

## **Miracles of Jesus 12-07-22a**

This is Sunday, the 22nd of July, 2012. We continue our study in the miracles of the Lord Jesus Christ. We're taking them more or less seriatim or in chronological order with a few exceptions.

I'm going to make an exception this morning to put two together that I want to look at together. But we will begin with miracle number 19, which is the feeding of the 5,000. Along with that, we're going to skip forward a bit and look at what I think in my list is 23, the feeding of the 4,000.

But we get a great comparison contrast with these, and there are so many similar elements, it's my idea that we'll study them together. We'll begin in Matthew chapter 14, and let's take a moment to go to the Lord in prayer, and we'll begin. Father, what a blessing it is to be held in Your hands, to be sustained by Your grace, to be the recipients of Your love and Your compassion and Your watch care in so many areas, both those we are conscious of and those that we are unable to perceive.

You have orchestrated the events of our lives in such a way that we are not only able to experience Your power and Your forgiveness and Your sustaining grace in this life, but we see the means by which You're preparing us for the future eternal life in Your presence and in Your kingdom. We thank You for this portion of Your Word that we look at this morning, the actions and words of the Lord Jesus, and we ask that as we study it, we will not only have comprehension and perception, but that God the Holy Spirit will minister the truth of it, the divine power and enablement of it to us, so that each of us will come away impressed, motivated, and more fully equipped to fulfill our calling and to fulfill Your will. We ask these things in Jesus' name.

Amen. The feeding of the 5,000, one of the more notable miracles and unique in the Scripture record. Would anyone like to hazard a guess on why this miracle is unique among all the miracles in the Bible, all the miracles recorded as being performed by the Lord Jesus? What might be special about this one? It isn't a healing.

Of course, the stilling of the storm might fall in that category. This is the only miracle performed by the Lord Jesus Christ that is found in all four Gospels. It is in Matthew, it is in Mark, it is in Luke, and it is in John.

Interestingly, the seven signed miracles that John records, only two of them occur in any other Gospel. Wedding Feast at Cana, nowhere else. Nobleman's Son, nowhere else.

Three of the others, but two are found in other Gospels, but this one is the only one found in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, as well as in John. It must be pretty important if we've got not just stereo, not just surround sound, but we've got quadraphonic coverage of this miracle. The other one, by the way, just for your Bible trivia game knowledge sake that's

found in John and the other Gospels is Jesus walking on the water.

It's the only two that John records that you have any evidence of in the other Gospels. So we're going to look at the feeding of the 5,000 this morning, and we'll start in Matthew chapter 14. And as always, we like to get a little bit of context.

So if you look back in the end of chapter 13, it came to pass when Jesus had finished these parables, He departed from there. When He had come to His own country, He taught them in their synagogue. They were astonished and said, where did this man get his wisdom and these mighty works? Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary, and his brothers James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us? Apparently Mary and Joseph had a sizable family after the Lord Jesus.

Where did this man get all these things? Where did this man get all these things? And by the way, when it says, where did this one notice man is in italics, they've capitalized it, but it's Dr. Criswell likes to point this out in Acts when the apostles are trying to preach. And they talk about them being seed pickers and so on. But whenever you want to kind of denigrate someone in the ancient world speaking Greek, if you're ever back there speaking Greek, this is a way to kind of insult someone.

You just say, this one, Hutas, this Hutas. You don't even honor them by speaking their name. You just say, you'd call them by an indefinite pronoun or a demonstrative pronoun.

You just say, this one, where did this one get this stuff? And you just don't even acknowledge their name. It's a denigration. It's a diminishment, a diminution.

So that's what they do here, and they'll do this to the apostles later on. Where do these Hutoi, where does this Hutas get this stuff? So they were offended at him. Here's Jesus teaching the living and powerful Word of God.

Think about this now. The Lord Jesus Christ, the greatest teacher to ever stand on the surface of this planet, is teaching the living and powerful divine firsthand knowledge of God's truth, and the people get in a huff. Well, who does he think he is? What is this stuff? Who is this guy? And they think he's making much of himself because they know him.

I know you. And this is a tactic that people sometimes use when they want to reject the message and they're looking for an excuse. They'll find fault with the messenger.

We do this. It's a natural defense mechanism. Somebody says, excuse me, Sam, but, you know, you've fouled this up.

And I say, well, you fouled stuff up. You say, you know, excuse me, Sam, but, you know, you didn't quite finish this. Well, who are you to, you know, that's our natural reaction.

Our defense, our natural innate Adamic fallen nature is somebody pokes us and it hurts. We want to poke them back. And what does the truth of God do when it is accurately presented, effectively presented? When we are in the presence of the light from God's heaven, what does it do to our sinful souls? We are convicted.

We are rebuked. If you go to church and you don't feel a rebuke from time to time, if you study your Bible, if you spend time in devotion, if you review and think about the things that we look at in Bible class, if you don't find yourself convicted and rebuked, you need to find another Bible class. Find a better teacher.

Find something because it necessarily must correct, rebuke, and instruct us. And if we say, oh, yeah, that's me. I'm good.

Oh, yeah. Peace, love, joy, patience. Oh, yeah.

My picture's in the Bible right next to that description there. I'm forgiving. I'm loving.

I'm sure when Jesus comes back, why, I'll be the first to rise because he just won't wait to get into my presence. There's something wrong with us if the Word of God does not step on our toes, does not create some painful awareness. Well, we have a choice when that painful awareness comes.

What was this people's choice? What did these folks decide? Well, who do you think you are? I know your family. You ain't so great shakes. You walk around in sandal leather just like the rest of us.

I know who your sisters are. And by the way, I don't think they're very good looking. I know who your brothers are, and I don't think they're very smart.

I know your family. What do you think you are saying to me when you start telling me, you know, this is a, it's a human reaction. It is rooted in the conviction of the teaching of God's Word.

The Lord Jesus was the best teacher ever, is the best teacher ever. And when that truth hits, we have a choice. This is what we must do.

We must learn from examples like this and not react in a knee-jerk defense and try to start finding fault with the source. We need to look at the fault that has been exposed in us and respond. Respond to God's grace.

Respond to God's healing power. God has got a way to fix this. He's only showing us the problem so that we can grasp the solution.

He's not trying to denigrate us or put us down or make us feel inferior and, you know, unworthy, except as a means to heal us and rebuild us and restore us and make us useful and fit and productive branches in the vine. That's what the purpose is. And if we

focus on His purpose instead of getting all huffy, God can do great things in us and through us.

These people lost that opportunity. Who does this guy think he is? This one. So, they were offended at him.

Can you imagine? The Lord Jesus Christ comes in for a Bible class? I just find that offensive. It's scary. A prophet is not without honor except in his own country and in his own house, and he did not do many mighty works there because of their apisteia, their alpha privative faith.

Faith lack of. Faith as in none. Trust, acceptance, response, none.

At that time, Herod the Tetrarch heard the report about Jesus, said to his servants, this is John the Baptist come back from the dead. Then we get a retrospective on how John the Baptist came to be dead. And this happens in all the Gospels, very interestingly.

You get this retrospective on John. Why would that be? Why would this be in the preceding context? Why would it be in the context of this rejection at Nazareth? John the Baptist preached. Herod, as the king, sort of the representative of the people, can't make up his mind, won't.

Not only should you not reject, but you can't stall around and try to be neutral. He put John in prison, wouldn't kill him because he knew he was a righteous man, knew that his words were truth, but he wouldn't accept them, wouldn't take the lead, wouldn't respond positively either. And so he tried to stand in the no man's land, tried to stand in the demilitarized zone.

And ultimately, there's the dance and the head on the platter. I was kind of wondering this morning that after Herodias' daughter danced and Herod chops off John's head and puts it on a platter and gives it to her, she was given John's head on the platter and she gave it to her mother. And I was just wondering, what happened to it after that? What do you do with a human head? It's not like you can set it on the mantle and show your friends, not for long.

What do you do? What kind of a sick, twisted mind would find that to be a worthy trophy? Another way you know the Word of God is inspired of human beings that have written the Bible. You know what that head would have done when it showed up in Herodias' possession? In fact, I think I saw a movie once where this happened. After she got the platter handed to her, John's head, he opens his eyes and looks at her and she freaks out.

But you know, this is the human idea of retribution. There's no indication any such thing happened. God could have had John's head open its eyes, open its mouth and rebuke her one last time.

But He didn't. But John's disciples came and took away the body and buried it and went and told Jesus. Now we get to the context of the feeding of the 5,000.

When Jesus heard it, He departed from there by boat to a deserted place by Himself. John is, by everything we know, Jesus' cousin. He's a close family member.

He is the forerunner. As well, he holds a hugely important place in the plan of God. His ministry was prophesied in the Old Testament.

He is the Elijah who would come. And His execution marks a turning point in the ministry of the Lord Jesus, in the reaction versus response picture of the entire nation. So this is very significant.

And Jesus wants time to grieve, to think about the import of this event. And so He departed to a deserted place by Himself. And this is something that we ought to respect.

There are times when people need time to themselves. And you can see that they're actively trying to seek it. Maybe they'll take a day off.

Maybe they'll just go and close a door or they'll go off somewhere, want to take a drive. I'm going to go to the park and sit on a bench. I'm going to do something.

This is a good thing to respect. These people who are insensitive to Jesus and are basically very self-centered don't consider that He might want some time for meditation and prayer and concentration, focus, time to grieve. So they follow Him.

When the multitudes heard that, they followed Him on foot from the cities. When Jesus went out, He saw a great multitude. And He was annoyed beyond all belief because they wouldn't leave Him alone.

He got into a boat and departed to another place and went really fast so they couldn't catch Him. It isn't what it says, is it? The Lord Jesus isn't so full of Himself, isn't so caught up in His own sorrows or His own problems that He is unaware of the fact that He's unaware of the needs of others. Let this mind be in you that also was in Christ Jesus.

What kind of mind did He have? He looked out not only for His own interests but also for the interests of others. So He sees the great multitude and He was moved with compassion for them and He healed their sick. Now, if you look at the parallel, I told you it's on all four Gospels.

If you flip over to Mark chapter 6, we have an additional detail or two given to us. You notice John chapter 6, verses 14 through 29, we have the same account of the beheading of John. And then in verse 30, the apostles gathered to Jesus and told Him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught because this also is the time when they were sent out in pairs to do their ministry.

And He said to them, come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while. Not only did Jesus need time to Himself but after the exertions, after the events, after this unique experience that the disciples had in going out and fulfilling the active command to preach the Word, heal the sick, raise the dead, and so on that Jesus gave them, when they returned, He said, you need some time to, and even to think, to meditate, to rest. Even secular mind doctors recognize that we need time to process experiences.

When we go through something that's very unique, very stressful, of a very high order, we live through a disaster, we live through something very intense, we need time to process it, to put it into focus, to put it into perspective. And it is a good idea to do this. You suffer the death of a loved one, especially if it's a spouse or a child or a parent.

You have to make time to be by yourself and think it through, pray it through, apply the Word of God to it over a period of hours or days. This is the biblical pattern. Jesus told the disciples, you all have been through a very unique and action-packed experience here, come aside by yourself and rest.

Give yourself a chance to think about it. Why did God do this? What does it mean? He did the same thing for Himself with the news about John the Baptist. Come to a deserted place and rest a while.

Look at verse 31, for there were many coming and going and they did not even have time to eat. Sometimes in the effort to console someone who has lost a spouse or a loved one or whatever, everybody shows up. It's just a round of visitors, visit after visit after visit.

Sometimes the best thing we can do is express a brief condolence and leave someone alone. Give them some time to themselves to just get over it. We're just built this way.

We're made of flesh. If Jesus needed it, if the disciples empowered by the Holy Spirit and sent out to do these mighty works needed it, the rest of us need it as well. It doesn't mean we just abandon someone and leave them with no food and no comfort of any kind, but we need to be sensitive.

We need to be aware that this time should be allotted and allowed. Many coming and going and they did not even have time to eat, so they departed to a deserted place in the boat by themselves. Notice the disciples are by themselves, but who are they with? The Lord Jesus.

This is the best company, the best comfort, the best reconstructive situation for our souls is to be alone with the Lord. But the multitude saw them departing and many knew him and ran there on foot from all the cities, still thwarting the effort. They arrived before them and came together to him.

They know his habits. They know where he can be found, where he likes to go, and so

they get there first. Well, let's go have a little quiet time.

They get there and turn the corner and here's a multitude. It's the healer. I've got Aunt Sally here with her malady and he'll heal her.

Jesus, when he came out, saw the great multitude. This is picking up with Matthew's account, moved with compassion for them because they were like sheep not having a shepherd. So what did he do? People without guidance, people without direction, people without a proper perspective, people with faulty priorities, people who are insensitive.

What is the remedy? He began to teach them many things. We saw this on Friday night. In the last days, the dangerous times, the hard times that are coming, what is it characterized by? Men's hearts messed up.

What is the antidote to messed up hearts of men? Teach many things. Learn many things. When that day was now far spent, his disciples came to him and said, this is a deserted place and already the hour is late.

And I'm just continuing here in Mark. Send them away, the disciples say, that they may go into the surrounding country and villages and buy themselves bread, for they have nothing to eat. Let's get rid of these people.

We came out here to be by ourselves. We've had to deal with them all day. You have patiently taught them.

You've healed their sick. Let's send them away now so we can get some peace. But he answered and said to them, you give them something to eat.

Strange thing to say. You give them something to eat. And they said to him, shall we go and buy 200 denarii worth of bread and give them something to eat? And there was a discussion about this.

This is not the only thing that was said. And you get this by laying the four gospel accounts side by side. In Matthew, Jesus said, they need not go away.

You give them something to eat. They said to him, we have only five loaves here and two fish. That's Matthew's account of the dialogue.

You've seen what it says in Mark. You give them something to eat. Shall we go and buy 200 denarii worth of bread and give it to them? And he says to them, how many loaves have you? Go and see.

And when they had found out, they said, five and two fish. When you go to Luke's account, this is in Luke 9, verse 13, he said to them, you give them something to eat. They said, we have no more than five loaves and two fish unless we are to go and buy food for all these people.

For there were about 5,000. In John, we have a very detailed account. The Passover, the Feast of the Jews, was at hand.

This is the time context that John gives us in John chapter 6. And in verse 5, lifting up his eyes then and seeing that a multitude was coming to him, Jesus said to Philip, how are we to buy bread so that these people may eat? This he said to test him, for he himself knew what he would do. Philip answered him, two hundred denarii would not buy enough bread for each of them to get even a little. One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, there is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are they among so many? Then Jesus goes on to feed the 5,000.

But which of these accounts is more right? They are all right. This is different perspectives, different snatches of the conversation, different pieces of the puzzle. When you piece it together, it's all, and amazingly, four Gospels by four different writers written at different times from different sources.

Some of them may be looking at each other, but all of the details are exactly the same. There's a multitude. Jesus has compassion on them, tells the disciples we need to feed them.

The disciples demur and say, how can we possibly do this? There's talk of the 200 denarii, five loaves, two fish. What kind of loaves are they? What kind of loaves are they? Barley loaves. Before we go any further, why would Jesus think that he could feed these 5,000 people with five barley loaves and a couple of fish? Why would he think this? Is there any precedent in the Word of God at all for this kind of thing taking place? You say, well, God rained manna down from heaven, the Lord.

We've got something far better than that. Turn back with me to 2 Kings 4. These are the days of Elisha. You look at verse 38.

Elisha returned to Gilgal. Boy, there's a lot you can say about Gilgal. We don't have time to do.

There was a famine in the land. The sons of the prophets were sitting before him and he said to his servant, put on the large pot and boil stew for the sons of the prophets. So one went out into the field to gather herbs and found a wild vine and gathered from it a lap full of wild gourds and came and sliced them into the pot of stew, though they did not know what they were.

They served it to the men to eat and it happened as they were eating the stew, they cried out and said, man of God, there's death in the pot. They're poison gourds and they could not eat. So he said, bring some flour, put it in the pot, said serve it to the people that they may eat and there was nothing harmful in the pot.

Now look at verse 42. Then a man came from Baal Shalisha and brought the man of God

bread of the first fruits, 20 loaves of what kind of bread? Barley bread and newly ripened grain in his knapsack. And he said, Elisha said, give it to the people that they may eat.

Give it to the men that they may eat. But his servant said, what? Shall I set this before a hundred men? Elisha says again, give it to the people that they may eat for thus says the Lord, they shall eat and have some left over. So he set it before them and they ate and had some left over according to the word of the Lord.

So this is not the first time barley bread has been multiplied to feed more people than it ought to. Just thought I'd point that out. But Jesus had a reason for feeding these people at this time.

But here's our point. We're going to pause here and take our break. But from what we have seen so far, there is probably never a more justifiable occasion for Jesus to get impatient with the people than after he's been rejected in his hometown and vilified and slandered and belittled by his own people.

He hears of the death of John the Baptist, another national sign of rejection because Herod represents the people and his actions sort of speak for the people. Jesus is grieving. He's sorrowful.

His disciples have just come back from a mission trip and they need time. Everybody needs time to themselves. Jesus intends to go.

He goes one place and they crowd him. He goes another place and they still find him. You can imagine that the righteous wrath of God might radiate from the Lord Jesus and he might do any one of a number of things.

Instead he looks at the people and he sees what they need. In his hour of need, in the hour of need for his disciples, he doesn't say we're going to go and have our needs met. We're going to go and rebuild and restore ourselves.

Then we can go back and minister. He says now is the time. You disciples, who I just said you need time to rest, you can't even find time to eat yourselves, you're going to help these people eat.

There is a wonderful illustration of the truth that we have seen in other passages. The mind that should be in us, which also was in Christ Jesus, is we look out not only for ourselves but also for others. We do not look out for ourselves at the expense of others.

There is not a time when you can say, well, I've been looking out for you and now it's time for me to get mine. You go away hungry. I'm going to sit here and get my rest.

That isn't the mind that is in Christ Jesus. There's never a better occasion to see it illustrated than here. He's teaching this to his disciples.

They say, all right, we've done this for a day. Let's get these people out of here so we can do what we came here to do. Jesus says, no, you're going to feed them.

What have you got? Well, what they have seems insufficient. Five loaves and a couple of fish and all the other things you can say numerically and representatively. They say, look, we're out.

We don't have anything to give these people. We often feel this way. I'm tired.

I'm beaten down. I've been through a lot. I don't have anything to give.

This is not my time to minister. This is my time to be ministered to. I need mine right now.

Jesus says, no, the little bit that you have, God will make it enough. And it's convicting. That little selfish streak that says, look at what I've done.

Where's the gratitude? Where's my time? We've got to purge that out. Look at the Lord Jesus. Look at what he is teaching his disciples just in this context.

Well, let's pause here and take our break. When we come back, we're going to see the details of this provision for these insensitive people who nevertheless did stick around for the teaching, didn't they? Been there all day and Jesus taught them many things and they didn't leave. So there's enough response that they're going to see one of the greatest miracles ever done.

They stuck around. All of their deficiencies, all of their defective motivations, whatever else, they stayed. It's not like Nazareth where you could do no mighty work.

These people evidently have got just that flicker of faith, that spark of interest and Jesus is able to do something profound, something so profound that all four Gospels record it. That's what we'll look at when we come back.