LIFE BIBLE MINISTRY

Matthew 14 (Part 2) :13-21

Jesus feeds the 5,000

Pastor Paul LeBoutillier · April 18, 2026

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

Matthew chapter 14 last time we covered those of you that have really good memory might remember that we actually ended with the first half of verse 13 we got down and I just read the first part of verse 13 so we're gonna go back and read the whole verse let's read through verse 21 that kind of covers the story here it says when Jesus heard what had happened he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place and that's how we ended last week hearing of this the crowds followed him on foot from the towns and when Jesus landed and saw a large crowd he had compassion on them and healed their sick 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 Jesus replied they do not need to go away you give them something to eat we have only we have here only five loaves of bread and two fish they answered bring them here to me he said 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 and then he gave them to the disciples and the disciples gave them to the people and they all ate and were satisfied and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over and then we're told here that the number of those who ate was about five thousand men besides women and children let's stop there pray with me father God open our hearts to the ministry of your word and and use it Lord today to speak to us it's a it's a great story we're reading but many of us have heard it many times so help us Lord God not just to kind of check out thinking oh yeah I've heard this story but help us Lord just to really be open to your Holy Spirit today even if it's a truth that we've heard before help us Lord to apply it anew we ask it in Jesus name amen this is interesting because we come to a story now here in Matthew's gospel that is retold in all four of the gospel accounts and do you know that this is the only miracle that is retold in all four of the Gospels kind of makes you sound or makes you seem like the Holy Spirit really wanted us to hear this right and and see what it has to say for those of you who are taking notes today I'm going to be a share with you our three kind of topic headings that we're going to be looking at in these verses so take out your pen and write on something and here's we'll put them up on the screen so you can kind of jot them down but the first thing that we're going to cover and this is our heading is when people are a bother just jot that

down and then next write down accepting the challenge and then finally giving God my lack all right those are kind of the three headings that we'll cover and I'll explain each one of them so let's highlight the very first heading here and that is when people are a bother verse 13 if you look with me again in your Bible says this when Jesus heard what had happened he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place and it says hearing of this the crowds followed him on foot from the towns why did Jesus go off in the first place well he had heard about everything that was going on he heard about the fact that John the Baptist had been beheaded that that that Herod and many of the other people were speculating wildly that the ministry of Jesus was actually kind of a resurrected form of John coming back and doing these miracles and so forth Jesus heard all this and it says he began to withdraw but Luke actually gives us more insight as to why Jesus pulled away from the crowd I want you to remember something Jesus had just recently sent his disciples out to do ministry and they had just come back and in Luke's Gospel chapter 9 up on the screen here for you this is what it says it says when the Apostles returned and they came back from their time of being sent out they reported to Jesus what they had done and they took then it says he took them with him and they withdrew by themselves to a town called Bethsaida but the crowds learned about it and followed him this is Luke's version of what Matthew is also telling same event Luke tells us where they went and why they he he was pulling his disciples out of the fray out of the busyness because they just come back from ministry now Jesus wanted to kind of have some time alone with them so he could minister to them kind of like boy talk about a retreat huh with that you know I'd be a real retreat I'm going to go and get alone with Jesus you know but it didn't work because in both passages in fact in all of the passages that where this is told we are informed here that their little retreat didn't work look at verse 14 here in Matthew back in your Bible verse 14 says when Jesus landed and that means they came to the shore it says and he saw that huge crowd he had compassion on them and healed their sick now there's a couple of things I want you to know here the New King James version of the Bible says that Jesus was moved with compassion for the people and I I have come to learn that this word that is translated compassion is a very strong word it refers in fact to being stirred emotionally I mean to the depth of your being it doesn't just mean that Jesus looked at the people went oh these guys they need me come on I know we were gonna do a little retreat action but you know come on these people are here no no no he was stirred to the depth of his soul that's what the word says you know I was I started reading just before vacation I started reading the latest book by Jim Symbola great author pastors at church in New York and I forget the name of it right now but he tells them in in the first chapter of the book how he was his wife was away so he went to a little kind of restaurant that he likes to hang with and he was having his lunch and reading the New York Times and he was reading about believers in Pakistan and how they were being persecuted for their faith and that they were being tortured and dying of course this is a lot of this has

come to light with our brother Saeed Abedini who's in an Iranian prison but this was particularly in Pakistan well anyway he said in there reading this thing he's reading this article over lunch and the Holy Spirit just so moved upon his heart as he's reading this that he he had to like turn away because he felt like just bawling you know I mean there was just this emotional surge of compassion that was going through him and and and so forth and you know that's kind of what we're talking about here when Jesus saw the people when they got to the land and they and they and they looked upon all the people Jesus was overwhelmed with compassion for the people and that's what impresses me so much about this passage is the fact that Jesus responded to these people with so much love so much emotion even when they crashed his time they crashed his time alone with the boys they they they rained on his parade you know to use a strange sort of a euphemism no doubt the disciples really needed this time with Jesus you know I mean they've been they've been out doing things and Jesus wanted to touch bases with them on a personal intimate kind of a level and just minister to him and and help but there's people there's there's the people there and they're just like oh Jesus we want to you know touch me and and and instead of just kind of roll in his eyes you know which I'm ashamed to say I would probably do and just kind of going oh well boys here we go we're back on the clock I guess the people you know need need what's some some attention so here we go let's go take care of the ball babies no he was just he was moved he was moot all these people just and and and you have to appreciate that when the crowd kind of comes in and ruins your plans and it doesn't matter if it's a crowd it could be one person I I don't know how you react when your plans get messed up and when somebody needs you and you you know you made plans but I'll admit to you that sometimes I react rather badly but I recognize when that happens that I'm just being selfish really about my time and my plans and I want them for myself you know I want them for what I want them for and I forget that my time is his time and my plans need to be aligned with his plans I forget that too and I just kind of flesh out you know I just get very selfish and and I just want to have my time and sometimes you know isn't that just the case We become so possessive of the things the Lord gave us, whether it's our belongings or whether it's just our time. We become possessive about it and I don't want to share it. I don't want to share it with anybody, you know? And this is for me, this is my time. And you know, our culture is constantly encouraging us in this, you know?

It's your time. Yeah, how many times a day if you watch television or listen to the radio or, you know, whatever, do you hear people talking about how you deserve things? You deserve this. You deserve a break. You deserve a little comfort.

You deserve this chocolate. You deserve, which is true, but you deserve, you know, this stuff. And you deserve this because, yeah. And then we just, we're starting kind of like on our own. We carry that cry, you know?

It's like, man, I just, I really was looking forward to this. I deserve this time, you know? It's not your time. It's His time. It's His time.

People, it's His life. That life that you have, that breathing in your nostrils, the heart pumping and all, that's His. That belongs to Him. We get possessive of it. It's my time.

I'm going to do this. But it's His time. You know, I got to tell you something. I'm a little ashamed to admit this is the first time I've ever done it, but I'm excited to tell you that it went well. But on this vacation, and how the hell I got for a little intro?

Did you follow that all? Anyway, on this vacation, I prayed ahead of time and I said, Lord, make this about ministry, not about me. I've never done that before. I'm sorry to say that. That's the part where I'm ashamed.

Now, the part that's exciting is He answered it. And that was pretty sweet. We had several opportunities to minister. And sometimes it was in ways that you wouldn't expect and that sort of thing. But one of them was we were going through the badlands of South Dakota.

Anybody ever been through the badlands? Really? You need to go. One of the things Stu and I decided to do on this vacation, we've made this trip to Minnesota dozens of times. I don't know.

I haven't. I lost count. But we've never stopped to look at the sites and stuff like that. So we decided we were going to do that. We went through Montana first and we went through the Little Bighorn Battlefield Memorial.

That's pretty sweet. We came down into South Dakota. We went through the badlands. We then, on our way back, came through Wyoming and toured the Grand Teton Mountains. And that was pretty sweet too.

But while we were in the badlands, they have this loop that you drive through. It's about 35 miles long. And all along the way, there's these various little turnouts where you pull off and you can go out and read the information and look at the sites. And the badlands are beautiful in a weird kind of eerie sort of a way. But anyway, so we got to the very last turnout.

And we were pulling our travel trailer the whole time. And we had just gotten to the final turnout before you really get out of the badlands. And this little car with a Minnesota license plate came zooming in and I could tell the guy was leaving a trail of something behind him on the ground. I mean, some kind of liquid. And I'm kind of drawn to that anyway, to car things.

And so I got with the guy and we started looking under his car and it turned out he had sprung this leak in his transmission. And it was just pouring out. I mean, pouring out. I mean, he made this huge puddle, which I'm sure the park loved. But anyway, so I'm working with him and he's jacking up his car.

He wants to get under and see it. And I got some of my wood pieces to, you know, brace his car so it wouldn't fall off the jack. I thought for sure the guy was going to kill himself. And he's slithering in the oil and he's getting all messed up. And he's not going to be able to go anywhere.

His car is dead in the water. Well, Sue and I just, you know, we had our trailer with us and we were able to offer him some hot water and rags and towels to clean up. And then they had to wait about two and a half hours for AAA to get there to tow his vehicle. So we just, I put the slide out on our trailer and I cranked on the generators and turned on the air conditioning and we just had him in for dinner. And it was the coolest thing.

Turned out they were believers. And we just got to minister to them and just talk to them and speak into their lives. And can I just tell you that that's what made vacation cool? Sometimes vacation... I don't know, have you ever gotten back from vacation and it's so self-indulgent, you know, that you get back from vacation, you're kind of like, I don't know.

It's like you just had some kind of syrupy, sugary something. And it really sounded good at the time, but you ate it and then you're kind of like, yeah, yeah. It's kind of like that it can be that way because it's so all about me. I'm going to go on vacation and I'm going to get a rest. And, you know, it was just so cool to be able just to give away.

And I'm 55 years old the first time I've done it, so don't think that I'm virtuous, but it was cool. And I love this example that Jesus gives here of instead of saying, this is my time, this is my vacation, this is my retreat, this is all about me, this is all about us. When the people arrived, he said, all right, it's all about you. And that's the life of Christ. It's a kingdom principle that our lives, our ministries are all about those whom God puts in our path, you know?

The good works that he has prepared in advance for us to do. And it's what gives our life meaning. It's what gives our life purpose. It's what gives our life joy. You know, I have never had a better vacation than this last one where we decided, let's just minister.

Lord, just, you know, I want to minister. I want to minister to my family. I want to minister to the people we come in contact with and so forth. And so, and on and on. So, next on your notes, let's put the next point up on your notes.

This is accepting the challenge. Look now in your Bible with me again in verse 15, would you? Read in verse 15 and following, it says, this evening approach, the disciples came to him and said, this is a remote place. We're kind of out of the way here and it's already getting late. So, Jesus, why don't you send the crowds away so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food?

Jesus replied, they do not need to go away. You give them something to eat. Now, remember, we're told at the end of this section that Matthew tells us that there were 5,000 men. Don't take this bad ladies, but they didn't count the women and they didn't count the children. They were just there.

So, there were 5,000 men. We don't know how many people there were in total. Obviously, if there was a woman for every man, which, you know, there may or may not have been, I don't know. Maybe there was more women than there were men. And then you've got all the children.

Potentially, you know, if there was one child for every couple, I mean, just alone, then you've got 15,000 people. We don't know. All we know is it was a huge crowd. And even with modern sorts of means of feeding people, this would have been a monumental task to cater this kind of a crowd, you know? Do lunch.

Hey, we've got some fish and bread on the menu here today and so forth. But you try serving about 15,000 people at a time. It would have been a daunting task today. Obviously, back in those days, it was a virtual impossibility. Now, Jesus knew.

He knew going into it. They didn't have enough food. He knew that. He didn't say that because he was mistaken or he thought that there was a caterer who came along with several, you know, wagons full of food. He wasn't mistaken.

And yet, he said to his disciples, and that's interesting, he says, you give them something to eat. And it's an interesting sort of a statement where he challenges them. He doesn't just say, oh, I've got a trick up

my sleeve, so don't worry about it. He says, you, you give them something to eat. And the response that they gave him was exactly the response, I think, that he was looking for.

Even though they came back and they said, well, you know, we can't because we don't have it. Honestly, I believe that that is what he wanted them to say. I think that's what he needed them to say. We can't. We don't have the goods.

But see, this challenge that Jesus is giving them when he says, you give them something to eat, this isn't an empty one. In other words, Jesus didn't say this just to get them to admit their inability to feed the crowd. He said it to get them to accept the challenge of trusting him as the one who would provide for the people and had the ability to take care of that kind of a crowd. And that's the challenge of faith that we will all face at some point in our lives if we haven't already. It is the challenge to believe, to believe, you know, will you accept the challenge and say, I can't, but God can.

An easy thing for us to say sometimes because it hits us at the center of our ego, I suppose, to be faced with a situation where I have to admit, I can't do this, God. You're asking me to do this, but I can't. He knows. He knew that before he asked. He knew before he said to his disciples, you feed them.

He knew they couldn't do it. The challenge was to get their eyes off themselves and get their eyes onto him and to trust him to work it out. And then to walk that out by faith, that feeding of the people, which they eventually did. But I think that every single one of us needs to take, you know, uh, this, this idea, this understanding that we get from this story and really soak it into our hearts that, that, you know, God, God comes to us at these difficult moments and, and he challenges us to step up and to have faith in him. But he usually does it by, by kind of framing, uh, the challenge in a, in an impossible sort of a request, you know, do this.

I can't do that. I know. But are you going to trust me? See that's what I'm asking you to do. I'm asking you to live the life of faith.

I'm asking you to walk the walk of faith. I know that what I've just asked of you is too much. I know that I'm a reasonable person, you know, but will you trust me? You know, there's a passage in, in, in Mark's gospel that I think you and I ought to pin to our hearts. I'll put it up on the screen for you.

It goes like this. Jesus looked at them and said with man, this is impossible, but not with God. All things are possible with God. That's it. That's it right there.

See that's what he was trying to get them to come to. That's the reality. That's the challenge is to get you to see the situation from this dual perspective. You know, you and I are always clued in on what we can and can't do, aren't we? I mean, you don't have to go very far to understand what you can and what you can't do.

What we are challenged to do is to go on and think about, well, now what can God do? What can he do with this? I know that I'm, I'm empty. I can't do it, but that doesn't mean he can't. So whatever it may be, whatever you're facing right now, whatever you are personally facing in your life right now that God has you looking at and focusing on and so forth, and you're looking at it, and it's daunting, just like this challenge was.

And Jesus says to you, just like he said to them, don't send the people away, feed the people. I can't do that. I can't do that. No, no, I know, but will you trust me? What is the situation you're facing right now in your life, in your marriage, in your home?

Whatever it may be, maybe, you know, whatever, whatever it is, that's the challenge. And then our last point that we put up on the screen here is offering God my lack. Look with me here in your Bible in verse 17. Let's read again from verse 17 on. It says, we have here only five loaves of bread and two fish.

They're telling him, you know, what they, what their, their, their lack is. And he says, okay, bring them here to me. And he's, he said, and he directed the people to sit down on the grass and taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven. He gave thanks, broke the loaves, and he gave them to the disciples and the disciples gave them to the people and they all ate and were satisfied. And the disciples picked up 12 basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over.

And again, we're told the number of people there. Now, the amazing part of this story is that Jesus fed a multitude with just five loaves of bread and two fish. Quite obviously, that's not enough food to feed a multitude of people. How many thousands? We're not really sure.

It's lacking sufficiency. Five loaves and two fish, that's a lack. That's a lack. You know, it's funny, I had a new introduction of this word kind of brought into my life a number of years ago when I was on staff at a church up in Washington, but the church didn't have enough to pay me at first. And so, I was working outside the home doing whatever I could find to do.

I wasn't good at anything, but I was trying to be diligent to work anyway. And one of my friends owned a painting business, painting new construction. And so, he had incredible mercy on my life and he hired me to come and help him paint. And we'd be doing our thing, whatever we're painting or whatever,

and he'd come to me at the end of the day and he had this thing he would say to me. He'd say, what do you lack?

And what he meant was, what's left? What do you have left that's undone? And I had never heard that before. So, he comes to me, you know, and the first time he says, so, Paul, what do you lack? I thought he wanted to talk about the Lord.

I was like, well, I lack patience and sometimes I really lack courage. He kind of looked at me like, no, what do you have left to do in your job, the painting? Oh, yeah, I just got to go from here to there and I'm done. That's what he wanted to know. But anyway, what do you lack?

Doesn't that question seem to kind of come up in your life a lot? What do you lack? Yeah, just about everything. Thank you for asking. You know what I mean?

Just about everything. Jesus, when Jesus told his disciples to give the people something to eat, when he said to them, you don't have to send them away, you feed them. You know what he was doing? He was exposing their lack. And he does that in our lives, doesn't he?

He exposes. He wants to do that. Not to make us feel discouraged and depressed, but for other reasons, which we'll talk about here, which, in fact, is the point. In order for you and I to see the power of God in our lives, in our families, in our marriages, our homes, our children, whatever the situation, you and I have to see and acknowledge our own personal lack. And then we have to bring it to him.

And that's the most important element of this whole thing. He said, you know, what do we have? Well, we got five loaves of bread, two fish. Bring them to me. Bring them to me.

Oh, oh, therein, brothers and sisters in Jesus, lies the secret of the lack that you and I have in our lives. And don't you just recognize lack all the time, every day? I lack energy. I lack patience. I lack, you name it, fill in the blank, I lack it.

And God says, you know, I have an abundance. I know that you lack, but I have an abundance, so bring them to me. Bring them to me. Bring that lack to me. Let me take it.

Let me take it in my hands, and let me do with it what I'm going to do. Bring it here to me. You know, you and I must never, ever, ever, ever forget the words that Jesus spoke to the Apostle Paul when he was dealing with a lack in his own life, a physical lack. And I'll put it on the screen for you, but in 2 Corinthians, it says, that he said to me, my grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect where? Yeah, do you know what that's basically saying?

My power is made perfect in your lack. Where you lack, you know those areas you lack, all of them? That's where my power is made perfect. That's where my power is manifest. I don't just come to help.

I come to fill in the blanks. I come to complete the package, okay? But where does it happen? In your weakness. That's why Paul went on to write in this passage, he says, so you know what?

From this point onward, I'm going to actually brag about the areas where I lack. I'm going to brag about those areas. You know why? So that Christ's power will truly rest on my life. So it's like, you know, I talk about those all the time.

Lord, I lack. I'm lacking. You know, I'm lacking in patience. I'm lacking in courage. I'm lacking in faith.

I lack, I lack, I lack. And God says, yes, bring it to me, bring it to me. Don't just sit and wallow in it and go, I lack, I don't know what to do. Bring it. You know, the disciples could have sat there that day with those five loaves and just said, oh, we don't have enough, and just cried in their soup.

But Jesus said, bring it to me, and they did, and they handed their lack over to him, and that's what made the difference. And that's what's going to make the difference in your life too, in your home, your ministry, your marriage, your heart, whatever it may be. You know, if we would just humble ourselves before God and just be willing to say, Lord, I don't, I just don't have the goods, you know, all these things you asked me to do, I don't have the goods. I don't, I do not possess the goods, but you do. And so I'm going to bring you my lack today and I'm going to ask you to be the Lord of my lack Because you know what's Fascinating and wonderful and exciting about this story is that it ends with this weird sort of strange Statement about how much garbage they picked up You know and the people obviously weren't all that, you know careful about What they left behind and so in fact in another gospel passage Jesus even told the guys go pick everything up don't leave Don't we're not gonna waste anything, right?

And so they okay, so they went and got some baskets and they pick up and they got 12 basketfuls Leftover what they had to start with didn't even fill one basket and they ended up with 12 basketfuls at the end So what does that tell you and I about what happens when we bring our lack and put it in his hands? It becomes an abundance. It's a it's a simple thing you guys. It's a simple truth There's not nothing real deep about this, but it's something we need to hear Regularly, right? We need to hear this we need to be reminded that our lack becomes his abundance when we hand it over by faith and Trust in him and accept the challenge To walk by faith not by sight And that's the essence of this passage so Let's put our three headings back up on the screen one last time when people are a bother How you gonna react Lord, please

do that work in me of compassion, you know May my heart instead of being possessive and thinking that I deserve my time my alone time Help me Lord to just give my life away next accepting the challenge to Do what?

I know I don't have the goods to accomplish But to step out in faith and begin to believe that God is able and then thirdly Offering God my lack what I do lack that little that I have Which isn't enough to give it to him and let it become his abundance. Amen You