



### **Our Collective Longing and Greater Need**

- We all have a greater spiritual need that must be satisfied.
- Our search for fulfillment in the things of this world leaves us spiritually famished.
- This need is not met in material things but in relationship with the God who made us to receive his love, our true provision.

St. Augustine wrote: *“You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in you.”*

### **Mark 6:30–44 (NLT)**

*The apostles returned to Jesus from their ministry tour and told him all they had done and taught. Then Jesus said, “Let’s go off by ourselves to a quiet place and rest awhile.” He said this because there were so many people coming and going that Jesus and his apostles didn’t even have time to eat.*

*So they left by boat for a quiet place, where they could be alone. But many people recognized them and saw them leaving, and people from many towns ran ahead along the shore and got there ahead of them. Jesus saw the huge crowd as he stepped from the boat, and he had compassion on them because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things.*

*Late in the afternoon his 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 nearby farms and villages and buy something to eat.”*

*But Jesus said, “You feed them.”*

*“With what?” they asked. “We’d have to work for months to earn enough money to buy food for all these people!”*

*“How much bread do you have?” he asked. “Go and find out.”*

*They came back and reported, “We have five loaves of bread and two fish.”*

*Then Jesus told the disciples to have the people sit down in groups on the green grass. So they sat down in groups of fifty or a hundred.*

*Jesus took the five loaves and two fish, looked up toward heaven, and blessed them. Then, breaking the loaves into pieces, he kept giving the bread to the disciples so they could distribute it to the people. He also divided the fish for everyone to share. They all ate as much as they wanted, and afterward, the disciples picked up twelve baskets of leftover bread and fish. A total of 5,000 men and their families were fed.*

## Feeding of the Multitude in Scripture

- The only miracle story to appear in all four gospels.
- Like the death and resurrection of Jesus, the feeding points to God's past faithfulness and God's promise for the future:
  - Manna in the wilderness (Exodus 16:17–18)
  - The prophet Elisha's feeding of 100 (2 Kings 4:42–44)
  - The Last Supper and New Covenant (Matthew 26:26–28)
  - The end times banquet and death's defeat (Isaiah 25:6–8)

## Interpreting the Story—Four Explanations

- Miraculous—The event occurred just as it is described in the scriptural account as a creative act of God.
- Sacramental—Jesus and his disciples merely passed small pieces of bread and fish around much like we do in communion. The story was later elaborated into a miracle story.
- Rationalistic—Jesus was trying to teach the crowd unselfishness and shamed them into sharing what they had hidden away.
- Symbolic—The event didn't happen but was written as a theological expression of the gospel message.

## Core Lessons in the Feeding Story

*“Let's go off by ourselves to a quiet place and rest awhile.”*

- Most often in our lives, it is the desert places where we are most receptive to God's \_\_\_\_\_.
- Purposeful \_\_\_\_\_ is a discipline we need to embrace in a world that demands constant activity and connectivity.
- Devotion must result in action.

*Jesus saw the huge crowd as he stepped from the boat, and he had compassion on them.*

- Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ our hunger, both physical and spiritual.

*“You feed them.”*

- Jesus challenges our \_\_\_\_\_.
- God can \_\_\_\_\_ anything we bring to him.
- The key = Seek first God's Kingdom.

## Bottom Line

God wants you awake to your \_\_\_\_\_.

*“I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry again. Whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.”*

John 6:35 (NLT)

*“People do not live by bread alone; rather, we live by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.”*

Deuteronomy 8:3 (NLT)

In the hands of Jesus, \_\_\_\_\_ is always \_\_\_\_\_.

**When we live with a constant revelation of our need for Jesus, anything we do suddenly has deep meaning.**

Major Sources: *Awake* by Joel N. Clark and *The New Interpreter's Bible Commentary*.