

Read: Matthew 14:13-21

God Provides in Amazing Ways

Matthew 14:13-21

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.

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

“You’ve done it again, honey!” Dave said to his wife. “You’ve made enough food to feed an army!” It wasn’t a normal family get-together unless Dave spoke those words at some point. Aunts and uncles, cousins, grandparents—the whole family would gather for fun weekends to enjoy family, fun, and *lots* of food! Usually it was about halfway through the meal that Dave, patting his full belly, would announce his famous line, “This is enough food to feed an army!”

That’s a funny phrase people use. Families often have big meals with *way* too much food, especially at Thanksgiving or Christmas. But could their food really feed an entire army of hungry people? No way! Who could actually provide that much food? Today we are reminded of one simple, yet amazing answer—Jesus. Jesus is so powerful that he can provide for all people.

Can you picture the hungry crowd we heard about today? Thousands and thousands of people were gathered to see and hear Jesus. However, it was well past snack time and now close to dinner time, so the disciples wanted to send the people away to eat. After all, hungry, grumpy people are no fun to be around! Besides, they had hardly any food—only five loaves of bread and two fish. That wasn’t enough to feed an army, this big crowd, or even the 12 disciples.

But Jesus was about to teach them something amazing on that day. After he gave thanks for the food they had, Jesus told the disciples to start handing it out to the people. Incredibly, not only did everyone eat, and not only were they all full and satisfied, but there were even 12 basketfuls left over! Incredible!

Who else could do something so amazing besides God himself? And that’s the point! Jesus shows us with this miracle that he is true God. As God, Jesus is able to provide for every need we have. Whether your family is very large or very small, God will provide. Whether your family has a lot of money or a little money, God will provide. Whether your fridge is full or almost empty, God will provide.

And here's the best part, the loving Savior who can feed thousands of people is also the same Savior who is so powerful that he can provide what you really need—forgiveness of sins and life in heaven. Thanks be to God for all his physical and spiritual blessings!

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 Younger Children

- What are your favorite foods that God provides for you?
- How does God use your family to provide for you?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- How does God bless people who work on farms or in fields so that they can provide food for us?
- What do we mean when we ask in the Lord's Prayer for God to give us "daily bread"?

Questions for Middle School and Above

- Explain this statement: God shows he is loving by providing even for the unbelievers.
- Jesus provides us bread to eat, but what does he mean when he calls himself the Bread of Life?

Closing Prayer:

Dear Jesus, thank you for using your mighty power to provide for the needs of our bodies and our souls. Amen.

Hymn: CW 349:1 – Jesus, Priceless Treasure

Jesus, priceless treasure, Fount of purest pleasure, Truest friend to me.
Ah, how long in anguish Shall my spirit languish, Yearning, Lord, for thee?
Thou art mine, O Lamb divine!
I will suffer naught to hide thee, Naught I ask beside thee.