**Hunger and Thirst for Righteousness**

Based on [Mark 8:1-9](https://biblia.com/books/esv/Mk8.1-9)

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Besides the resurrection itself, the feeding of the five thousand is the most well-attested miracle of Jesus. It is in all four gospels. People know it, that Jesus took five loaves of bread and two fish and miraculously multiplied them into enough to feed 5000 people, not counting women and children, with 12 baskets full left over. Today we hear of the less familiar feeding of the 4000. This time, he feeds them with seven loaves and a few fish; and they all eat and are satisfied, and there are seven baskets full left over.

These are two separate miracles, to two different crowds in two different places. And only two evangelists, Matthew and Mark, record the feeding of the 4000. A common denominator in both accounts is the compassion of Jesus.

In reading the Gospel, you’ll notice that much of Jesus’ ministry is to crowds of people. People are drawn to him because he teaches with authority. And though the crowds are sometimes shallow and dull of hearing, he has compassion on the crowds. In today’s miracle, Jesus says **“I have compassion on the crowd, because they have been with me now three days and have nothing to eat. And if I send them away hungry to their homes, they will faint on the way. And some of them come from far away.**” They are hungry. They had been following Jesus for three days. Three days! Jesus was worried they would faint on the way to get food. And so Jesus takes responsibility for them.

There are several teachings for us here. First is that Jesus takes responsibility for those who follow him. He has compassion on them, which is a good enough word, because it means “to suffer with”. Jesus sees their suffering, and he suffers simply by seeing theirs. “Compassion” however is only a translation of the word *Splanchnizomai*...a word that literally means “his guts hurt.”

This is good news. Jesus is God, and upon seeing the crowds stranded and hungry for following him, “*his guts hurt”*...*God’s guts hurt.* Throughout the whole Old Testament, God has mercy on his people. But his guts never hurt...because he didn’t have guts. He is the eternal God, knowing all thing, being in all things, but He is not identical with everything. God knows you, but he is not you. He is the creator, he holds creation together, but he is not His Creation.

But when the time was right, God came down from heaven and was born of a woman, born under the Law to redeem those who were under the Law. N**ot only did he *create* all flesh, but 2000 years ago *became* flesh and blood, blood and guts.** And when he saw the pathetic crowds his guts hurt. He saw with his own human eyes the crowds that were following him, without plans for their next meal and knowing they were stranded, his guts hurt because God is one of us.

Another teaching of this miracle is this: not only that God has become man for us; but also that ***this man, Jesus Christ, has come to be our God***. Of course Jesus is “*God of God, light of light, very God of very God, begotten, not made*.” He is God, but not everyone honors Him as God, or trusts him to be their God. In the First Commandment, God teaches “Y**ou shall have Me alone as your God.**” In this sense, *A god means that from which we are to expect all good and in which we are to take refuge in all distress*.” In that sense there are many gods...money, fame, friendships, drugs and alcohol, entertainment. But Jesus has come to be *our* God, the one from which we are to expect all good and in which we are to take refuge in all distress. He never casts out those who come to him. He never turns away the poor or the hungry or the needy, but feeds them, clothes them, shelters them in his wings lest they faint on the way to glory.

On the night of his last will and testament, he took bread, and having given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples and said “This is my body Given for you.” The four thousand that Jesus fed in a desolate place were satisfied. And at the Lord’s Supper, those who hunger and thirst for righteousness in this desolate world will be satisfied.

One of the most tragic scenes in the Scriptures, is the remorse of Judas Iscariot. He had taken thirty pieces of silver as a bribe to reveal Jesus to those who would arrest him. After the arrest, Judas was sorry for having betrayed Jesus and sold out innocent blood. He went back to the Chief Priests and tried to return the money. He even confesses that he shed innocent blood. Judas was seeking atonement, and the Chief Priests respond, “[So you shed innocent blood]…What does that have to do with us?”

Many hunger and thirst for righteousness. Religious leaders today give sanctified opinions; pious advice. The pharisees even have a type of righteousness that they offer, a righteousness of dead works which coddles the conscience a bit, but doesn’t love and doesn’t save. Only one person in the history of *ever*, ever provided a righteousness before God. ***Only one person offered himself, his body and blood, to feed your hunger and thirst for righteousness.*** Even here and now, his guts hurt in looking upon our sinful condition. And we who worship him as Lord and God, we who expect all good from him, take refuge in him, He will not send us away. He will feed us the forgiveness of sins and the righteousness that gives eternal life.