

## Daily Devotional, October 12, 2020 Thankful Even in Distress

***“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. 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.” Matthew 14:19-21 (NIV)***

There are few scenes more powerful in all of the Gospels than the feeding of the 5000 as described in the book of Matthew. This miracle shows the compassion and power of Jesus as he provides food for the large crowd who had followed him into the wilderness. The Disciples wanted to send the crowd away so that they could feed themselves. The crowd followed Jesus from the city, and they brought little to no provisions with them. All that could be found amongst them were fives loaves of bread and two fish.

The miracle of the feeding of the five thousand not only reflects Jesus' compassion and power, it also shows his humanity. Matthew 14 starts with the death of John the Baptist, the cousin of Jesus. After hearing about John's death, Jesus withdraws from the crowds to be alone. We have to believe that Jesus was heartbroken, deeply saddened at John's passing. The feeding of this large group of people happens while Jesus is in mourning over the loss of his cousin, someone who was most special to him.

In the middle of Jesus' mourning, the loss of John, and feeding his followers and this great multitude of people, Jesus demonstrates an important lesson to all of us. Matthew 14:19 says Jesus, "Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves." Jesus stopped everything that He was doing and expressed His thanksgiving to God. In the middle of His sadness and His being chased by the crowds, Jesus shows all of us that even in the most trying of times, there is always something to give thanks for, no matter how dire the circumstances.

Today, we find ourselves in the midst of some very difficult times. COVID-19 has truly changed our world. The news is filled with medical, economic, and political trouble, but even during trials as big as we are currently facing, there are so many reasons we have to be thankful. Today, when life gets busy and trouble seems to be all around you, take a moment, stop, and give thanks. It is a way to remind ourselves we already have all that we need, because God is with us, because Jesus cares, and because God's spirit is moving among us and watches over us, even In those moments when it seems there is no hope. Jesus looked up to heaven and gave thanks because He knew that His Father would never deny Him nor abandon Him. How can we not put our trust in such a gracious provider?

***Prayer: Lord, it is a great comfort to know that You know everything about me and that You know my needs even before they arise, and You faithfully set in motion the answers to my prayers even before I call. And Lord, even though the answers to my prayers may sometimes be delayed, I still see Your hand of blessing in so many other ways. Thank You for the way that You have used difficulties and delays to perfect and develop my trust in You. And Lord, even though I do not always understand why things do not work out the way that I expect, I do thank You that You have always been there to provide for my needs in Your time and in Your way. Keep my heart ever thankful for Your gracious provision and loving kindness towards me, and may I grow in grace and come to know You more and more in the days that lie ahead. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.***