

Jesus abundantly satisfies

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[0 : 00] So do you have that passage that was read for us from Matthew chapter 14 open in front of you.! 2026 is here.

And when we get to the turning of the year, which feels very significant, we often will come up with all sorts of hopes and dreams that we have for the year.

And perhaps you're one to set a New Year's resolution. Or maybe, I don't know if this is bigger or lesser than New Year's resolution, a goal for the year, something to aim at for yourself.

And it strikes me that when we do those kind of things, we're sort of thinking along these lines. If only I had dot, dot, dot.

If only I did dot, dot, dot. Then my life would be complete. Then life would be sorted. Then I would be happier. So I wonder what your if only I dot, dot, dot is.

[1 : 28] Maybe it's if only I fell in love this year. If only I made new friends this year. If only I lost weight this year. If only I got better this year. If only I was more organized this year.

If only I woke up an hour earlier. Then life would feel complete. Life would feel happier. Life would feel happier. And all of those things listed are very good things.

Generally. All of them have value. And will in some way help us. But really what we all need this year is Jesus.

And I say that as a pastor in a church opening up the Bible in a sermon. So you're probably not shocked that I would say that we need Jesus this year.

It's probably what you were expecting. And perhaps you're thinking, okay, same old, same old. But let me show you from the Bible. Let me show you from Matthew 14.

[2 : 35] Matthew 14. That it really is Jesus that we need this year. It's nothing new. The Lord Jesus is who we need this year.

And in him we will be satisfied. No matter whether those other goals or resolutions that we might come up with work out or not.

And so we're going to be in this reading that we had just earlier from Julie in Matthew 14.

And then we'll be there tonight as well in the next passage as we see more of Jesus to help us to focus on him this year.

Now the story that we've read this morning is familiar, isn't it? But one that's good for us to see again. The disciples come to Jesus with this plan in verse 15.

[3 : 40] Have a look. As evening approached, the disciples came to Jesus and said, this is a remote place. It's getting late. Send the crowds away so that they can go to the villages and buy themselves something to eat.

A plan has been concocted by the disciples. It's getting late. People have been with Jesus for most of the day and saw his healing power amongst them.

Some of them were sick and Jesus had compassion on them and healed them. But it's getting late. The disciples are tired. And actually, I think Jesus is probably tired as well.

The passage began in verse 13 with Jesus withdrawing to a solitary place for some rest, for some prayer. The passage comes right after his cousin, John the Baptist, was executed.

His cousins died. And so he needs some space. But it wasn't long, as we read, before the crowds came and demanded of him.

[4 : 57] And Jesus is very compassionate. But Jesus is also human. And like us, he gets tired. And the disciples say, it's okay, Jesus.

Let's just send them away. They can go and get their food and find somewhere to rest for the night. But saying that isn't like saying that to us this morning.

If we were here for hours and hours, we could say to you, just pop down to Aldi and get a sandwich. That's not really the way it's going to work for the people around Jesus.

They say, the disciples say, they've got to go to the villages. They've got to make quite a journey. Not five minutes down the road to get some food.

And Jesus has already had compassion on them. And his compassion hasn't run out. And so he asked the disciples, well, let's feed them.

[5 : 59] Have a look there in verse 16. Jesus replied, they do not need to go away. You give them something to eat. Go and find them something to eat.

And we see what they find in verse 17. We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish, they answered. And we've even got some down here this morning, just to show you what that looks like. Although that is six rolls rather than five. And two tins of fish. So would that feed us this morning, all of us? Possibly not.

There's quite a few of us here, maybe 60 or so. Not sure that's going to go beyond six or so people, is it really? But there we go. We'll leave that there.

That's going to remind us what Jesus and the disciples have to feed this crowd. It's barely enough to feed us, just to check that we're awake.

[7 : 03] How many people are here in this story according to verse 21? Perhaps just tell your neighbor for a moment. How many people are there? Cool.

How many people have we got? Yeah, Bethany.

More than 5,000. Yeah, were you going to say similar, Samuel? Any other answers? Or is that? 8,000. 8,000. Do we? 8,000. Where have you plucked that up from?

There's, yeah, there's wives and families. So more than 5,000 is absolutely right. Maybe about 8,000, maybe even 10,000. Maybe more. We don't know how many wives and children were around.

Potentially enough to fill the Brighton Center twice. Brighton Center holds about 5,000 people. Do you think this is enough food to fill?

[8 : 08] Feed the Brighton Center twice? Probably not. No. It would be very, very small, tiny, tiny, tiny bits of food if it was the case.

So they've got barely anything, haven't they? Just that. And yet, we see this in verse 19.

Have a look. And he told the people to sit down on the grass, taking the five loaves and two fish. He looked up to heaven, he gave thanks, and he broke the loaves, and then he gave them to the disciples.

And the disciples gave them to the people. This is an amazing moment. And Jesus takes these few bits of bread and fish, and he looks up to heaven, and people are probably thinking, hang on a minute, he's mad.

He thinks he's going to feed all these people. But a meal, we discover, for 10,000 people is provided.

[9 : 18] Verse 20, they all ate and were satisfied. And so if Jesus decided to start a mass catering business, he would be in a lot of demand, wouldn't he?

But is that what we're to learn from this passage? Well, no. I think there's much more to learn than that. We're going to see two things for ourselves this morning.

I'm sure we could have pointed out more. The first is that Jesus abundantly satisfies. Jesus abundantly satisfies.

We're saying in a new year, if only I had this this year. If only I got this this year, then life would be complete.

Then I would be happy. But here, look, Jesus provides a meal out of nothing, really, for 10,000 people.

[10 : 25] And we're told they all ate and weren't satisfied. But you're probably thinking, I want a bit more than just food this year, Daniel.

Well, that's okay. Because we see from Jesus that he provides us with so much more than just food on the table.

After this encounter of the feeding of the 5,000 in John's gospel, the crowds follow Jesus. And they are after more, more food.

They basically follow him around like he's a walking vending machine. And I thought I'd Google walking vending machine thinking I wouldn't find a picture. Apparently, they do exist in Japan.

But they're limited to how much they can have. Anyway, the crowds follow Jesus around wanting more and more food.

[11 : 27] And it's worth just reading a few verses from that chapter in John's gospel. John chapter 6. John chapter 6, verse 26.

John chapter 6. And Jesus says to them, Jesus says, You're coming to me, aren't you? Because you want food. You ate the bread and the fish and you were satisfied and you want more of that. But Jesus is saying this food is food that spoils.

It might have been a miraculous provision of food. But it was still earthly bread that would one day go moldy. Fish that would go very stinky and inedible.

He says, don't go chasing after that food. Sure, you need real food. And one way or another, surely you'll get it and it will satisfy you.

[13 : 13] But it's not going to satisfy you for many hours. You'll get hungry again and a bit later or the next day you'll want some more food, won't you? Jesus says, what you really need is food that endures to eternal life.

And so he explains to them, we could have read more of John chapter 6. He explains to them that they need bread from heaven. A bit like the manna that Moses provided for the Israelites in the wilderness.

He says, you need bread from heaven. And he says to them, I am that bread from heaven. I am the bread of life, he says.

Whoever comes to me will never go hungry. Whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. And in that, Jesus is sort of answering our thoughts about, if only I had this this year.

If only I fell in love this year. If only I was more organized this year. If only I woke up an hour earlier this year. Then I'll be satisfied. But Jesus says, that's food that spoils.

[14 : 29] What you really need this year is me. I'm the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry.

Or thirsty. Whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. None of those, if only I had this this year, will raise us up to new life on the last day.

But Jesus will. Jesus abundantly satisfies. At home, our Christmas present to ourselves was a coffee machine.

A little bit like this, not quite like that. We've been thinking about it for months and months and months. And finally, we did it.

On Black Friday, one of the deals, we thought, that's going to be our Christmas present to ourselves. We'd been longing for it. Longing for fancy cups of coffee.

[15 : 35] Longing for convenient ways to make coffee in the morning. And I have to say, it's doing a really good job for us. We're loving the coffee it produces. We really are.

But it doesn't provide coffee for us forever. It runs out of beans and we have to go and buy more. It causes some work.

It runs out of water and we have to add more. And the other day it got dirty and told us we need to clean it. And no matter how good a cup of coffee is in the morning, we're bound to want another one at some point.

And so too, with so many of our goals, our resolutions, our hopes for 2026. We may get them.

But we will want more. Or want something else. And so how good is it for us to hear from the Bible this morning that Jesus doesn't just give bread for hungry tummies.

[16 : 43] But Jesus is the bread of life. And if we come to him, we will never go hungry nor thirsty. We won't be left wanting.

Because he alone satisfies our soul's deepest longings. He alone gives lasting life to us.

Life beyond the grave, beyond here. He alone can give life to you and will never run out of life.

He will never run out of love for you in 2026 and beyond. You can always go to him as we sung.

You can always trust him.

He is who we need. And he has proved this to us in this miracle in Matthew 14. Showing himself to be the one who provides food that satisfies.

[17 : 51] Miraculous food that satisfies. And even more, we see that he really does give food in abundance. Verse 20 says, They all ate and were satisfied.

And the disciples picked up 12 basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. 12 left. Jesus supplies more than enough food to satisfy.

I suspect quite a lot of us can imagine what abundant food looks like because we've just had Christmas, haven't we? Our fridge at home had a whole cheese shelf for about a week before it got eaten.

It was an abundant supply of cheese. And here Jesus supplies abundantly. 12 basketfuls of food left over.

That's so generous. And perhaps we're thinking maybe enough for the 12 disciples to take home. Whatever it shows, it clearly shows Jesus' provision is abundant.

[18 : 59] He's not just come to offer the bare minimum. He's come to offer us everything. He hasn't just come to offer us forgiveness for our sins.

He hasn't come just to offer us heaven. He's come to offer us everything he has. But there may just be a doubt in some of our minds where we're just a little bit afraid that like everything else in this world, everything else in this world that offers to complete us and satisfy us, to make us happy, perhaps Jesus isn't really everything we need.

But we know, we know he offers us everything we need. Because he really has given everything for us.

And we see that. And we will see that very clearly in our communion meal this morning. Because the bread of life was broken on the cross.

He gave his very self in order to give us everlasting life. In order to pay the penalty for our sin.

[20 : 32] In order to satisfy God's wrath for our sin. So that we don't have to face it ourselves. So that we can go free and live in the life that he offers to us.

So that we can share his righteous life. So that we can be known as sons and daughters of God. Because of the Son of God who's given his life, given everything for us.

And because of him we get to share new creation. And the Bible says every spiritual blessing in him. And the communion meal is a way to remind us of that.

Communion meal is a way to remind us that he says, Come and feed on me the living bread who was broken for you. Perhaps this morning you're here.

And you are hungering and thirsting for something in 2026. Which will satisfy you.

[21 : 49] But perhaps you haven't yet considered seriously that that could be the Lord Jesus Christ. We'd love you to look to him and the everlasting life that he offers in his very self.

Because he's given everything for you to make that possible. Do you speak to us? A Christian here. To understand more about that.

And we'd love to see that being the case for you. But we see something else here in this passage as well. Secondly, we see Jesus wants you.

Jesus wants you. Jesus abundantly satisfies and he wants us. Now don't get that wrong. Don't make an interpretation of what's on the screen.

As God needs you. God isn't needy. He doesn't need any one of us. But he really does want us.

[23 : 00] He loves us so much that he gave his one and only son. That whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. He wants us because he loves the world.

He loves his creation. And when we come to find the life that Jesus offers, we come to find that he wants to use us.

He doesn't just satisfy us completely. He also gives us a purpose for living. Look at what Jesus says to his disciples in verse 16.

Jesus says, Jesus says, Don't send them to Aldi for a sandwich.

You give them some to eat. There's 5,000 plus people here, Jesus. We need 5,000 bread rolls and probably 2,500 tins of fish to give bread and fish lunch to people.

[24 : 09] I wonder if the disciples panicked here. Or perhaps they just thought Jesus was out of his mind at this point. I'd seen him done many other miracles, but this wasn't going to work, was it?

And all they managed to bring to him, verse 17, is, as we said, those five loaves and two fishes. That's not much, is it?

But nowhere does Jesus say, That's no good. I'll sort the food out myself. He says to them, verse 18, Bring them to me.

Bring them over here to me. And we see that he uses their small and little resources to supply a huge meal. And it's remarkable.

And it's teaching us that as we arrive into a new year, Jesus really does want to use you. He doesn't need you, but he wants you.

[25 : 17] He's almighty God and has all power and authority. But the way we see in the Bible that he generally works in the world is through human beings.

We were reminded, and mentioning John 6 earlier, of the Israelites in the desert. They had Moses as their leader.

And God chose to use Moses. Yet Moses protested and said, I can't speak. I'm no good at this. Moses. And God said, it's okay. I have made you. I've made your mouth so that you can speak. And I will teach you all the words that you will say. But Moses says, no, please send someone else. Moses is weak.

[26 : 12] He feels like he has nothing to give. And yet the Lord says, I am choosing you. And okay, very well, I'll give you your brother Aaron to speak for you.

That should encourage us. That certainly encourages me. I'm not eloquent in my speech at all. I'm not very learned. And yet, for some reason, I still manage to stand up here and preach a sermon, which you may decide is not any good.

But we trust that the Lord does speak through weak human beings. And God, throughout history, keeps doing that.

And keeps doing that today. I was reminded as well of another example in church history of a man called George Muller, who was setting up orphanages in Bristol.

[27 : 25] And one morning, in the orphanage, there were hundreds, maybe thousands of orphans sitting down to eat breakfast.

But there was nothing there. There was no money to get anything there. And yet George stood up and he prayed and thanked God for the food that wasn't yet on the table.

And then there was a knock on the door. And a baker who couldn't sleep that night was there standing at the door with bread. Because he couldn't sleep that night and he felt compelled to bring it to the orphanage for them to eat.

Another example that God uses small and weak human resources to do a great work.

And I pray that God's sake. And I pray that that's an encouragement to all of us as we begin this year. In Jesus, we find abundant satisfaction and he delights to use us.

[28 : 33] And he will delight to use you through this year. Perhaps you look to the year ahead and you feel like you haven't really got anything to give.

You don't have much capacity to serve in the church. Perhaps you feel you have very little supply of energy. But Jesus still wants to use you.

Even if you feel like you've got very little to give. And more as a church. We've been thinking and praying over this last year about purchasing a property for a church worker and their family.

And currently that's myself and Becky and Micah. But we look at house prices in Brighton and we think that they're so high. And how's that going to work? We don't have very much.

And then we're also thinking through changes in the church building. To try and make it even better for use for the gospel. We'd love to make changes to the toilets.

[29 : 42] Which don't quite seem to be adequate for us. And a bit more space for children's work. And whilst talking about those things, a new kitchen would be nice.

But that's more expense. And we've got limited resources. Limited resources financially and limited expertise in these things.

And yet what we see here in this passage is encouraging. That Jesus takes little and can produce a whole lot from it.

And so, the call for us this year is nothing new. But it is look to Jesus.

Look to Jesus who can take a few bits of bread and a few fish and multiply it for thousands for his glory. And that's who we need to look to through this year in these things.

[30 : 48] And see where he takes us. Submit to him these building plans and our limited resources and trust that he'll provide for all that we need.

It might not be all that we want. But he will provide for all that we need through this year. And pray that he will continue to show us his abundant satisfaction for our lives found in him.

So why don't we pray along those lines now before we sing again. Father God, over this year, we ask, please would you take our limited resources.

Please would you take our limited finances. Please would you take our limited buildings. And Father, even in your mercy, our limited selves.

And use these for your glory, Father God. Please would you do great works amongst us. And help us to keep seeing that you will provide for our every need.

[32 : 14] And help us to continue to look to you, the bread of life, and find that in you we really do lack nothing.

And we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. We're going to sing this hymn.

Immortal honors rest on Jesus' head. We want to give the glory to the Lord Jesus Christ. And was particularly mindful of this hymn because of this third verse.

My every need he richly will supply. Nor will his mercy ever let me die. In him there dwells a treasure all divine.

A matchless grace has made that treasure mine. So when the music begins, we'll stand and sing together. Let's sing together. Thank you.

[33 : 45] Thank you.