

**Read: Matthew 14:13-21**

## Abundance from nothingness

### **Matthew 14:20**

They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of leftovers.

*In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

The disciples scratched their heads. They clearly had a crisis on their hands: A crowd of thousands followed Jesus by foot to a faraway location and no food to give them. To their credit, their first response to this crisis and need was to bring it to Jesus, but their suggestion was simply, “Send these people away.” Such is the thinking of humans. *There just isn't enough.* We see the problem, but not the possibility. We see the shortage rather than abundance.

Then Jesus shows up to bring abundance from nothingness.

Have you ever noticed that when Jesus gives, he doesn't just give the bare minimum? Think about the first miracle he did when he turned water into wine. The wedding couple had run out of wine, but instead of just providing enough to skate through the celebration, Jesus changed brimming jars of water into enough wine that could fill 600-900 bottles!

We love hearing stories like them! The truth they share is clear as day: Jesus always provides in just the right way. We know it, we love it! So why do we have such a hard time trusting it? Do we tell ourselves, things are so different now? Like the disciples, do we think through and explain to Jesus all the ways this *can't possibly work*? Sure, there's food on the table, but it's hardly gourmet cuisine. Think about your prayers. What do you ask God for? Better sport skills? Better health? Better grades? And then do you get upset when you don't get what you want? Here's the root problem: We think we see a way out of it, if only Jesus would start providing for us the way *we think* he should! We're more interested in telling Jesus how he should be doing things than we are in trusting his love and care for us.

God knew this would be a problem. Today's story about the feeding of the five thousand is the only miracle of Jesus recorded in all four gospels. Maybe it's the Holy Spirit's way of teaching us to trust that there is no need too great for Jesus to meet. Think of our greatest need of all—the solution for our sin. Rather than wring his hands at the sinners in a sinful world, Jesus opened his hand and satisfied the greatest desire of every living thing—the desire to be loved, to be forgiven. Jesus takes care of all our needs, great and small. There is no nothingness from which Jesus cannot bring his perfect abundance!

*The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.*

### **Questions for the Younger Children**

- What was the problem the disciples were worried about?
- How did Jesus solve the problem?

### **Questions for Elementary Age Children**

- What did Jesus use to feed the crowd of thousands?
- List the ways that Jesus provides for your needs.

### **Questions for Middle School and Above**

- Why, do you think, did Jesus provide enough for 12 baskets of leftovers?
- When are you most tempted to feel like Jesus isn't providing or can't provide for your needs?

### **Closing Prayer:**

Lord Jesus, you provide for all of our needs, great and small. Forgive us for doubting your loving care. Remind us of your perfect power to bring abundance from nothing for us! Amen.