
A Year in the Word

A Year in the Word: Part 12

Small Group Questions: How to Feed a Hungry Crowd

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Read

Matthew 14:13–21 and 19:26; Mark 6:37; John 6:8–9; and Proverbs 17:17

Reflect

When Jesus learns of John the Baptist's beheading, he withdraws to a remote place by boat—but a crowd follows him there on foot. Rather than retreat or become angry, Jesus has compassion on them and heals their sick. Toward evening, the disciples suggest to Jesus that he disperse the crowd so they can head to the nearest villages to find food. But Jesus tells them they don't need to leave, and tasks the disciples with feeding everyone. They come up with only five loaves and two fish. Jesus gives thanks and breaks the bread, and gives it to the disciples to give to the people. Afterward, they collect 12 baskets of leftovers. Why is this miracle so important that it is the only one told in all four Gospels?

Pastor Greg offers us several lessons we can learn from a hungry mob:

1. Compassion will sometimes cause you to be inconvenienced because of the needs of the crowd.
 - a. What difficult situations have you or a loved one gone through that have made you more compassionate toward others?
 - i. How has your perspective changed?
 - ii. How do the causes you serve in and support relate to your personal experience?
 - b. What is your biggest stumbling block to viewing interruptions as opportunities?
2. A crisis will oftentimes compel you to jump to the wrong conclusions.
 - a. When have you come up with a flawed conclusion? What did you learn from it?
3. An impossible circumstance is an invitation from God to participate in a miracle.
 - a. What circumstance seems impossible for you right now?
 - i. Are you trying to solve the problem on your own?

Three things you should never underestimate in a crisis: (disciples missed these things)

1. Don't underestimate the abilities of the people around you.
 - a. Who were the disciples underestimating?
 - b. Who has God placed strategically in your life during a time of crisis?
2. Don't underestimate the potential of what you have in your own hands.
 - a. Describe something that started small and simple, but became part of something far-reaching and important?
3. Don't underestimate the power of God in your situation.
 - a. The disciples thought they couldn't possibly feed all the people, but they end up with lots of leftover food. How has God's best option differed from yours? How has he shown that he's right there with you? What is God trying to teach us through these situations?

Respond: Where is God leading you? How can your small group support you?