

Walking with Jesus: Jesus is the Lord of Creation

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Preacher: Rev Gordon Kennedy

[0 : 00] Let's share our prayer together. Heavenly Father, we humbly bow in your presence. May your word be our rule, your spirit our teacher, and your great glory our supreme concern.

! Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. Our story of Jesus today is one of the best known miracle stories. Jesus feeds 5,000 men, not counting all the women and the children, with just five loaves and two small fish.

A few weeks ago we noted that a miracle is not a surprising thing that happens. So whatever the headlines on the newspapers or the internet say, that event that was surprising that happened yesterday about tea time, within walking distance of here, is not a miracle.

It's just very surprising. A result of a week's hard training and good discipline on the rugby field. One for which, however surprising, we are incredibly grateful.

A miracle is when God is at work among us. Not just something surprising that happens. God at work among us constitutes a miracle.

[1 : 35] It has become common in our day not to believe even in the possibility of miracles. To rule out miracles even before you start the conversation.

When reading the Bible then, it has become popular when you come across a miracle story, and if there isn't one on every page, there's one on every other page, to try to explain away the miracles. To try to explain away the miracles. Well, it's not really a miracle. This is what happened, and it turns out it's very ordinary.

A well-known Bible teacher proposes to us that the feeding of the 5,000 is not in fact a miracle at all. What happened was that the crowds all sat patiently listening to Jesus all through the day, and they got more and more hungry.

And they all, every single one of them, forgot that they had brought their packed lunch in their pockets or their bags. And then, even more astonishingly, all of them, all at the same time, remembered that they already had their lunch with them, and pulled it out and started eating.

I call this the myth of the forgotten picnic. Let me ask you, which is easier to believe? That 5,000 people, and more than 5,000, because we only counted the main, more than 5,000 people all sat together, and all of them forgot they had brought food with them?

[3 : 17] Or, is it not easier to believe that Jesus did a miracle? Does it not stretch credulity beyond breaking, to imagine a huge crowd sitting together until they were hungry, before someone, anyone, remembered they had a pocket full of food?

Surely it is much more reasonable to believe that Jesus, the living word of God the Father, the one who stood at the Father's side when all things were created, the King in God's kingdom, the one to whom all authority in heaven and on earth has been given, did a miracle.

Do not allow materialistic rationalism to steal away your Jesus.

The only Jesus there is, is the Jesus of the Bible. The only Jesus there is, is God's Son, who with all the power and authority of God, works wonders for his people.

The only Jesus there is, is this miracle, wonder-working Saviour. Don't trade him away for anything else.

[4 : 49] Don't substitute him for anyone else. Walk with this Jesus. Fix your eyes on this Jesus. Depend upon the great big Jesus of the Bible.

On their return, the apostles told Jesus all they had done. He took them and they went apart to a town called Bethsaida. And when the crowds learned, they came and followed him.

And he welcomed them and he spoke to them of the kingdom of God. And he cured all those who had need of healing. What do you want to do at the end of a busy day?

What do you want to do after tea time on a Friday, at the end of a busy week? Close the door. Keep everyone else out.

Get your feet up on the stool or the sofa. And have a good rest. Don't imagine that Jesus or the disciples were any different from you.

[5 : 57] The point of their withdrawing apart was to get some time away from the crowds. To have just a few moments of peace. To regroup and refresh.

Before getting up and going again. After a hard week, we would hide from another crowd. We might snap.

Or be impatient with them. Thanks be to God that our compassionate Jesus is different from us. Jesus welcomes the crowd.

He makes time and space for them to come to him. Whenever you come to Jesus, with generous compassion, he will welcome you.

Jesus will always make time for you. Jesus spoke to the crowd of the kingdom of God. Whenever you come to Jesus, that's what he will speak to you of.

[7 : 00] Jesus will never snap at you. I've told you all this before. Weren't you paying attention the first time? With patient compassion, Jesus will tell you over and over, again and again.

Jesus will never tire of speaking words of grace and mercy to you. Jesus cured those who had need of healing. Whenever you come to Jesus, he will meet you and care for your needs.

You might not know that you have needs until you come to Jesus and he fixes them for you. You might have thought your situation could never change.

Until Jesus transforms your life from the inside out with God's powerful, energized compassion.

Jesus will meet your needs. Jesus will care for you. But if you reject the miracles, you won't come to this Jesus.

[8 : 13] If you choose to walk in your own poor understanding, you won't come and walk with this Jesus. Hear the good news.

The compassion of Jesus is energized by his wonder-working power. Come to Jesus and walk with him. The day began to wear away, the twelve came and said to Jesus, send this crowd away so they can go into the villages and buy food or find somewhere to rest.

But he said to them, you give them something to eat. And they said, we've got no more than five loaves and two fish. Where are we to go and buy food for all these people?

There were about 5,000 men. Jesus said, have them sit down in groups of about 50 each. And that's what they did. So let's enter into this part of the story a wee bit here.

Let's imagine for a moment that you're one of Jesus' disciples. Well, we are Jesus' disciples, but let's imagine that we were one of the twelve on this hillside.

[9 : 23] Don't you think you're doing a good thing when you go to Jesus and say, look, there's a huge crowd here. They've been here all day and they're hungry.

You need to let them go so they can go to the villages and find food and lodgings. How do you feel when Jesus turns around and says, no, no, you give them something to eat?

Us? All of them? How do you feel? How do you think the twelve felt? How do you feel when Jesus says, okay, give me the five loaves and the two fish and he says a prayer and then he says to the disciples, okay, line up.

There's a bit for you. There's a bit for you. There's a bit for you. And he goes along the line and you're left with a twelfth portion of five loaves and two fish. And Jesus points you at just over 800 people.

So on you go. Really? That's all I've got? How do you feel? Oh, how do you feel? The disciples were right.

[10 : 43] They couldn't do it. They didn't have enough food for all these people. The tiny handful that they had wasn't enough for them to go and feed their portion of the crowd.

The disciples were right to tremble. We can't do it. Isn't that how we feel?

We want to walk with Jesus. We want to serve Jesus. But we've only got a little. We are only a little. We can't do it. But we know someone who can. What are you doing to serve Jesus?

Helping make the tea after our service or helping with the live stream or serving as an elder or singing in the choir or tidying up the chairs after meetings.

[11 : 46] What are you doing? Well, listen to the good news. Jesus, the Lord of all, is the one who equips you to do whatever you're doing.

Apart from Jesus equipping you, you don't have enough to do it. Jesus takes the little that you offer him and miraculously multiplies it up in his service.

In our story, Jesus didn't need the disciples. Jesus could have fed and satisfied the whole crowd without involving the disciples at all.

But the Lord Jesus Christ, the King and Head of the Church, chooses to fulfil his purposes by including us in his service. Jesus, you remember when your children were young or the grandchildren and you were doing something and one of them would come along and say, can I help?

The first thought that went through your mind was, I wish you wouldn't. I'll get it done in half the time and we'll do it right first time. But you know the good thing to do is to say, sure, and let them join in and let them be part of whatever it is you're doing.

[13 : 21] Like children coming to our elder brother, we find that Jesus smiles at us and includes us. Sure, you come and join in what I'm doing.

Jesus delights to achieve his purposes with us, with us, working through us.

Jesus shares with us the high calling of providing shelter for the homeless, of comforting the broken hearted, of welcoming the refugee and the stranger, of being kind to someone in the street.

Jesus could do all of this without bothering with us, but it pleases him to include us. You and I can't do miracles, but we know someone who can.

We can't achieve God's purposes to bless others, but we know Jesus and that's his work. Hear the good news.

[14 : 30] when you walk with Jesus, you walk together with Jesus into his service, into his mission and he himself equips you and empowers you to serve with him.

Come and walk with Jesus. Jesus so Jesus took the five loaves, the two fish looked up to heaven and said a prayer. He broke the loaves, gave it to the disciples and the whole crowd were satisfied. What was left over was twelve basketfuls. That's what was left over. They didn't start with twelve basketfuls, but they had twelve basketfuls left over.

There is nothing, nothing that Jesus cannot do. The Lord Jesus did not just feed this vast crowd, he satisfied this vast crowd.

It's like Christmas day. You know after your Christmas dinner when you think I'll just sit in this chair a wee while longer before I get up and somebody round the table is bound to say well we won't be needing to eat till tomorrow.

[15 : 44] And if you've got any teenage boys around they hear that as a challenge and say it to the dinner right again. When Jesus gives, he gives abundantly.

When you come to the miracle working Jesus, he doesn't ever do half a miracle for you. He does the whole thing. On the cross the Lord Jesus didn't die for just some of your sins but for all of your sins.

Rising from the dead, the Lord Jesus doesn't only bring a part of your life into the kingdom of God. He brings all of you into the kingdom of God. When the Lord Jesus pours out God's Holy Spirit upon you, he does not measure out meanly.

He tips the bucket up and drains you in the power and presence of God's Holy Spirit. Jesus is all sufficient. Jesus satisfies our hunger for peace with God.

Jesus satisfies our longing for more of God's love. Jesus satisfies our desire to serve him. You can't satisfy yourself, far less anyone else, but you know someone who can.

[17 : 13] All the riches of Jesus' mercy are for you. All the abundance of Jesus' amazing grace is for you. Come to Jesus. Walk with Jesus.

Test him out and find out for yourself how abundantly generous he is. Jesus is the mighty giver. God is the free gift of God for you. You can never outdo Jesus in giving because he will always provide for your needs.

Jesus is the free gift of God for you. Giving and giving again and again. Each new day Jesus is there before you.

Yes Jesus loved you yesterday. Yes Jesus loves you right now but Jesus will love you every tomorrow until he comes or calls you home.

[18 : 16] Jesus will shower you with gifts of love and grace and peace that will never run out. Walk with Jesus and know his miracle working love and power for you today and every day.

Let's pray together. God our Father we pray that with your word in our ears and our hearts you would humble us.

We think we are strong show us we are not. We think we are able teach us to depend upon Jesus. Bring us to Jesus each one of us for the hundredth time for the first time may we come to Jesus and walk with him and know his grace and his miracle working power at work in us and through us. Gracious God hear our prayer come quickly and bless us for your glory. Amen.