

Bible Studies for Life: March 26

The Sign of His Provision • John 6:1-15

By Clay Anthony



Anthony

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Not only was this true of His disciples but for the crowds that followed Him as well. Jesus, having crossed the Sea of Galilee, found Himself surrounded by a crowd of people on a

mountainside. For whatever reason, the thought occurs to Jesus to offer these people a meal. At no point was He required to do such, yet we are told in Mark's account that Jesus felt compassion for the people (Mk 8:1).

It should not be lost on us that Jesus knew what these people were facing. They had traveled far to be close to Him. He also knew why. Verse 2 tells us that they had seen what Jesus could do with the sick among them. No doubt parents were bringing sick children as well as senior citizens and those born with infirmities. In truth, these people were not looking for dinner and a show, they were genuinely looking for Jesus to heal them. Again, beyond the outside, Jesus knows that they are physically hungry. That fact plus His compassion equals a meal for hungry stomachs.

Remember also that Jesus cares greatly about these peoples' lives. We are told that this feeding was a form of testing for Philip and no doubt the other disciples. Can so many people be taken care of all at once? The only resource present was a young boy's sack lunch of some bread and fish. This was a God-sized dilemma. Thankfully Jesus was on the scene. The fish and bread did not seem like enough, on that much all could agree. Yet, Jesus took such pains as to have the people sit on grassy areas and had them served. We can imagine the conversation, "Tell them to sit and we will bring them food." The Creator King of all the Universe telling tired bodies to sit, relax and allow Him to fill their empty stomachs with as much as they wanted (11). This was no cafeteria style meal. It was a buffet with enough leftovers for the disciples to take home food for each of their families.

Ultimately, we should never forget that Jesus provides and does so in ways that are more than we expect. This crowd could be described as tired, hungry, needy and even curious. The end of John 5 records Jesus closing a conversation with the Jewish leaders that began in verse 18 concerning Moses. They did not believe Moses so why should Jesus expect them to believe Him?

Then after feeding this large crowd He finds himself once again on the other side of the Sea of Galilee having been followed by that same large group which is now demanding a sign so that they may believe. Can you see this scene? Here are men and women with fish and bread still on their breath asking for further proof that Jesus is who He claims to be.

Once again Moses is brought up in conversation (6:32). These people were demanding a sign for belief but it would seem that they are elevating Moses higher than need be. They even claim that "the Prophet" has come to the world (14). Jesus knew their hearts and needs better than they did. This crowd did not need a prophet dishing out manna from heaven. They did not even truly need a free meal to go with their healings. What they needed was a Savior to take away their sins. That was the greatest provision Jesus would give the world.

Just as His first listeners learned in John, Jesus did not come to fill stomachs or perform parlor tricks. We live surrounded by people that need to be told that their greatest needs are not food or even physical healing. Our great need is to be reconciled to God through His Son Jesus. Then we, as saved people, are to have mirrored compassion on those we are surrounded by as our Savior did.

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