

**FEEDING THE FIVE THOUSAND
A BOY'S LUNCH FEEDS A MULTITUDE**



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BIBLE STUDY GUIDE SERIES

CHRIST TO THE WORLD MINISTRIES



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Christ to the World Ministries is a nonprofit ministry dedicated to sharing the gospel of Christ with the world through radio dramas and printed and oral studies based on Scripture. The printed lessons can be studied by one person or by a group.

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Dear Friend,

I am glad that you are interested in studying the Bible. It is God's Word to us and in it, we find the way of salvation and guidance for daily living. The main theme of the Bible is God's love for us and how he expressed that love by Jesus Christ dying on the cross for our sins. Jesus arose from the grave and today He will save every person who puts his or her faith and trust in Him.

This study guide will help you gain a better understanding of the Bible. Open your heart to what God has for you through the study. I have prayed that your study will be life changing.

May God bless you richly,

*Larry Alston
Christ to the World Ministries*



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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to a study about an event when Jesus takes a boy's lunch and feeds a multitude.

This Bible study shows that little in his hands can become much. It reminds you that we show compassion for others by meeting their needs. Concern becomes an "action" word.

You should write in this study guide. Don't keep it clean and unmarked! When the guide asks you to make a response, don't simply think of your response. Take time to write it down. Doing so helps internalize and reinforce your learning. Write from your heart. Only you will see what you write.

As writer, I will work along with you as you complete your study. I will share with you my own responses to most of the questions and activities. This does not mean that my responses are any more correct than yours; it simply means that you have the benefit of a fellow traveler walking beside you as you move through the study.

Keep your Bible before you as you complete the study. When you are asked to read a Scripture reference, take time to read it.

Ready? Then let's get started.

Begin your study with prayer. Make the following prayer your very own.

Dear God, please open your Word to me as I study. Speak to my heart. Help me obey your will for my life. Help me do what you want me to do. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

"13 When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns. 14 When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick.

15 As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a remote place, and it's already getting late. Send the crowds away, so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food."

16 Jesus replied, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat."

17 We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish," they answered. 18 Bring them here to me," he said. 19 And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. 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. 20 They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. 21 The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children."

THE SCRIPTURE

BACKGROUND AND SETTING

Feeding the five thousand is the only miracle of Jesus found in all four gospels. (See Mark 6:32-44; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-13.)

The Bible records two separate occasions when Jesus feeds a multitude. On another occasion Jesus fed four thousand (Matt. 15:32-39; Mark 8:1-10). Jesus, himself, refers to both events (Matt. 16:9-10).

The feeding of the five thousand took place with Galilean Jews. The second miracle, the feeding of four thousand, took place in the region of the Decapolis (Mark 7:31), and the people most likely were Gentiles. This miracle happens at the end of Jesus' Galilean ministry.

Herod Antipas killed John the Baptist. The disciples return from preaching throughout Galilee on their first journey without Jesus. They have much to tell him. For one thing, they want him to know that John's disciples buried the body of John the Baptist. Now they fear for Jesus.

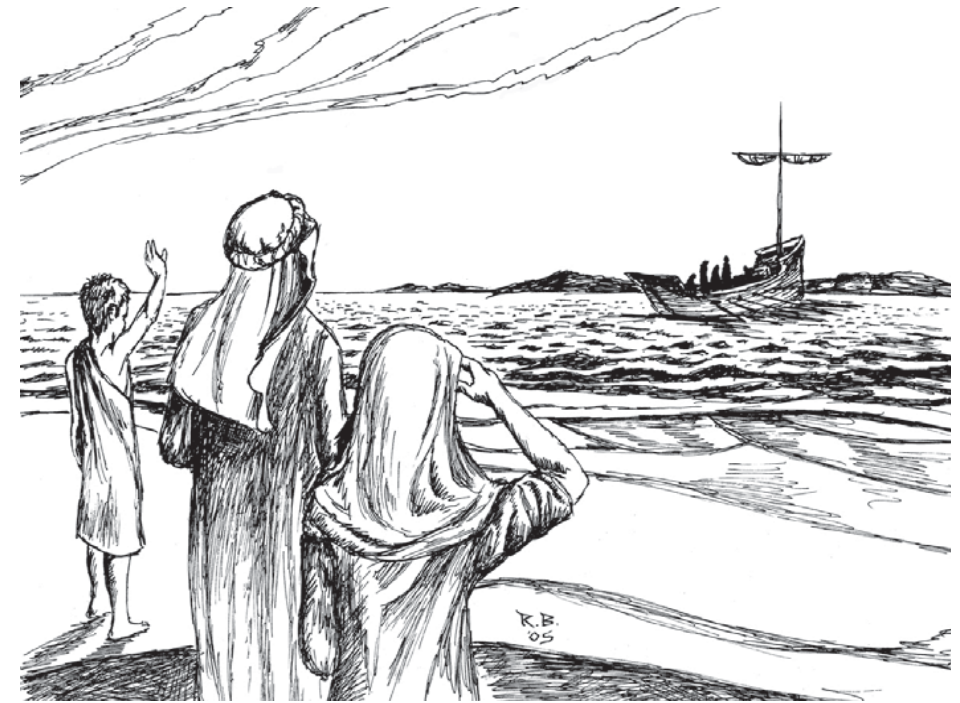
People say Herod may believe Jesus is John the Baptist restored to life. Jesus will stay away from Capernaum and will return only once.

The disciples are tired and Jesus needs time alone with them. He and the twelve leave in a small boat for the mountains across the lake on the northeast side of the Sea of Galilee.

The mountains are out of Herod's domain. Jesus and his disciples can relax for awhile. In Passover season multitudes from the villages head for Jerusalem. They want to see and hear this man, Jesus.

News of his miracles spreads everywhere. Some want to crown him king.

JESUS AND THE TWELVE LEAVE GALILEE



When the people see Jesus leave, they walk around the lake to meet him on the eastern side. Jesus sees them waiting eagerly with their sick. They know he has the power to heal.

Read Matthew 14:14. Complete the following verse:

“When Jesus _____ and saw a large _____, he had _____ on them and _____ their _____”.

Jesus, filled with compassion, heals the sick for the rest of the day and teaches them about the kingdom of God. Sometime in the late afternoon the disciples come to Jesus and tell him the people have not eaten all day.

Read Matthew 14:15 and complete this verse:

“Send the _____, so they can go to the _____ and buy themselves some _____.”

THE HUNGRY CROWD FOLLOWS JESUS

No wonder the disciples want Jesus to send them away; five thousand hungry men along with women, tired children and crying babies could triple the number!

Are the disciples concerned about the people? Yes, maybe. Do they wonder if the people have money for food? If so, where will they find it? The disciples do not ask. Just “send them away.” It is their problem! The disciples are tired and hungry, too.



Read Matthew 14:16. Write here what Jesus tells the disciples.

They can hardly believe their ears. Feed them? Feed them? Philip, one of the disciples, says, “Eight months wages would not buy enough bread for each one to have a bite” (John 6:7)!

JESUS TEACHES HIS DISCIPLES

Jesus wants to feed the multitude. He also must teach his disciples that their mission is to draw people close and not push them away.

The disciples look around for food. Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, finds a boy who gives them his lunch.

A BOY GIVES HIS LUNCH

He had five small, flat, round barley cakes and two fish. (See John 6:8-9.)



They take the lunch to Jesus. They do not believe that he can feed the multitude with that small lunch!

Read Matthew 14:19 and complete this verse:

“And he _____ the _____ to _____
on the _____.”

In springtime the tall, green grass covers the mountainside. Jesus directs the multitude to sit down. This means to “recline” since that is the normal posture for meals. They sit down in orderly fashion, “in groups of hundreds and fifties” (Mark 6:40).

Read Matthew 14:19 again. Complete this verse:

“Taking the _____ and the _____ and looking up to _____, he gave _____ and _____ the loaves.”

Jesus takes the five loaves and two fish.

JESUS BLESSES THE FOOD



He looks up to heaven and gives thanks. Then he breaks the bread into pieces. As he breaks off pieces they multiply!

He gives the bread to the amazed disciples. They pass it on to the multitude.

Each disciples fills his basket with the leftovers.

ALL ARE SATISFIED

Read Matthew 14:20 and complete this verse:

“They all _____ and were _____, and the disciples _____
up _____ basketfuls of broken pieces that were _____.”

There is enough food to feed everyone until “all are satisfied.” Jesus tells the disciples, “Gather the pieces that are left over. Let nothing be wasted” (John 6:12).



APPLICATION

Look again at the five drawings in this lesson. Write beside each drawing a sentence that describes the situation pictured.

Jesus, the Son of God, really SEES people. He feels deep compassion for those who suffer. He responds with healing miracles. He sees hunger and satisfies empty stomachs, and he fills hungry souls.

What does this miracle teach you about compassion for others?

List some ordinary kindnesses you can show daily to let others know you care about them?

How do you think the disciples feel when they tell Jesus to send the multitude away? (Check the appropriate answers with an “x.”)

- indifferen
- overwhelmed
- tired
- concerned
- irritated

Sometimes you may want to send people away when they come to you for help in meeting their needs. How do you feel at those times? (Check the appropriate answers with an “x.”)

- angry
- contented
- tired
- hungry
- depressed
- happy

Do you feel justified in having those feelings? (Check your response.)

- yes
- no

At times you may need to retreat for awhile to restore your body and mind.

Picture yourself as one of the disciples. When Jesus says, “You give them something to eat” (Luke 9:13), what might you think? (Check your answers with an “x.”)

- Did I hear right?
- We can feed them.
- It will take a miracle.
- It’s impossible.
- He is powerful.

Describe some times when you felt God’s power in a special way.

A boy gives his lunch. Jesus feeds the five thousand with five loaves and two fish. This miracle shows that a “little” becomes “much” in God’s hands.

Each of us needs to share our resources.

Which of the following assets do you have? (Check your answers.)

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> financial resources | <input type="checkbox"/> spiritual strength |
| <input type="checkbox"/> political influence | <input type="checkbox"/> organizational skills |
| <input type="checkbox"/> social service access | <input type="checkbox"/> leadership |

Think of a person in your neighborhood or city. Which personal resources can you use to make that person’s life better? How?

People feel physical hunger but many are spiritually starved. Let Jesus’ teachings and works take hold of your heart and compel you to share his love with someone. His salvation can satisfy an empty, hungry soul. Of course, you must have his salvation before you can tell others.

Do you know Jesus Christ as your personal Savior?

- Yes
 No

The Bible says, “But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8). “Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life” (John 3:36). You can ask Jesus to come into your life even as you study this lesson, if you have never committed your life to him.

Think about your purpose in life. Try to express it in words. Write your life purpose here:

Do you feel that your life purpose fits into God’s plan for your life?

- Yes
 No

If you answered “No,” what do you need to do to align your life with God’s plan for you?

You can mold your life into the likeness of Jesus by trusting him as your Savior and living for him. Your influence can live on forever through the lives you touch.

Commit this Bible verse to memory:

“Do not merely listen to the Word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says” (James 1:22, NIV).

Summarize in a sentence or two the main thing God has taught you in your study of this lesson.

You can lead your family or a group of friends and neighbors or perhaps a church group in this study of the feeding of the five thousand. Doing so will strengthen your own life, and God will use you to bless others.

GUIDE FOR GROUP STUDY

The following suggestions will help you lead a small group study.

Each person in a group has contributions to make. Each person should take active part in the discussion. No one should dominate the time together. Begin the study with prayer.

Read aloud the story of “Feeding the Five Thousand” in Matthew 14:13-21.

Using the five drawings as visual aids, tell in your own words the story of what happened. Show the drawings to the group as you tell the story. Answer any questions group members may ask.

Use with the group the questions and activities under “Application.” Lead each group member to respond.

The following “Agree/Disagree” statements will involve group members in discussion.

Read each statement aloud. Ask persons who agree with the statement to raise their hand. Then ask persons who disagree with the statement to raise their hand. Ask, Why do you agree or disagree with each statement? Allow time for discussion.

1. The people were negligent to go hear Jesus without making provision for their food.
2. We are not responsible for helping people in need due to their own negligence.
3. Jesus had compassion on the multitude of people.

4. Jesus has compassion on the hungry and hurting people in the world today.
5. Jesus reaches out to help hungry and hurting people today through believers.
6. Physical needs and spiritual needs are equally important.
7. Spiritual needs are more important than physical needs.
8. Spiritual needs cannot be met adequately unless physical needs are met first.

Lead the group in memorizing James 1:22. Ask volunteers to explain the verse in their own words.

Read to the group the section of this lesson captioned “Responding to God.” Pray the prayer for yourself and help each person pray it for himself or herself.

Now that you have studied God’s Word, he wants you to respond.

RESPONDING TO GOD

The Bible teaches that you are a sinner. *“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). “There is no one righteous, not even one” (Rom. 3:10).*

But God loves you and sent his Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross for your sin. *“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16). “But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8).*

You receive Christ as your Savior by turning from your sin and placing your faith and trust in him. *“Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out” (Acts 3:19). “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved” (Acts 10:13).*

Notes:

Pray this prayer:

“Dear God, I know that I’m a sinner. I believe Jesus died for my sins and rose from the dead and lives today. I now turn from my sins. I place my faith and trust in Jesus alone to be my Savior and to forgive me. I receive Jesus into my life as my Savior and Lord. From this day forward, I will follow Jesus. Thank you, Lord Jesus, for loving me and for coming into my life. In your name I pray. Amen.”

Welcome into God’s family!

Share with others that you have received Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord. Ask for baptism by immersion in a local church as a public expression of your faith. If you have no church near you, start a church by gathering a group of persons in your home and worship together on a regular basis. Read your Bible and pray each day. Tell others what Christ has done for you and what he can do for them.