

Beyond Prayer

Read [John 6:1-14](#)

The Feeding of the Five Thousand is one of the most famous miracles in the Bible. Jesus was ministering to a large crowd in a remote area where there was no food. He asked his disciples how they were going to feed such a large crowd. The Bible says he only asked this question to test them. He already knew what he was going to do.

One disciple said it would take eight months wages to buy enough food for all these people, which may not have been an exaggeration. You see, there were actually more than 5,000 people there. The “5,000” this miracle is known by refers to just the men who were present. There were also women and children there, the Bible says ([Matthew 14:21](#)).

Matthew 14:21 (NASB)

²¹ There were about five thousand men who ate, besides women and children.

Where you have 5,000 men, you probably have at least 5,000 women, and maybe another 10,000 kids. So there were likely some 20,000 people there. Eight months’ wages may not have fed them.

Another disciple pointed out that there was a boy present who had five loaves of bread and a couple of small fish, but how far could they go? Jesus was about to show him:

¹¹ Jesus then took the loaves, and having given thanks, He distributed to those who were seated; likewise also of the fish as much as they wanted.

¹² When they were filled, He said to His disciples, “Gather up the leftover fragments so that nothing will be lost.”

¹³ So they gathered them up, and filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves which were left over by those who had eaten.

¹⁴ Therefore when the people saw the sign which He had performed, they said, “This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world.”

[JOHN 6:11-14](#)

Jesus took the relatively small gift that was given to him, miraculously multiplied it, and met the large crowd’s need.

The Feeding of the Five Thousand is the only miracle from Jesus’ ministry that is recorded in all four Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Why is that significant? Because when God repeats a matter four times, he’s telling us: “This is important.” God is teaching this truth through this miracle: If we give to the Lord, he will multiply our gift, and meet the need. Very simple. Very profound.

This reveals that sometimes, when it comes to meeting a need, we need to do more than pray about it. There's an action we need to take first: giving. Jesus took what the boy gave him, multiplied the gift, and then met the need. Sometimes we need to go beyond prayer to giving to have our needs met.

Sadie Sieker was a house-parent for missionaries' children in the Philippines. Sadie loved books. Some she gladly loaned out, but others she treasured in a footlocker under her bed. One night she heard a faint gnawing sound. After a search, she found the noise was coming from the footlocker. She opened it and found an enormous pile of dust—all the books she'd kept for herself had been lost to termites.

Her story illustrates a Biblical truth: What we try to hold on to, we often lose. When we give, we receive. As [Proverbs 11:24](#) puts it: *One man gives freely, yet gains even more; another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty.*

Proverbs 11:24 (NASB)

²⁴ **“There is one who scatters, and yet increases all the more, And there is one who withholds what is justly due, and yet it results only in want.”**

Remember Pastor Garret Jaks from Mississippi: “Our church experienced the power of giving. We had searched for land for a church building for years with no success. Either the land was priced too high, or the developer wasn't selling to churches, or the land was out of our target area—too far for our people to drive. Land in the growing Phoenix area is always at a premium. We happened to be searching for land at a time when land values were increasing. We found nothing—for five years.

Then we had our “Journey to Joy” fund-raising campaign to raise money to buy land (should we find it) and construct a building. We asked the leaders in our church, pastor included, to give to the campaign first—to set an example to the members. We asked everyone to give a one-time cash offering, and then over the next three years to pledge what they could give on a monthly basis.

The most amazing thing happened after we took that offering. One piece of property after another began to open up for us. Property in our target area, property we could afford, and property in good locations. The major land developer in our area actually invited us into their office to look at their map and pick out the land we wanted. “A church can go anywhere,” the vice president said to us. We ended up purchasing our land from this company, and they sold it to us at a discounted price (because we were a church).”

There is a power in giving. Have you been asking God to meet a need? Perhaps there's an action he wants you to take first. Sometimes we have to go beyond prayer to giving to meet our needs.