

Transforming Daily
“ . . . you give them something to eat . . . ”
Luke 9:13

Many people want to focus on the miracle in this passage, and that's fine, but this was an exercise in faith for the disciples of Jesus. If you focus only on the miraculous feeding of the five thousand, then you will miss the bigger picture. You have to start with verses 1, 2, and 6.

Jesus gave his disciples authority and power to do ministry in His name for His purposes, and it worked (v.7-9). Jesus told His disciples not to take anything with them, but the bare necessities, and to overpower demons and cure diseases. By what power and means were the disciples to accomplish this? The disciples were to accomplish the task by the power and authority bestowed upon them by Jesus, nothing more and nothing less than Jesus.

I don't know about you, but I don't see much difference in the level of difficulty to heal the sick and cast out demons than to feed more than five thousand people with nothing more than five loaves and two fish (v.13). That was precisely the lesson that Jesus wanted to teach His disciples, and He emphasized it with 12 baskets of food left over (v.17). Read the text. The disciples come back all pumped up from healing the sick and overpowering demons, and while still in celebration mode, Jesus says feed those who have gathered to hear Me. What happened? The celebration of the disciples came to a screeching halt (don't miss this). They reply to Jesus' command by saying, "We have no more than . . ."

This is what I think happened to the disciples then and often happens to disciples now. Early in the chapter the disciples go out in the name of Jesus according to His power and authority. But somewhere in the midst of ministry and service, the assignment becomes theirs and somehow they misconstrue the success of the events to their own doing, by their own strength, and through their own understanding. So when Jesus asks the disciples to give just as they had been giving, they fail to do so, because unlike their first response to His command, this time they have a little experience under their belt.

As it turns out, somewhere along the line of the first experience a misperception arises, and it is through that misperception that they answer Jesus, "We have no more than . . ." What did the disciples have to give in the first assignment? They had no more to give in the first assignment than they did in the second. The difference was they were without hesitation ready to give in the first case, but by reasonable doubt unwilling to give in the second. In the first experience, they looked to Jesus for the success of the mission, and in the second experience they looked to themselves. Naturally the disciples of Jesus would respond, "We have no more than . . ." when Jesus commanded them, "you give them something to eat."