



Jesus: A Life: Week 7

Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand

Big Idea: Jesus always has time to meet us right where we are.

Read the Bible:

Luke 9:10-17

STUDY

*** Before interacting with this guide, all leaders should study the referenced texts using the HEAR Method. It's also important to encourage your group members to read the text using the HEAR Method. ***

H: Highlight, or take note of, things in the passage that stick out to you as you read.

E: Explain what the passage means by asking simple questions of the text:

- **Why was this written?**
- **To whom was it originally written?**
- **How does it fit with the verses before and after it?**
- **Why did the Holy Spirit include this passage in the book?**
- **What is He intending to communicate through this text?**

A: Apply the text to your life. What does God want you to learn from this text?

R: Respond to God in prayer.



¹⁰ On their return the apostles told him all that they had done. And he took them and withdrew apart to a town called Bethsaida. ¹¹ When the crowds learned it, they followed him, and he welcomed them and spoke to them of the kingdom of God and cured those who had need of healing. ¹² Now the day began to wear away, and the twelve came and said to him, “Send the crowd away to go into the surrounding villages and countryside to find lodging and get provisions, for we are here in a desolate place.” ¹³ But 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.” ¹⁴ For there were about five thousand men. And he said to his disciples, “Have them sit down in groups of about fifty each.” ¹⁵ And they did so, and had them all sit down. ¹⁶ And taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing over them. Then he broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples to set before the crowd. ¹⁷ And they all ate and were satisfied. And what was left over was picked up, twelve baskets of broken pieces. ¹

¹ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Lk 9:10–17.



Summary

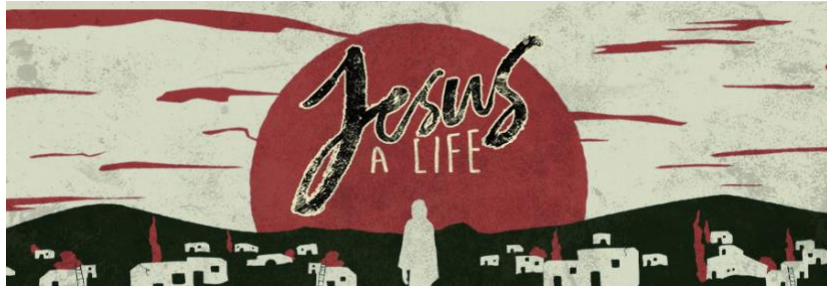
At this point in the book of Luke there isn't much we haven't seen Jesus do. So far he has: Calmed the storm. Raised the dead. Healed the sick. Caught a lot of fish. Truly, Jesus is a jack of all trades. Pretty much all that we've not seen him do is multiply the molecular structure of something. Well, that's next.

One common element in this story, keeping with Jesus' ministry, is the crowd. Here they are again asking a lot of Jesus. Jesus, the kind king minister to their need. All day long he loves on them and heals those who are sick. This goes on so long that the day is almost gone, and the people need to be sent away to get something to eat. The disciples insist that Jesus bring this day of ministry to a close and send the people away.

Jesus has other plans. He gathers what the disciples have, five loaves of bread and two fish. Then, he does something that legitimately is hard to understand. The sovereign king of the universe in all of his power multiplies the molecular structure of the food such that he fed 5,000 men.

We are truly reaching the end of available words to describe what Jesus is capable of. Healing the sick almost goes unnoticed, because of his great power put on display by feeding men with food when there was no food.

The point? Nothing is too big for Jesus, and Jesus is never too busy to meet you where you are.



Leading Your Group

Community Time

Start group by asking for Prayer requests and checking in on everyone.

Bible Study

***Have everyone in your group read assigned scripture before meeting. ***

Start Group by Reading Luke 9: 10-17

Major Lessons – (These are the “Lesson Points” in Class)

Point No. 1: Jesus Shows Us What True Compassion Is.

As we read this story, we have to believe that Jesus has done enough for these people. Surely, he can send them home to get their own food. Yet, Jesus is interested in meeting these people right where they are and loving them.

They are sick. He wants to heal them.

They need to know about the kingdom. He wants to teach them.

They are hungry. He wants to feed them.

It's striking that as we read about Christ he is never rushed. He is never in a hurry. His mission in every moment is the person before him. This is what it means to have real compassion. To see people and actually see them, to see what they need, to see what is going on in their lives.

How are you doing in showing compassion like Jesus does?



“Real compassion means you’re always interruptible.” - Nate Calvert

Discuss: Why do you think it’s so hard for us to take the time to show compassion to those in our lives?

Point No. 2: Jesus Is The One We Need.

There is a resource problem in this miracle. Namely, Jesus didn’t have any resources. Five loaves of bread for five thousand men. Those numbers don’t add up.

Part of what Luke wants us to see is that Jesus is not limited, ever. Jesus is not limited by anything. Jesus is never put into a tough position. Jesus is never in a situation beyond his power. We are talking about the God who can calm storms, raise the dead, and if need be, change molecular structures to his needs.

The point that Luke wants us to see is not simply that Jesus is powerful. Luke is trying to give us a complete picture of Jesus power so that we begin to see that no matter the situation in our lives Jesus should be the one that we turn to.

Marriage troubles? Jesus.

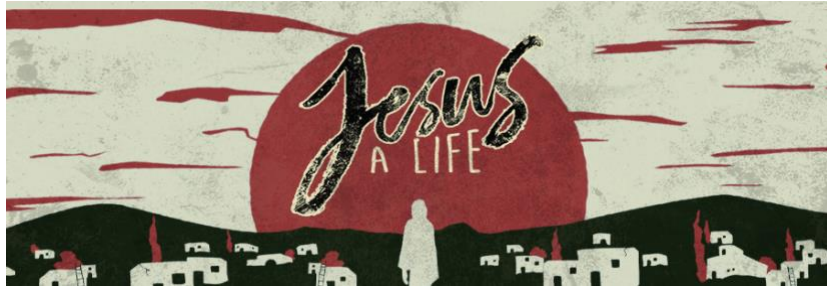
Financial troubles? Jesus.

Hunger? Jesus.

Cancer? Jesus.

Death? Jesus.

Discuss: Why are we so quick to turn to our own power at times when Jesus is the one we need?



Resources

Expositor's Bible Commentary

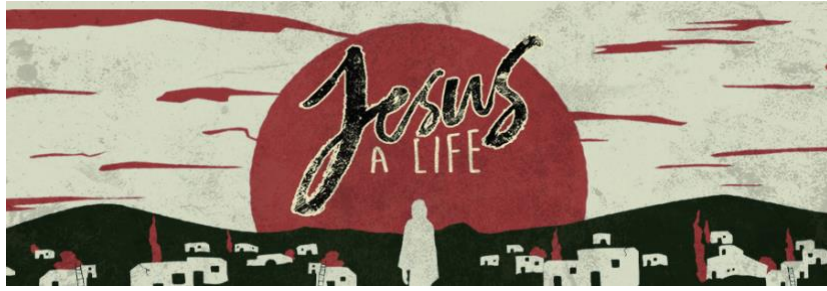
The fact that this miracle is in all four Gospels indicates its importance. Luke's account is sparse and straightforward, a little shorter than Mark's, though including some additional words (e.g., on the kingdom, v. 11).

10 The return of the disciples is the occasion for Jesus' withdrawal to Bethsaida (for the purpose of resting, according to Mark 6:31). This town was on the northeast side of the lake outside Herod's territory. Only Luke mentions its name.

11 The image of the shepherd in the parallels (Mark 6:34; cf. Matt 14:14) is here replaced by that of the Savior who "welcomed" (*apodexamenos*) all who came and told them about the kingdom. Thus even a time set aside for rest becomes an opportunity to fulfill the purpose expressed in Luke 4:43. As in Matthew 14:14, Luke mentions healings. He presents Jesus as having ministered to the total needs of people as he taught, healed, and fed those who came to him.

12–13 Each of the Synoptics records the disciples' unimaginative suggestion that the crowds be sent away to find their own food (v. 12; Matt 14:15; Mark 6:36) and Jesus' response, "You give them something to eat" (v. 13; Matt 14:16; Mark 6:37), putting the responsibility back on the disciples. The loaves (*artoi*) were a basic food, often eaten stuffed with fish (*ichthys*) from the Sea of Galilee.

14–17 The crowd was much greater than five thousand, since there were that many men (*andres*, v. 14), plus women and children (Matt 14:21). Luke briefly summarizes the miracle, showing the orderliness of the distribution, Jesus' thanks (v. 16, providing a lasting example for Christian table fellowship in the presence of God), and the adequacy of the food (v. 17). Luke's



description of the miracle does not direct attention to the Lord's Supper, though there are some common factors.²

Teacher's Bible Commentary

Revelations to Disciples (Luke 9:1–50)

The passage.—Chapter 9 begins with the mission of the twelve, which is really an extension of Jesus' own mission. It was a rapid tour of Jewish communities for the purpose of proclaiming the breaking in of the messianic age through preaching and miracles of healing.

This is followed by a series of incidents and teachings that revolve primarily around two of the principal themes of the Gospel: (1) who Jesus is, and (2) what it means to be a disciple. The great confession (vv. 18–27) and the transfiguration (vv. 28–36) are, of course, the crucial events that mark a real turning point in the ministry of Jesus. From this time he is less concerned with his public preaching and more concerned with teaching the inner circle of his followers about the meaning of his life and theirs in the light of his impending death.

Special points.—The twelve were commanded to “take nothing” (v. 3) when they set out on their preaching mission. They were to depend for food and shelter on the hospitality of the inhabitants of towns in which they preached. Some Jews returning to their homeland from Gentile country would shake the dust of the pagan lands from their feet. This act by the disciples (v. 5) symbolized that the city which rejected them was regarded as pagan.

Herod's question: “Who is this?” (v. 9) is really the primary question that the Gospels answer. An insight into the answer is given to the disciples by the feeding of the five thousand (vv. 10–17), the only miracle recorded in all Gospels. This miracle took place near Bethsaida, the capital of Philip's territory north of the Sea of Galilee. By feeding the people in the desert, Jesus showed that he was the prophet like Moses that God had promised to raise up (Deut. 18:15).

Peter recognized Jesus as God's Christ, or Messiah (9:20). But he did not understand that the Messiah was to suffer and die (v. 22). Nor did the disciples understand that they were also required to walk the way of the cross, if they were going to follow him (vv. 23–27). To be ashamed

² Walter L. Liefeld, [“Luke,”](#) in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Matthew, Mark, Luke*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, vol. 8 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1984), 921.



of Jesus (v. 26) meant to refuse to confess him for fear of persecution or hardship. Some early Christians did deny Jesus in times of testing, but others were faithful to death.

Verse 27 is difficult. To “see the kingdom” could refer to the end of the age, of course. But it may refer to some special manifestation of the kingdom’s power and glory in this age, such as the transfiguration or Pentecost.

The transfiguration (vv. 28–36) followed closely on Jesus’ Prediction of his death. It gave to the three disciples a glimpse of his deity and of the glory that awaited him beyond the cross. Moses and Elijah were both closely related to the messianic age in Jewish thought. The Messiah was to be a prophet like Moses: Elijah was to be his forerunner.

The power struggle among the disciples (v. 46) is almost inconceivable in light of Jesus’ teaching about the meaning of the cross. Jesus explained that greatness among his disciples was to be understood in terms of service to the little ones of the world (v. 48).

Truth for today.—The Greek word that we translate “disciple” means “learner.” This is a good definition if you are thinking about a disciple of some Jewish rabbi or Greek philosopher. But it falls far short of defining what Jesus meant by disciple. Primarily a disciple is one who follows him along the way of the cross. The path to glory for the disciple also leads through suffering and humiliation.

We have substituted beliefs about Jesus for commitment to follow him. You can believe certain things about Jesus without its costing you money, position, or prestige. But if you dare to follow Jesus, that is something else altogether! You may have to give up your job; or move to another country. You will have to cut across the grain of accepted social values and prejudices. It is much safer to believe in Jesus with the top of the head than to make the dangerous decision to follow him.³

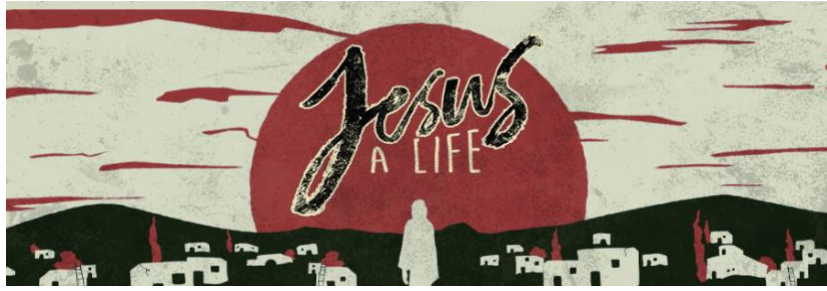
THE BIBLE PANORAMA

V 1–6: SENT The twelve disciples are empowered and sent by Jesus to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick. They obey His commission to go to the villages throughout the region. They travel light and leave if people reject the message. **V 7–9: SEE** Herod wants to see Jesus. He is perplexed because someone says that Jesus is John, risen from the dead, whereas others have

³ Malcolm O. Tolbert, “[Luke](#),” in *The Teacher’s Bible Commentary*, ed. H. Franklin Paschall and Herschel H. Hobbs (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1972), 646–647.



told him that He is Elijah or a prophet. Sadly Herod's seeking does not result from spiritual conviction of his sin. **V 10–11: SELFLESS** Jesus takes the returning disciples aside near Bethsaida, to be with them. However, when crowds come, He gives Himself selflessly and unstintingly to speaking to them and healing them. **V 12–17: SUSTENANCE** The amazing miracle follows of feeding 5,000 people from five loaves of bread and two fish. It blends Christ's compassion and divine power with good organisation and use of the disciples in the Lord's work. There is a lot more left over than there was to start with! We must never doubt Christ's power to sustain us in any situation where we trust Him. **V 18–22: SUFFERING** Peter correctly answers that Jesus is 'The Christ of God', in stark contrast to the other speculation that Jesus is John the Baptist, Elijah or a prophet risen from the dead. Jesus immediately warns His disciples that He must suffer, be put to death, and rise from the dead. **V 23–26: SHAME** Jesus goes on and teaches His disciples that they, too, must take up their cross to follow Him daily, as must any disciple of Christ. The Christian must crucify self, refuse sin and the overtures of the world, and live for Christ. Those who are ashamed of Jesus and His words will find that He will be ashamed of them at His second coming. **V 27–36: SUPREME** Jesus tells His disciples that some who are standing with Him will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God. About eight days later, He is transfigured in front of them and immediately focuses on His death to come. The sleepy disciples wake up to see His glory, in which He is shown to be supreme over Moses and Elijah (standing for the Old Testament law and prophets). God the Father declares from a cloud that His Son pleases Him and that all must hear Him. Jesus then remains as Moses and Elijah disappear. The disciples keep this amazing experience to themselves. **V 37–43a: SPIRIT** Jesus casts out an evil spirit from a man's son, after His disciples are unable to do so. The people are amazed at God's greatness and Jesus returns the renewed boy to his father. **V 43b–45: SPECIFIC** While everyone marvels, Jesus repeats to His disciples that He will be betrayed. They do not understand and dare not ask about it. **V 46–48: SIMPLICITY** An argument starts among the disciples about who will be the greatest. Jesus shows them the need for simplicity of spirit by placing a child in front of them to show them how a child reacts. Humility and childlikeness are required. **V 49–50: SUPPORT** Jesus warns against party spirit in His work and cause. Those who are not against Him and His disciples are with them. **V 51–56: SAMARIA** En route to Jerusalem, when a Samaritan village refuses to listen, James and John want to emulate Elijah in calling down fire on its inhabitants. Jesus turns, rebukes them, emphasises that He has come to save, and passes on to another village to teach. **V 57–62: SACRIFICE** Two people express a superficial desire to follow Jesus but 'first' have other matters to attend to. Jesus teaches that His disciples must sacrifice to follow the Lord. This must take



priority over all our desire for comfort and over all our family ties. The follower of Christ must look ahead, not dwell on the past.⁴

⁴ Gerard Chrispin, [*The Bible Panorama: Enjoying the Whole Bible with a Chapter-by-Chapter Guide*](#) (Leominster, UK: Day One Publications, 2005), 433–434.