

7/26/26

Sermon Title: The Miracle of the Five Loaves and Two Fish

Preacher: Pastor Kim Soonbae

Scripture Passage: Matthew 14:13-21

Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand

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.

¹⁴ When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick.

¹⁵ As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a remote place, and it's already getting late. Send the crowds away, so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food."

¹⁶ Jesus replied, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat."

¹⁷ "We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish," they answered.

¹⁸ "Bring them here to me," he said.

¹⁹ And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people.

²⁰ They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over.

²¹ The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children.

When Jesus heard that King Herod had been telling his officials that the miraculous powers at work in Jesus were the result of John the Baptist being raised from the dead, He withdrew from the territory under Herod Antipas's jurisdiction.

Jesus recognized that the same Herod who had executed John the Baptist had now begun to focus his attention on Him.

This was not the first time Jesus had withdrawn in the face of growing hostility. On an earlier occasion, He had also departed to avoid the mounting opposition of the Pharisees.

Jesus therefore got into a boat, crossed the Sea of Galilee, and went to a solitary place in the wilderness.

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.

At about this time, the Twelve disciples had just returned from their missionary journey.

Jesus intended to give them a period of rest, review the ministry they had carried out, and provide them with further training for the mission ahead.

Indeed, from this point on, Jesus devoted Himself more intentionally to preparing His disciples.

Knowing that His suffering and death on the cross were drawing near, He began equipping them for the work they would continue after His departure.

Consequently, the events and miracles that took place in this region mark the climax of Jesus' public ministry.

After hearing of John the Baptist's execution, the crowds, like sheep without a shepherd, followed Jesus on foot along the shore of the Sea of Galilee.

When Jesus saw the great multitude, He was filled with compassion for them and healed those among them who were sick.

¹⁴ When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick.

As evening approached, the disciples came to Jesus and said, "This is a remote place, and it's already getting late. Send the crowds away so they can go into the villages and buy themselves some food."

¹⁵ As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a remote place, and it's already getting late. Send the crowds away, so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food."

The setting was a remote wilderness, where there was no food available. Even if they had gone to the nearby villages to buy food, the disciples did not have enough money to feed such a large crowd.

From a human perspective, the disciples' suggestion to dismiss the people so that each person could find food for himself was the most practical and reasonable solution.

For reference, the crowd numbered about five thousand men, not including women and children.

Including them, the total gathering is estimated to have been around 20,000 people.

However, Jesus immediately rejected the disciples' proposal.

Instead, He gave them an unexpected command:

¹⁶ Jesus replied, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat."

With these words, Jesus challenged His disciples to move beyond human calculation and to trust in God's power to provide.

Having already met the crowd's need through His ministry of healing, Jesus now invited His disciples to participate in meeting another of their needs—their hunger.

The disciples were overwhelmed.

According to the Gospel of Mark, feeding the crowd would have required about two hundred denarii.

Since one denarius was the typical daily wage of a Roman laborer or soldier, this was an enormous sum of money.

The disciples simply did not have the financial means to feed so many people. Even if they had possessed the money, it would have been impossible to purchase enough food for such a vast crowd at that time and in such a remote place. Of course, Jesus knew all of this.

Yet He gave this command to awaken in His disciples a sense of responsibility for the people entrusted to their care.

He wanted to remind them of their calling as His disciples.

At the same time, He was testing their faith, teaching them to rely not on their own resources but on God's power.

The disciples replied that they had only five loaves of bread and two fish.

¹⁷ "We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish," they answered.

The disciples failed to trust in Jesus' unlimited power and focused only on the visible reality before them.

This weakness of faith continued to characterize them until they encountered the risen Christ.

Jesus then told them, "Bring them here to Me."

Taking the five loaves and the two fish, He looked up to heaven, gave thanks, broke the loaves, and handed them to the disciples.

The disciples, in turn, distributed them to the crowd.

Jesus kept breaking the bread and giving it to the disciples, and the disciples kept receiving it and passing it on to the people.

¹⁸ "Bring them here to me," he said.

¹⁹ And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people.

As a result, everyone ate and was satisfied, and after the meal the disciples picked up twelve baskets full of broken pieces that were left over.

Not only did Jesus provide enough to feed the entire crowd, but His provision was so abundant that twelve baskets remained, demonstrating the overflowing fullness of God's grace and His limitless power to provide.

²⁰ They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over.

²¹ The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children.

The miracles of the kingdom of heaven are not accomplished by human effort but are provided by Jesus Himself.

The numbers five and twelve—the five thousand, the five loaves, and the twelve baskets of leftovers—would have carried special significance for the Jewish people.

The number five recalls the Five Books of Moses (the Torah), while twelve points to the twelve tribes of Israel.

Together, they testify that Jesus is the true source of life for God's covenant people.

The bread that Jesus broke points forward to Jesus Christ Himself, the Bread of Life, whose body would be broken to give spiritual life to the world.

Just as Jesus continually broke the bread to satisfy the hungry crowd, the risen and exalted Christ continues to provide the nourishment our bodies and souls need.

The pattern of distribution is also significant.

Jesus gave the bread to the disciples, and the disciples distributed it to the people. In the same way, the life-giving Word of Christ is first entrusted to His disciples and then proclaimed to the world through them.

The scene of the healed multitude reclining on the green grass and being abundantly fed by Jesus recalls the great banquet foretold in Isaiah 25, where the Lord promises to prepare a feast for all peoples, remove the veil of death, wipe away every tear, and bring everlasting salvation.

(Isa25:6) On this mountain the LORD Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine—the best of meats and the finest of wines.

(Isa25:7) On this mountain he will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples, the sheet that covers all nations;

(Isa25:8) he will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign LORD will wipe away the tears from all faces; he will remove his people's disgrace from all the earth. The LORD has spoken.

To a people living under Roman occupation and enduring poverty and oppression, Jesus transformed a barren wilderness into the setting of a magnificent banquet, satisfying the hunger of thousands.

As the crowds ate the bread and fish Jesus provided, they would naturally have remembered how their ancestors, after the Exodus from Egypt, were fed with manna from heaven through Moses in the wilderness.

The feeding of the five thousand was the kingdom of heaven breaking into the wilderness.

Just as Israel had been delivered from Egypt but had not yet entered the Promised Land, the multitude in the wilderness experienced the reality of God's kingdom in the period between its inauguration and its final fulfillment.

It was a foretaste of the kingdom to come.

Jesus came as the King, bringing the kingdom of God with Him.
Through His life, death, and resurrection, the kingdom was inaugurated.
Yet it has not reached its complete fulfillment.
That day awaits Christ's second coming, when His kingdom will be fully established in glory.

We are living in that very wilderness age.
The kingdom of God has already come, yet it has not been fully consummated.
We still live in a world marked by sin, suffering, and the chaos of evil.
But even now, the King is present with His people.
He continues to feed us with the Bread of Life, sustain us by His grace, and give us a foretaste of the heavenly banquet that awaits us in His eternal kingdom.

Beloved members of Church of Godly Dreams,
Today's passage is not merely a record of Jesus performing the miracle of feeding five thousand men—besides women and children—with five loaves of bread and two fish.
Through this event, Matthew wants us to see who Jesus is and what the kingdom of God is like.

The place where the crowd had gathered was a desolate wilderness, a place where nothing could be expected.
From a human perspective, it was a scene of emptiness, need, and hopelessness.
The day was drawing to a close, and the people had nothing to eat.

But when Jesus Christ, the Bread of Life, was present, that barren wilderness became the banquet hall of the kingdom of God.
With just five loaves and two fish, Jesus fed more than five thousand men—an estimated twenty thousand people including women and children—and everyone ate until they were satisfied.

There were even twelve baskets full of leftovers.

Our Lord is the One who has compassion on our weakness and our needs, and He provides for us abundantly.

The disciples looked only at the five loaves and two fish in their own hands and became discouraged.

But once those same five loaves and two fish were placed into the hands of Jesus, they were no longer insignificant.

Blessed by the Lord, they became more than enough to feed the entire multitude, with twelve baskets left over.

God's work does not begin with the abundance of our resources but with the willingness of our hearts to obey Him.

Today, the Lord speaks the same words to us:

"Bring what you have to Me."

Jesus can use our small faith, bless our humble offering, and accomplish extraordinary works through our simple obedience.

The real question is not how much we have, but whose hands we place it into.

The bread Jesus distributed to the crowd pointed forward to Jesus Christ Himself, the Bread of Life, whose body would one day be broken on the cross for the salvation of the world.

Just as Jesus gave the bread to His disciples, and the disciples distributed it to the people, Christ continues today to feed the world with the Bread of Life through His church.

Therefore, we must not remain merely those who receive the bread.

We are called to become disciples who share the bread.

As stewards entrusted with the gospel of life, we are to bring Christ to spiritually hungry souls.

Let us place our five loaves and two fish into the Lord's hands.

Let us offer Him our small faith and our humble devotion.

The Lord will use them to bring life to countless people and to advance His kingdom.

Until the day we rejoice together at the wedding supper of the Lamb, may we depend wholly on Jesus Christ, the Bread of Life, and faithfully share His life with a hungry world.

May each one of us live as faithful disciples for His glory.

I pray this in the precious name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.