

Power and Compassion (Matthew 14:13-21)

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 07 January 2024

Preacher: Albert Tang

[0 : 00] 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. When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick.

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.

Jesus replied, They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat. We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish, they answered. Bring them here to me, he said, 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.

[1 : 01] They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children.

And this is the word of God. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

today, the particular miracle feeding of the 5,000. Matthew chapter 14 verses 13 to 21, thanks.

[3 : 01] And you're sharing that to us. And very simple. I mean, Jesus just fed the hungry crowds of 5,000 plus. Because it was only 5,000 men alone. But I'm sure that we're more than 5,000. With kids, there'll be ladies there, okay.

And with just five loaves and two fish. Can you imagine? This, you know, on Sunday morning, we have about seven, in the fullest capacity, we would have about 60, 70 kids. And you just have two biscuits, chocolate biscuits. How are you going to feed them? Right?

You need a miracle. And Jesus did just that. 5,000 plus, maybe 10,000 with five loaves and two fish. And you just think, how could he do it?

Did the bread swell just in disciples' hands? Or how did he do it? Well, this is a miracle. And for us today, I believe that it's a very simple truth.

Jesus cares for me, cares for you. But he did not only care, he has the power to manifest that caring.

[4 : 31] He did not just say, oh, I care for you. I know how you feel. Oh, yeah, but I feel for you. But he can actually fix for me. He can change the circumstances for me.

And a greater miracle will be, he can change my heart to overcome those circumstances. So let us have a look at that. Now, all four Gospels describe the same thing.

Though maybe it's slightly different in different perspectives. I think, I think, as we look at from all the Gospels, each will enrich the picture of the actual thing that happened.

Right? For instance, we know from John that the five loaves and two fish, they actually were barley loaves. They're not, they're not fine wheat biscuits.

Right? They're rough, not so good to eat stuff. And they, they came from a little boy. It was his lunch. And, and, and, and Mark tells us that Jesus felt so pitiful for them because that they were like sheep.

[5 : 48] Jesus looked at them and they, they was like sheep without shepherds. And, Luke tells us that that was, they were going towards a city called Bethsaida.

Right? So, we, as we piece together from all four Gospels, we'll kind of appreciate, oh, we'll get a fuller picture of what happened. Now, this, this was the actual, now, scholars different.

I mean, they differ in their, in their places of actual, where, where the 5,000 was fed, was fed. All right? Now, but they were, the, the, Matthew told us that they went across by boat, Jesus and the disciples.

But, others followed on land. So, maybe, they were crossing here towards Bethsaida and others was walking along the shore and, and, and, could be somewhere around there there was the feeding of 5,000.

But, there are scholars would say differently. Some say it's about here, some say it's about there. But, anyway, that was not the most important thing. The most important thing was Jesus fed the 5,000.

[7 : 06] So, let's have a look at, um, this miracle, right? I will, I will put it in three categories. One is the intention of the miracle, verses 13 to 14.

The utilizations of the gospel, 15 to 18. Integration of the gospel, 19 to 21. Let's have a look at it. Firstly, the intention of the God, the miracle.

Why would Jesus perform this miracle to feed the 5,000? Why? Hmm? Because he read the Bible, right?

Yes, indeed. Mark and, Matthew and Mark told us that it was out of his compassion. Right? In Matthew, it says, you know, when Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed the sick.

I mean, could it be Jesus would know these people, they had needs? Okay? And Jesus, perhaps these people came with different motivations, but Jesus could see the needs.

[8 : 18] so Jesus had the compassion on them. And Mark told us that Jesus landed, saw this crowd and he had compassion on them because they were like sheep without shepherd.

So he began teaching them many things. He did not only perform miracles, he also teach. All right? So I think we don't just look for miracles, we actually want to hear the word of God.

And that would be most powerful. You know, all the times we look for miracles, sure, surely Jesus will perform miracles. But every time we look for miracles, the next time you will look for bigger miracles.

And it will never satisfy us. But the word of God satisfies us. Right? And this word compassion is a word with kind of a deep feeling, yearning, but it's not just a feeling or yearning.

I'm sure we have been kind of moved to be pitiful to someone in need. I'm sure we all have. Certain people, people that God put in our life, and we really feel for them.

[9 : 36] But we don't just feel. It will push us, it will inspire us to act. And this is what Jesus did.

He did not only feel for them, he acted, he healed them. And in this case, he saw them not just physically hungry, but spiritually hungry.

But he fed them anyway. But he had more. he wanted to know. Now, John was followed by the teaching of the bread of life. They were fed this time, but deep inside, they will need the will of God.

Okay. So I wonder, when we look at the people, look at the people around us, look at the people around us. Some of you might know him or her better.

how do we feel? You know, when Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, when you came in and saw the church, not a large crowd, not a large crowd, but if one day, you know, baptismal service, all filled, okay, no more seats, when we come, how would we have felt?

[10 : 54] Right? Okay. And, you know, Jesus' miracle, in the synoptics, like Mark, John, and Matthew, it used the word dunamis.

It means the act of mighty power. That's the word dynamite, okay? That's the Greek word for today's dynamite, power, power, okay?

And for John, he used the word semayon. Semayon is like signs, okay? So when you look at the miracle, you want to look beyond the miracle itself.

So when he fed the 5,000, oh, you know, you want to know, he is the bread of life, he could satisfy us, all right? But for Jesus, the intention of the miracles would be compassion.

Splachnismite, this word, can you say it with me? Splachnismite, splachnismite, it sounds something like spaghetti plus schnitzel, all right?

[12 : 05] So next time when you have spaghettis and schnitzels, think about this word splachnismite. Compassion is a word, it's not just a feeling word, but it should drive us to act.

When you look at the people around us and our neighbors, how would we feel? During Christmas time, you go to Costco, you don't have to be Christmas when you go to Costco, look at the crowds, how would you feel?

Oh, I don't want to enter, I'll come back again, there will be less people. How would you feel? I mean, look at them, they are not people to us, they're objects, you want them to remove them so I can go into the queue quicker, I can shop better, right?

And Jesus looked at the crowds and had compassion. It will teach us something.

A few of us ES people that are over there now in Hong Kong, Hong Kong, this is Hong Kong. How many have you been in Hong Kong?

[13 : 29] That is the one place you want to buy basketball shoes or high fives, okay? And actually, that is supposed to be recorded as the most crowded place in the world, okay?

Commercial and residential resident found in Hong Kong. 340,000 people in one square mile. Maybe in New Zealand, 3,400 people in one square mile.

Some places in New Zealand, 340 people in one square mile. Right? Now if you're there, wow, man, you get off at the MTR and went up to the street, and look at the people coming at you, you know, like waves, you know, and how would you react?

Oh, God, move them away, you know? But when Jesus looked at the crowd, he had compassion.

Jesus looked at us, not just a church of people. Jesus looked at us, and he knows me, he knows you, he knows your deep needs inside.

[15 : 00] People don't know, but he does. He has compassion unto me. In the new year, I don't know why, what sort of things we will be struggling with, what maybe something needs that, yeah, we're so fearful to tell others, but Jesus look at us, and he has compassion on us.

When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew, and in verse 14, when Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, and he healed them.

Let's expect Jesus to come and heal us, to perform his mighty acts in our lives this year.

Open to that, surely. But before we come to a conclusion, let's realize, how does he act?

you know, we normally define miracles as supernatural stuff, right? Something spectacular, 5,000 angels blowing the 10,000 trumpets before me, and wakes me up, oh, yes, yes, what do you want to speak to me?

[16 : 28] You know, I don't think he does that all the time. He does that at times, but he doesn't need to do it all the time. Look at what happened here.

Just five loaves and two fish to feed the 5,000 plus crowds. He couldn't have called out raining manas from heaven.

Surely, God did that in the Old Testament, right? He could have just made everyone suddenly felt, oh, I'm full. Could he?

Surely he could. Or even Satan tempted Jesus, right? Turn the stones into bread. Could Jesus do it? Of course he could do it. And then I'll be eating stones.

I mean, Jesus just used ordinary mundane things to perform the miracles. And so let's look out for those miracles.

[17 : 36] the means that Jesus performed miracles. Maybe God just used your friends, right? Your family, your church brothers and sisters, and miracles just happened.

I was thinking, God has been using us as miracles to bring blessings and healings to others, right? Billy, you're in the victim support.

I'm sure God has been using you in the times of need, in the times of hurt, in times of grief. Oh, that is a miracle done. Right?

Just ordinary things. But in the hands of Jesus, extraordinary stuff's happened. tradition. There is this showers of blessings ministry.

The headquarters is in Toronto. A Chinese, Hong Kong actually, originated group. They had a mission to film all the testimonies of Chinese Christians all over the world.

[18 : 51] They started about 25, 30 years ago, and they've been doing that all the time. They started with Cantonese and now in Mandarin, and for the 1.5 second generations, they're doing English versions now as well.

And last year, the team came to New Zealand. They filmed about 11 testimonies in New Zealand, mostly in Auckland, and we had five from PCBC.

PC. And some you know, some you don't. I think you know all of them, right? And each story is very unique. No superpower, supernatural stuff, but it's been miracles.

In order that they're testifying God's mighty works in their lives. For instance, for Simo, for my wife, right?

She's just a sick person, right? Right from marriage, right? So beware, we don't get married. But, yeah, all the time, people encourage me to pray for miracles, for healing.

[20 : 13] And I did pray for my daughter as well, Karis, when she was a little baby like Amy, now, I was praying, I was in a meeting, a revival meeting, and they said, come, come, let's pray.

I couldn't go up, there was too many people. And suddenly I was encouraged, I would pray for her, but nothing happened, you see. And suddenly I felt that God told me, you don't need to pray for healing.

You will be the miracle to rear her up as my daughter, as my child. God used medical means to keep Simo's life.

I'm sure all of us experience things similar one way or another. Right? And God does his miracles. And today I think I think yeah, I think God still does that.

But don't put God in a box. At times he can act supernaturally. But at times he can naturally super in our lives.

[21 : 31] And thirdly, the integration of the miracle. In verse 19 20, he directed the people to sit down on the grass, taking the loaves and the fish, looking up to heaven, he gave thanks.

And he gave to the disciples and the disciples gave them to the people. They all ate and were satisfied. Now look, deliberately use different colors to describe different acts or different groups of people.

Now Jesus, even though he was God, he could perform the miracle, he still gave thanks. He still looked up to heaven and he still asked him for the Father's blessing so that the miracle can be integrated.

God did. Even as the Son of God, he still acknowledged his physical self at that time, his dependence upon his Father.

Right? How much should we need to as well? And look to the bread and the fish to the disciples.

[22 : 50] Now, if you were the twelve and Jesus handed the bread and the fish, I don't know how, no, look, five loaves and two fish, that's seven items, to twelve disciples.

Did Jesus kind of break up the bread? Yeah, of course, I think he would and to break the fish, right? And look, as they distribute one to five and five to ten, what happened?

I would know. If you were disciples, how would you have felt? Can the seven items really, really look at the crowds?

It's beyond my vision, I can't even see them all. It's some sort of submission there, some sort of trust, right? And the people, they had to eat, they actually had to take them in for the miracles to happen.

And John told us it was the kid who was willing to give up his lunch, life. So there's actually all different factors could actually hinder the performance of the miracle.

[24 : 26] And today, God could still use us as part of his integration of the miracles happen in people's life.

I was thinking, yeah, if he does his miracle, yeah, I believe his miracle still abounds today.

Yep. Sometimes it's superly natural or naturally super, one way or another. but if we know, if we pay attention to his mighty acts and we can participate in it or we can be the recipients of the miracles, our lives will be full.

But as I want to conclude, just to challenge us, this, as Christians, as his disciples, the five loaves and the two fish, this kind of attitude, think about how they serve, think about the kids who was willing to give up his lunch, think about the disciples who follow Jesus and Jesus commanded them, look, distribute them to feed the five thousands.

I think that is the kind of trust, that is the kind of obedience, that is kind of the submission that we need to keep exercising.

[26 : 03] Right? No matter how many years of services we have, I have been 30, 89, I think 40, 34 years, if I say, look, I had 34 years preaching, it's easy stuff, I am not exercising that five loaves and two fish.

And what Jesus would want would be that kind of five loaves and two fish attitude. Right? If I say, ah, it's a piece of cake, that would not please God.

We're still, look, I'm a moksi now, I don't do these sort of things. That would be despicable for Jesus.

And Jesus would just want that little kids offering the five loaves and two fish so that his miracle can be performed.

so let's this year, let's ask God, help us to realize his acts of mighty power in our lives.

[27 : 37] We can come, we can come to him, whatever needs we have, we can come to him, ask, because God willing, you knock, he's going to open, pray, and he's going to answer, seek, and he's going to, we can find him, right?

But not just on the material stuff, right? He wants us to go deeper, right? Go further.

But as we follow him, he can use you and me as the instruments of actualizing his miracles for his glory and for others' blessings.

This is what this miracle teach me. And may his word continue to encourage us. A few questions for us to ponder on.

What are the experiences of God's compassion in my lives? What are some of the miraculous, miraculous in a sense, you know, not just super, super natural stuff, but God's mighty power that I have experienced?

[29 : 09] and how can I participate in the manifestations of miracles? Let's pray. Father God, I just want to thank you.

This miracle is not just something that happened in the olden days, not just in the Bible, but we do believe that it still happened today. Help us to open our eyes to see and help us to open our lives to participate so that your name be glorified and people will be blessed.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.