

Today's Reading: Mark 6:31-44

And he said to them, "Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while." For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. And they went away in the boat to a desolate place by themselves. Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they ran there on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. And he began to teach them many things. And when it grew late, his disciples came to him and said, "This is a desolate place, and the hour is now late. Send them away to go into the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat." But he answered them, "You give them something to eat." And they said to him, "Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give it to them to eat?" And he said to them, "How many loaves do you have? Go and see." And when they had found out, they said, "Five, and two fish." Then he commanded them all to sit down in groups on the green grass. So they sat down in groups, by hundreds and by fifties. And taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing and broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples to set before the people. And he divided the two fish among them all. And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up twelve baskets full of broken pieces and of the fish. And those who ate the loaves were five thousand men.

Simple Summary (for Parents):

Even though Jesus had taken His disciples to a desolate place in order to rest, He did not become annoyed or angry with the large crowd that followed them. He had compassion on the people because they were "like sheep without a shepherd." And when it looked as if this great crowd might be stranded with nothing to eat, Jesus miraculously provided food. With only five loaves and two fish, He fed over five thousand people! (Counting women and children, this crowd could have numbered up to 10,000 or more!) We're reminded of God's miraculous provision in the Old Testament when Israel was in a desolate place. In the midst of the wilderness, God fed His people with manna from heaven (Exodus 16; Deuteronomy 8:3, 16). Today's story teaches us that the same God who fed Israel has come to us in Jesus Christ, and He is still able to sustain His people today. We can trust Jesus, our Good Shepherd, to provide for all of our needs.

Discuss:

1. When was the last time you became very hungry? Did you worry that you would not be able to find food?

(Gratefully, many of our children have not had to worry about hunger. Help your children see that the people in today's story did not have food available and were genuinely in need of food.)

2. When Jesus saw the large crowd in today's story, He had "compassion" on them. What does it mean to have compassion on someone?

(Use some examples of what compassion might look like today.)

3. How many people could you feed with five loaves of bread and two fish? Then how did Jesus feed over five thousand people?

(Consider using a loaf of bread from your kitchen as a visual. Point out that Jesus was able to do this because He is the fully divine Son of God.)

4. Can you think of any other stories in the Bible where God provided food for a lot of people?

(Remind your children that God fed His people, Israel, when they were in the wilderness. The story is recorded in Exodus 16.)

5. This story teaches us that we can trust Jesus to provide for all of our needs. What needs do you have? Make a list and ask God to provide for you.

(In addition to the needs your children mention, add your own needs to the list. Let them know that you also need to depend on the Lord to take care of you.)

Pray:

Thank God that He can take care of all our needs. Thank Him especially for taking care of our greatest need—being saved from our sin—by sending Jesus to die on the cross for us.

Sing:

["A Mighty Fortress"](#) (See Week 2 Song Sheet for lyrics)

