

When You Feel Inadequate & Inferior



"19 ...Jesus took the five loaves and two fish, looked up toward heaven, and blessed them. Then, breaking the loaves into pieces, he gave the bread to the disciples, who distributed it to the people. 20 They all ate as much as they wanted, and afterward, the disciples picked up twelve baskets of leftovers." Matthew 14:19-20 NLT

- When was there a time you felt inadequate or inferior?

Everyone feels inferior or inadequate at one time or another. But Jesus can make us adequate, sufficient, significant, and fruitful.

Jesus feeding the 5,000 in Matthew 14:13-21 is the only miracle (except for the resurrection of Jesus) recorded in all four Gospels. Apparently, the Gospel writers considered this a significant miracle that impacted their minds and hearts and was life-changing. Jesus feeding the 5,000 is a miracle that teaches us important lessons about what Jesus can do IN us and THROUGH us.

An Overview of the Miracle

- The number was much **MORE** than 5,000.

Matthew wrote: *"About 5,000 men were fed that day, in addition to all the women and children!"* (Matt. 14:21 NLT). Since Matthew was writing to reach Jewish people, he recorded this according to Jewish culture, which was to separate the recognition of the men from the women and children. Scholars believe with the addition of women and children, there were 10,000 to 15,000+.

- Jesus **REPEATED** this miracle (see Mark 6:32-44; 8:1-10).

Not only did he feed the 5,000, but he fed the 4,000 on another occasion. Jesus was teaching his disciples an important lesson, and he reinforced it by repeating the miracle.

- The disciples were **SLOW** to understand what Jesus was teaching them.

Mark adds, *"for they still didn't understand the significance of the miracle of the loaves. Their hearts were too hard to take it in."* Mark 6:52 NLT. Also, when Jesus later repeated the miracle by feeding the 4,000, the disciples showed they had not learned what Jesus was teaching them. They responded: *"...How are we supposed to find enough food to feed them out here in the wilderness?"* (Mark 8:4 NLT). Their response was wrong. They should have said, "Lord, you fed the 5,000! Here are seven loaves of bread and some fish. Do it again!"

Jesus is patient with us when we are slow to get his message. He keeps working with us and teaching us. He keeps shaping our hearts and lives.

The Central Lesson:

LITTLE becomes MUCH when we place it in Christ's HANDS

Lessons from Jesus Feeding the 5,000

What was Jesus teaching his disciples? What does he want to teach us?

Preparing the Disciple to Turn the World Upside Down

Jesus was preparing the disciples for a future mission. He trained them to advance God's Kingdom and spread the Gospel worldwide (see Matthew 28:18-20). In the King James translation, Acts 17:6 says they *"...turned the world upside down..."* Jesus had to **prepare** them for this kind of spiritual impact.

Imagine ordinary blue-collar men being commissioned to advance the Kingdom of Heaven in a sin-cursed, hostile world. On the natural level, this seemed overwhelming, even impossible. They would feel totally inadequate, inferior, and under-qualified. However, the two miracles of feeding the 5,000+ and later the 4,000 - had a special purpose - **showing them the possibilities when their lives are in Christ's hands**. Bible Teacher Warren Wiersbe explains, *"...the miracle of feeding the 5,000 was a sermon in action."*

1. He Wanted Them to Understand His Divine **IDENTITY**.

John's account: *"14 When the people saw him do this miraculous sign, they exclaimed, 'Surely, he is the Prophet we have been expecting!' 15 When Jesus saw that they were ready to force him to be their king, he slipped away into the hills by himself."* John 6:14-15 NLT.

How could anyone witness this miracle of multiplying five loaves of bread and two fish to feed 10,000 to 15,000+ people with 12 baskets of leftovers and *not* conclude that Jesus is the Son of God, the Messiah, the King of the Jews? They witnessed a miracle that **proved his divine identity**.

2. He Wanted Them to See His **POWER** to Take the Inadequate and Make It Adequate; to Take the Inferior and Make It Superior.

3. He Wanted Them to **PARTICIPATE** In the Miraculous.

Jesus told the disciples, *"...you feed them,"* Matthew 14:16 NLT. They replied that what they had was inadequate! (14:17). However, after they placed the bread and fish in Jesus' hands, they were able to feed the multitude - *"...Jesus took the five loaves and two fish, looked up toward heaven, and blessed them. Then, breaking the loaves into pieces, he gave the bread to the disciples, who distributed it to the people."* (14:19).

4. He Wanted Them to Visualize What Could Happen If They Fully **PLACED** Themselves in His Hands.

Warren Wiersbe explains concerning feeding the 5,000, *"The disciples had many excuses - not enough money, the wrong place, the wrong time - but Christ took what they had and met the need. He will do this today!"*

When we fully place ourselves in Christ's hands, our inadequacies become adequate; our inferiority can become superiority.

Will you place yourself fully in the hands of Christ? Will you place your self-worth in his hands? Your skills, talent, and intellect in his hands? Anywhere you are inadequate - will you place it in his hands just as if you were giving him five loaves of bread and two small fish?

CONCLUSION - LITTLE becomes MUCH when we place it in Christ's HANDS

► Accept Christ as your Savior. ► As a Christian, dedicate your life to Christ.
► Invite someone to next Sunday's study. ► Attend a small group. ► Read the Bible & journal meaningful verses. ► Pray for friends that need Jesus.