

“You give them something to eat” Matthew chapter 14 verse 16

Jesus tells his disciples to feed the people who are hearing his teaching. How many people? Five thousand men, plus the women and children who are there in what we are told is 'a remote place'.

The disciples are aghast. There is nowhere nearby to buy food, they couldn't afford it anyway, and all they have with them are five loaves of bread and two fishes. So Jesus says the words that change everything; “Bring them here to me”.

Then he does the impossible. Giving thanks for the food and beginning to break it, he gives it to his disciples to pass among the crowd. There is enough for everybody, with a lot left over.

In a very real sense, they have brought to Jesus, not what they had, but what they did not have. The inadequacy of their human strengths and resources, in the hands of Jesus, are more than enough.

This visual and practical parable isn't just intended to teach us about God's material provision in our lives. Far from it. On another occasion, when Jesus warns his disciples about the yeast of false teaching, the disciples think he is commenting on the fact that they have forgotten to bring bread with them. But, he assures them, it's nothing to do with bread. They have fed a crowd far in excess of five thousand with a few loaves and a couple of fish, but in teaching them, Jesus has given them something far more important and of spiritual and eternal value.

Jesus is able to provide for all our needs, but we only receive spiritual nourishment when we understand what he meant when he said, in response to his disciples suggestion that he eat something “I have food to eat that you don't know about.”

Prayer

Father, thank you that you care about and are able to provide for every aspect of my life. I confess that all too often I care only about those aspects of life that relate directly to this world and my material needs. Please help me to see beyond these perishable things, and receive from you the nourishment that I need to feed my spirit. In Jesus' name, amen.

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