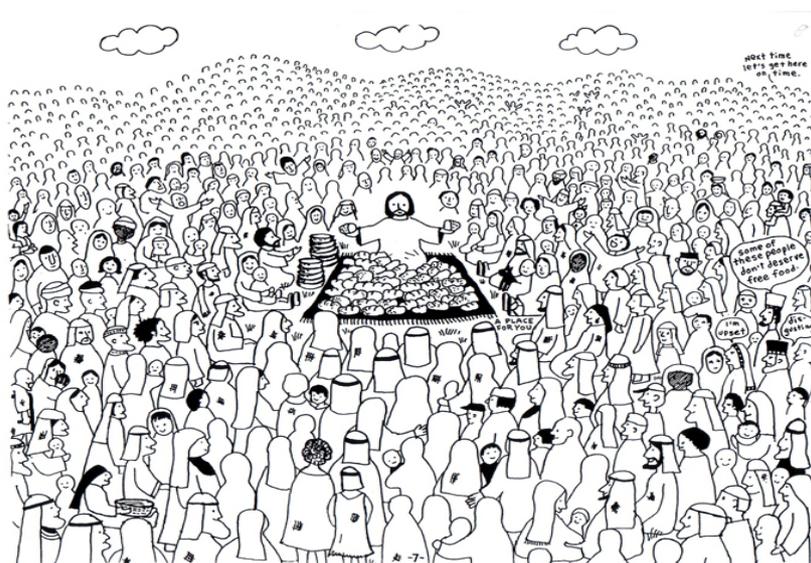


# Mark 6:30-44 “Lots Of Luscious Leftovers” Your Thoughts On The Feeding Of The 5000



On Sunday July 22 I asked you all some questions about the Bible story. The responses were so many that I could not print everything everyone said. I have attempted to print something from every response I received. Thank you everyone – and keep on reflecting!  
- Matt Thiele, Lead Pastor, Immanuel Lutheran Church.

## WHY DID JESUS CALL THEM TO THE DESERT?

Experts disagree on why Jesus said this. The Bible doesn't say why he did. Take some time to wonder about it! Was he teaching a lesson? Was he making a point?

The disciples “returned” from their mission trip with news of their work and news of a death: that Jesus’ second-cousin and friend John the Baptist had been executed. Jesus invited them all to ‘come away’ with him to a ‘deserted/desert place’. But something big was about to happen in that desert place. Why did he want them out there?

Where there is nothing, there is God.

Where is your “deserted place”?

So there were no distractions and they could reflect on what had happened.

To get them where there was no possible way of providing bread so he could feed them.

To settle them down a bit and get their ‘feet back on the ground’ after their mission trip and the exciting (and scary) news they brought back.

To be away from distraction.

He wanted them to be where they had nothing to rely on but him.

Scripture often highlights that Jesus would go to “a lonely place” (Luke 5:16) to pray. As he prayed the Father would have comforted and encouraged him with renewed strength. He wanted his disciples to share in the blessing of a “lonely/desolate place” with God. He wants me (and us) to do the same.

To recharge.

To trust him – in this trust they would be renewed.

Jesus was looking to bring them back to the place their forefathers roamed for 40 years before going into the promised land.

To dump the distractions.

To meet him for real.

Perhaps the disciples really did need to grieve the death of their friend John the Baptist. They may not have recognised this need, so Jesus took them away from it all to be able to have space for this important task.

### **WHY DID THE JESUS SAY “YOU FEED THEM?”**

Experts disagree on why Jesus said this. The Bible doesn't say why he did. Take some time to wonder about it! Was he teaching a lesson? Was he making a point?

To see what they would do?

To see what they would come up with. They had just come back from a ‘mission trip’ without taking food or money and it's strange that they wouldn't know now!

Perhaps Jesus was delegating to the disciples to ‘feed the body’ while he ‘fed the soul’.

When Jesus sent the disciples out “two by two” (Mark 6:7) he gave them authority to cast out evil spirits. Mark mentions a number of times the amazement of people who saw what was being done. So his request wasn't a stretch.

If Christ is in me, then there's “kingdom feeding” to be done. But do I trust in his presence and power enough to get on with it?

Help each other. We can do it!!!

Challenging them.

Jesus was testing the disciples' faith. It was not possible without a miracle to feed so many people.

Empowering them.

Perhaps Jesus was seeking a demonstration of faith from the disciples. Look what those men could do with God!

The “bystander effect” describes how people will all often assume someone else is dealing with a situation and stay bystanders. Perhaps Jesus here invites the disciples to not just be bystanders.

Hospitality mattered.

### **HOW WAS THIS BREAD IN THE DESERT LIKE HOLY COMMUNION?**

	Matthew 14:19b [Feeding 5000]	Matthew 26:26 [Last Supper]
TOOK	Taking the five loaves and the two fish ...	Jesus took bread,
GAVE THANKS	he gave thanks	gave thanks
BROKE BREAD	and broke the loaves	and broke it
GAVE IT	then he gave them to the disciples...	gave it to his disciples...

John’s Gospel (chapter 6) makes it clear that this had a lot to do with Holy Communion. Did he give those people a hint of something sacred?

Both are about creating community. People eating, talking, and sharing together. This is what communion is about too!

The bread sustained them physically – in the same way Jesus in our lives sustains us spiritually.

Perhaps as we have communion together we should remember that ‘all were satisfied’ and that as we have this together we are committing to not letting each other ‘go hungry’.

Both the miracle and Holy Communion consist in some faith in Jesus.

At this time Jesus would have been the only one who could foresee the (future) Sacrament of Holy Communion. Because Jesus always knew the big picture, what he said and did led to the ultimate gift of Holy Communion.

It refreshed and renewed people’s faith. It was available to all – is Holy Communion?

In each case, perhaps more than bread is shared!

Just as God sustained the people of Israel in the desert with Manna, God sustains, feeds, strengthens, and lives in us through the bread and wine of Holy Communion.

### **WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THE CROWD’S TRUST?**

Are you ever suspicious about the quality or source of food? These ancient Jews had laws about what to eat and how it was prepared. They had laws about cleaning before eating, cleaning utensils. They could not walk into the local Indian Restaurant and eat the curry! They could have asked how it was prepared, before they ate! It just says 'they all ate and were satisfied.'

Like in Holy Communion, nothing was required from the crowd other than to trust and receive. They only had to follow and trust.

They had faith that Jesus could perform the miracle and feed them. We can have faith that Jesus is our "Bread Of Life".

The crowd trusted Him unconditionally since the Holy Spirit was working in their hearts.

How many ate? If it was 5,000 "men" then the number must be 10,000 to 20,000 in total. No one really knows!

Their faith was restored and replenished.

This miracle "is beyond all understanding" – it must be of God!

They believed and trusted that which they could not understand or see. We don't know exactly how communion works, but we trust that Jesus gives it to us.

We are never too far gone for God to reach us!

Learn absolute faith!

I had never thought of this before... Perhaps Jesus' teaching prior to the feeding was so awe-inspiring that they were moved to totally trust.

Just trust!