soon They reached the shore And I'll give you the map And I'll give you the map again Just to remind you Of what was going on So Jesus is up On a hillside praying The boat has gone off I think it's heading up To the top The wind comes And eventually they end up Somewhere over here And that's where

They've landed And then just to touch Briefly on John 6 You could turn to John 6 Because that's where In verse 4 We hear That this is around The time of the Passover And I mentioned This is a time Of strong national feelings And we have also mentioned That the Jews saw Jesus As a political Messiah We've seen that they wanted To make him king Who would oust the Romans But Jesus' kingdom Was a spiritual one So the focus was Way beyond mortal life So that was the The dysfunction As it were Between what Jesus knew About what he was doing And what they The people were expecting And just verse 35 I'm only wanting to pick A few of these things But lovely statements here One of the several I am statements of Jesus I am the bread of life Whoever comes to me

Will never go hungry And whoever believes in me Will never be thirsty It's also clear And I'll just skim through The bits in John 6 In front of you But it's clear that There's talk about Manna in the wilderness Jesus knew about That history And a little part In Deuteronomy 8 That you'll remember This is when God's people Were in the wilderness They needed this food From somewhere Again there was a place Where there wasn't Any other food And God provided This food from heaven Chris was talking about it This morning But notice just the context Of how it was given here And in Deuteronomy 8 It says God humbled you Causing you to hunger And feeding you Manna With manna To teach you That man does not live By bread alone But by every word That comes from The mouth of the Lord So even in that Marvellous provision Of manna In the Old Testament There was a challenge

[19:10] Even though their stomachs Were being fed It was limited They were meant to be hungry Then they were given this To keep them going But

to remind them Not to live only By physical bread But by every word That comes from The mouth of God So really The feeding of the 5000 Was partly to say To these Jewish people That there is one Much greater than Moses here And the walking across water To the disciples It at least Has some reference Or makes you think About the Jewish nation Coming out of Egypt Through the sea I mean both of these miracles They're just They have similar Well they've got things In common haven't they And then in verse 51 Of John 6 We read I am the living bread That came down From heaven Whoever eats this bread Will live forever And this is a telling comment Isn't it This bread Is my flesh Which I give

For the life Of the world But whoever eats this bread Now this is getting Very obscure language But all I can say We're not majoring On this today But please Just for the moment Don't think Don't think about Teeth and flesh Right But faith in Jesus His death on the cross For sins And the Bible's teaching They are Vital to the spiritual life Of our souls More so Than bread Is to the body That I think Is the main point Of this Jesus saying I am the bread Of life And the reference To his sacrifice Coming And in And amongst the other words In John 6 There is Come to him Believe on him Because this Is eternal Life So I'm just skimming Around the story there I think we've covered it And I want to move on now

To the lessons And we'll Go back and Pick up The odd bit Just to Help with the lesson Lesson number one You remember When Jesus first Saw the crowds And he could have Had all kinds Of reactions To them He had Compassion on them And he healed The sick And he taught them It would have been So easy to say Not today Come back tomorrow Go a couple of miles Back around the coast I don't know I don't know What it is And the question Perhaps this Brings to us As you will see Different needs Out there And in and around you Could be Your neighbours It could be Bigger thoughts Of homeless people In our city Wherever you Particularly look You see a need Among a people How compassionate Are you Do you give room

For that to grow In your heart So that it might Disturb you Might make you Want to do Something How compassionate Are you That's lesson Number one The second one Think big And offer to God What you have Now it is Almost Almost an amusing Part of this story When Jesus Exposes And tests His disciples You feed them And we can all Imagine what it Might have been Like to be them Talking amongst Ourselves What is he Thinking You feed them They brought him What little They had Jesus gave Thanks He breaks it He gives it Back to them They work With it And they end Up with plenty Left over More than the Start So there's a

Good principle Of ministry Here Isn't there Anywhere you Look You could see That the task Is so big You just don't Know where to Start But if you're Only thinking About your Material Ability To meet Needs You will never Think of just Coming to Jesus With the little You have Humanly it doesn't Look like it's Going to do The job at all But Jesus Does ask them To bring Their little He gives Thanks for it He blesses it It's a good Principle of Ministry And wonderful Things come From it Now I'll give You a little Aside here On a film I've watched Because I Just think it Illustrates This point It might If Any of you Know that Film Have you Heard of it Anyone seen it Well I Warmly recommend It to you It's on Netflix You can also

[24:15] Get it on DVD And without Spoiling it I'll tell you Just a little About About this It's a story About compassion And taking Risks And offering Small efforts To God It doesn't Tick every Box in This parable But we Have an International Art dealer Who's the Man in the Middle here And he He confronts And befriends A dangerous Drifter That looks Very much Like Richard Dangerous Drifter That looks Like Richard And they Strike up An unusual Friendship While actually This art dealer Is trying to Save a Problem in His marriage Okay Turns out That his Wife Deborah Down the Bottom here She appears To be the Believer in This With a Big heart Of compassion And she Works in The local Homeless Charity Doing some Good And in

The early Stages of This When this This man Who's well Out of His Depth Thinking he Needs to Go and Do a Deal on Some Art And his Wife is Saying That violent Man that Just smashed That piece Of glass Over there That said About god Being love Think you Need to Go and Befriend Him Right So this Art dealer Is feeling A bit out Of his Comfort Zone And yet There is This Beautiful Story Of

how Healing Happens And something Magical Comes out Of this I don't Want to Spoil it Too much But Is this Thing responding I'm not Clicking right Yeah so Deborah's Ambition to Just her Vision this Man needs Love Violent Dangerous Man She just Does a Little Thing Pointing Her Husband And even The whole Family Get involved Help here And The end

Of this Story Don't want To spoil it Too much But that Rather special Friendship In the end Of the story These people Go around Places in America Trying to Share their Story of A remarkable Journey of Healing And the Dangerous Man who Goes around With a Baseball Bat To start With who Is remarkably Healed This unique Friendship They go Around the States Telling their Story and I believe You'll find They raised Something like 81 million Pounds for Homeless Work So I Leave that As a Recommendation To you But I Also just Think we Can all Think of Many times You give Something Little and It doesn't Seem to Multiply Very much But this Is something Quite small But it Seems to me God got Hold of That And did Something Rather Special With it It is It is A true Story Same Kind of Different As me Just a Plug for Something Other Nice Lesson Number Three Don't Be Overwhelmed And Give Up Any of You tempted To do That When you Look out On big Need Don't Be Overwhelmed And Give Up Clearly That's The way The disciples Were responding To Jesus At the Thought of Trying to Deal with This crowd Needing some Food They had No idea What to Do So if We also Just only Think of Our own Strength When we're Looking out At need We will Quickly conclude That whatever We're doing Is just a Drop in the Ocean And we Will probably Not start Now there Is another Story Just to Illustrate This one It's not A bible Parable But there's A parable About starfish A story About An older Man Walking Walking Along a Beach Where Some of You will Know this Thousands Of starfish Have been Washed up By the High tide And they're Stranded

And this Older man Sees this Little boy Throwing Starfish Back And the Older man Says to him What are You doing He says Well I'm saving I'm saving These starfish And the Older man Chuckles Slightly to Himself And he Says But there Are thousands Of starfish And there's Only one Of you And the Little boy Who hasn't Really looked At him Yet He checks Up another Starfish And he Throws it In And then He turns To the Man And he Says Well It made Quite a lot Of difference To that Starfish And he Carries On And An amusing Story An amusing Story But That little Boy He didn't He didn't See himself As in charge Of the whole Picture Sorting the Big problem But he Did what He could So don't Be overwhelmed And give up When Just remember That heart Of compassion From lesson One That we're Trying to Develop When you

[29:17] Feel overwhelmed Still Keep a focus Look around What can You do At least Do that And offer It to God So that Was the Starfish Parable Number Four And now We're Probably Thinking about The episode Of the Boat When the Disciples Must have Felt Very alone Although it Was all Pretty good Yesterday Earlier That day When they Were with Jesus Goodness me It seemed Like no One was There They faced A severe Trial And they Felt Alone But where Was Jesus I think this Is quite an Interesting part Of the story Isn't it Where was Jesus He was up On a Hillside Praying What do You think He was Sort of Facing the Other direction And praying For all Kinds of Other things He was Probably Thinking about How wrong The Jewish People were For wanting To make Him king And hoping And praying That God Might steer Them another Way But others In Mark

Six I think You'll find It's quite Clear that Jesus Can see The disciples So he's Probably praying For them Also And he can See they're In trouble Otherwise Why else Would he Suddenly get Out and go Out on the Water So they Felt he Was absent But he Was praying And he Knew Exactly what Was going On So in Hard times You might Not be Able to See God near You But don't Give in And believe That he Is not There And that He doesn't Care Just a Verse in Hebrews There that Reminds you About where Jesus is Now Because Jesus lives Forever He has a Permanent Priesthood And therefore He is able To save Completely Those Who come To God Through him Because he Always lives To intercede For them So this Jesus Who is Now In heaven His whole Business is To intercede For us And to

Watch out For us And to Command his Angels Concerning Us Lesson Five And this Is really Thinking about Peter walking On the Water In hard Times keep Your focus On Jesus This is Quite a Simple little One but Probably still Quite hard To put into Practice Because when Peter was Looking at Jesus And asking For help It was Working well But when He started To look Away and Saw the

Size of The problems Around him In hard Times keep Your focus On Jesus And what About this One Meditate On God's Greatness And his Love for You You could Ask yourself The question Had the Disciples Reflected On what Had happened When Five Thousand Or Ten Thousand People Were fed Had they Reflected On the Power Of Jesus And the Fact that They had Been Chosen To be A key Part of The kingdom Work Although This was Very scary Where they Were They might Have reacted Differently

When they Saw a Figure Coming across The sea Maybe they Would have Thought You know Jesus Yes I Was expecting You but That must Be you And then You know Things like Psalm 139 These words And you Can enjoy Some of This Reading it More outside Of what We're Doing You have Searched Me Oh Lord And you Know me You know When I Sit and When I Rise There is Nothing About what We do Day to Day That God Is unaware Of So consider His greatness And that Great love And that Should really Strengthen us A lot When challenges Come Lesson number Seven I think There's only One more After this But we When they Got into The boat And they Really Reflected on What had Happened And what They'd Witnessed Walking on The water And feeding Five thousand They worshipped Him Truly You are The son Of God And then

The final Lesson And I think Perhaps it's Where we Started That John Six Gives us This extra Goes on To talk About Jesus Being the Bread of Life Just this Final question Really Do you Value Jesus And his Word Above All physical Needs And have You come To Jesus And believed In him That's what That episode About the Bread of Life Was all About Nothing Is more Important Because this Is eternal Life So I'm Sure there Are other Things that Could have Come out Of that But I Think there's Some good Stuff to Think about There And it's Nearly Half past Seven So are We going to Follow the Normal Pattern Let's