

They Were Filled

- Today, the end of chapter five and the beginning of chapter six
- Jesus finishes His discussion with Jews that sought to kill Him
- And is followed up a mountain by a multitude of people that had seen His miracles
- He has harsh words of rebuke for these Jews who rejected Him and that which they knew from Old Testament scriptures
- But He takes compassionate action to help those that followed Him
- Let's begin in John five...

John 5:41-42

41 I receive not honour from men.

42 But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you.

- The service that occupied Jesus' time was not done to receive honor from men
- Many religious men honored Him not
- But He was able to speak with an unobstructed and accurate view of men's hearts
- And those He spoke with at this time had no love for God
- They certainly sought to appear to love God
- They wanted others to believe they loved God - particularly because of their fidelity to His law
- But the reality was very different
- In seeking to appear righteous and good and Godly before men, they forgot God
- Their pride interfered with their ability to see clearly what He said, to understand what He meant, and discern why He said it
- They were no longer seeking to honor Him, but went about seeking honor for themselves
- And Jesus confronts them with this harsh reality
- He clarifies...

John 5:43

43 I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.

- Jesus was sent by the God they no longer knew
- The details of His character and purposes were lost in their history
- Their religion was self-serving
- And they followed those who excelled in this self-service
- And Jesus says one of these prideful, arrogant teachers may come in the future and you would

embrace him

- He would justify your own self-righteousness, prolong and deepen your delusion that what you do is actually for the God of Israel
- But Jesus brought the truth...

John 5:44

44 How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?

- Religious people who reward one another for meaningless piety
- And pat each other on the back for their empty law-keeping gain nothing of eternal value
- Earning a reputation before man is useless
- Their words of affirmation, whether sincere or insincere are empty
- We ought to live by God's standard for God's glory
- We should seek to please Him because He is our God
- With love and humility and abundant gratitude, recognizing any obedience we achieve is due to His empowerment
- How could these Jews not know this?

John 5:45

45 Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust.

- They would persist in their disregard for Jesus
- His rebuke did not concern them
- But what of the rebuke of Moses?
- They would trace all of their religious tradition back to Him
- And yet, His words accused them
- Despite their citation of his law as a basis for their belief, they lived without properly understanding of it
- For all their scholarship, they missed (perhaps because of their pride), his references to their redeemer
- And Jesus makes this clear...

John 5:46-47

46 For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me.

47 But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?

- Moses wrote of Jesus beginning in Genesis 3:15...

“And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.”

- Further in Genesis 12:3...

“And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.”

- And more in Deuteronomy 18:15...

“The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken;”

- So, the man for which (outside of Abraham) they had the most regard, spoke of Jesus
- But they did not believe him
- And now that the Messiah stood before them, threatening to overthrow their man-centered religion, they had nothing but scorn
- This is a sad and cautionary tale
- It must prompt us to examine our own service
- Do we have a hint of self-righteousness?
- Why do we serve?
- Who do we serve?
- Who do we hope gains the honor when our service is done?
- Have we understood and are we obedient to the scriptures?
- Let's move on to chapter six...

John 6:1-2

1 After these things Jesus went over the sea of Galilee, which is the sea of Tiberias.

2 And a great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased.

- We'll get a representative number of the size of this multitude later in the text
- They follow because of His miracles
- And those are miracles He did for a reason
- To show His power as the Messiah, the Son of God
- And because of His compassion and care for people

- So, this was a legitimate reason for those to follow, to hear what He had to say

John 6:3-5

3 And Jesus went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples.

4 And the passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh.

5 When Jesus then lifted up his eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?

- As He and His disciples sat in the hill country on the eastern side of the sea of Galilee
- He looks out upon this great company
- No doubt He recognizes some responsibility, in that they are following Him
- According to the Gospel of Luke He "received them, and spake unto them of the kingdom of God, and healed them that had need of healing"
- And now they are in need of food
- The question to Philip is "where can we buy?"
- Clearly He intends to feed them
- We see that as we continue...

John 6:6-7

6 And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do.

7 Philip answered him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little.

- Jesus knew what He would do, but He still asked Philip
- One definition of this idea of "to prove" says: "to try, make trial of, test: for the purpose of ascertaining his quality, or what he thinks, or how he will behave himself"
- I wonder how often our Lord tested in this way?
- How often He tests us in this way?
- What will we say?
- How will we react?
- What are our qualities?
- This is a good kind of test, it reveals what is within - for the purpose of help
- And Philip has an answer
- But 200 denarii (perhaps) for each family just to have a little, was likely beyond their means
- If Jesus meant to feed this multitude, something else would need to be done
- The next two verses give us our first lead...

John 6:8-9

8 One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him,

9 There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?

- We can relate many a story from scripture that tells us God starts with very little, but does something big

- Take the man mentioned earlier, Moses

- When he was born, if it were up to Pharaoh, he would have been cast into the river

- Society, clearly, thought very little of him at that point

- And even after, by God's grace and intervention, He found himself living in Pharaoh's house

- He saw one of his Hebrew brethren being struck by his taskmaster

- And he killed and buried the offending Egyptian

- Then, again, his life was regarded as nothing, when Pharaoh sought to slay him for his crime

- Even after he had escaped to the back side of the desert, God found him just tending the flock of his father in law Jethro

- "And Moses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh?"

- And the answer was nobody

- God knew this, but simply said "I will be with thee"

- And so we have nothing here, just five barley loaves and two small fishes

- What are they?

- Nothing

- But Jesus is there...

John 6:10

10 And Jesus said, Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand.

- Here is Jesus, starting with this tiny lunch, and asking five thousand men, no doubt, plus women and children to sit down

- Anyone who would have glimpsed the meager starting point, saving those with eyes of faith, would have scoffed

- This is not enough

- No - but He is enough

- And He can make what He will enough for us...

John 6:11-12

11 And Jesus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would.

12 When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.

- These seem two very simple verses
- Not much different than your average meal
- The host gathers the food, He gives thanks, then He has servants distribute
- Simple
- But there is so much more
- This is a miracle
- This lunch cannot feed these thousands
- Just as Moses had no power to bring plagues upon Egypt, and had no power to part the Red Sea to escape Egypt's armies
- But God was with Him
- He was with this meal
- He did it
- That's why it says...

John 6:13

13 Therefore they gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten.

- I have no idea what the needs may be in this gathering
- If you have a prospect - a starting point - for any solution, it may be small
- So small, in fact, it seems hardly worth mentioning
- These loaves and fishes seemed too silly to mention
- But God can, and God does, make much of very little
- And this story is just one example

- It's not about the starting point
- It's about the God who holds that starting point in His hands
- Who has a plan to do something
- He wanted to feed the people in this account
- I don't know what He plans to do for us
- But He is able to perform it
- Because He is the Son of God...

John 6:14

14 Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world.

- It is not at all unusual that the men who witnessed this miracle recalled the scriptures
- It was the scripture the Jews should have recalled when they spoke with Jesus in chapter five
- He told them "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me."
- And they do
- Moses told them in Deuteronomy 18:15 (we read it earlier) "The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken;"
- Some did hear
- I hope we will hear what He is telling us today...

Christopher Harper, March 2021