

Mark 6:41-44

*“And He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up toward heaven, He blessed the food and broke the loaves and He kept giving them to the disciples to set before them; and He divided up the two fish among them all. They all ate and were satisfied, and they picked up twelve full baskets of the broken pieces, and also of the fish. There were five thousand men who ate the loaves.”*

Why must scholars rationalize the miraculous? And if there is one event the intellectuals must rationalize away, the feeding of the 5,000 is it. Jesus must have hidden food in a secret cave. The disciples must have given up the food they were hoarding. The size of the crowd must have been exaggerated. It must have been a sacramental meal — a mere token piece of bread alluding to the feast that is to come. Why are we surprised when God acts like God?

Here is the One who is like Moses but greater than Moses. Here is the One who is like Elijah and Elisha but is greater than all the prophets. In feeding the 5,000, Mark demonstrates Jesus exercises God’s power and uses it for the good of the flock. Jesus is the Good Shepherd of His people and He provides for all needs in this life and the life to come. Even today, we long for good news but sadly settle for merely good advice. The question of feeding the 5,000 is the question religion has wrestled with for millennia: Is the need of mankind spiritual or physical? God recognizes our needs are both spiritual and physical.

Neither sending the crowd away nor compelling the disciples to share what they have solves the problem because they are the solutions of men. This is why politics will never solve man’s problems because they can only offer man-made solutions: send the needy away or compel those who may have to give more to those who have less. The Church needs to learn from the example of Jesus Christ Himself; neglect neither spiritual hunger nor physical hunger. The command of Jesus to the disciples was *“You give them something.”* A disciple of Jesus Christ is always the servant of others. We are called to feed the sheep and not just ourselves. The lesson is clear for those who have ears to hear: there will always be enough to feed the Church.

Before we echo the words of the disciples about our inventory and conclude we do not have enough, we may need to step out in faith. When self-proclaimed Christians, on average, give 3% of their income to the church and even less of their time in direct ministry, we should see we have enough. God never sacrifices the physical need to satisfy the spiritual need. Nor will God ever sacrifice the spiritual need of humanity in order to satisfy an empty stomach. Both are important to Him. So how important are they to us?