



## Part 6: Jesus and the Happy Meal | Pastor Joe Wittwer | July 18, 2010

### A. Fellowship Time (10-15 minutes)

1. Chitchat, perhaps offering coffee, tea, or a cold drink with some snacks.
2. Pray, or invite someone to pray, and open the discussion.

### B. Review Time (Read the summary below to the group: 5-10 minutes.)

**Introduction:** This summer, we are going through the Gospel of Mark in the New Testament. Today's story is about a huge outdoor picnic. In the story, Jesus taught the crowd and then fed them. [Read **Mark 6:30–44** together now.] They started with five loaves and two fish. John's gospel tells us that it was five small barley loaves—think buns—and two small fish—think sardines. John also tells us that these belonged to a boy. It was one boy's small sack lunch, like a Happy Meal. Jesus started with one boy's small sack lunch and fed 5000 men, not counting women and children, and there were 12 baskets of leftovers! The big question is "why did Jesus do it?" When the day grew late, and the crowd became hungry, what would we have suggested Jesus do? Send them home! The disciples' suggestion to "send them away" was entirely reasonable. It was the only practical, sensible thing to do. They were in a remote location, it was getting late, and the people were tired and hungry. And they were all within walking distance of home. No one was going to starve. No one was going to die. There was no emergency. So why did Jesus do it?

**1. Compassion.** It could be that Jesus fed them out of compassion. The Bible says that Jesus had compassion on the people and started teaching them. Maybe He fed them out of compassion as well. Later, in Mark 8, when Jesus fed the people again, He was motivated by compassion then. So it could be here too that Jesus fed the people out of compassion. Jesus cared that people were hungry, and it moved Him to do something. Jesus cares not only about our souls and spiritual life. He cares if we're hungry or sick or discouraged or in need. He feels compassion for us, and His compassion moves Him to care for us. We shouldn't be afraid to bring our physical needs to Jesus and seek His compassion. And we shouldn't be afraid to let compassion move us to feed the hungry or care for the needy. So it could be that Jesus did this out of compassion, but maybe it was something else.

**2. Training.** At this point in His life, Jesus was in training mode. He had just had the disciples out on their first preaching tour, and they had just returned and gone away with Jesus to rest and debrief. Jesus used this as a teaching moment. What were the lessons for the disciples and for us?

**A. You do it.** The disciples came to Jesus with a reasonable suggestion: send the people home to get something to eat. But Jesus shocked them by saying, "You do it. You feed them." This idea had never crossed their minds. Of course, they objected. It would cost too much! Lots of great ideas get squashed by this objection, but we should never let money stop us from doing what God wants us to do. Almost a billion people will go to bed hungry tonight and are drinking dirty water that is making them sick or killing them. Over 3 billion people are living on less than \$2 a day. When it comes to feeding the hungry, to providing clean water, to alleviating poverty, many people want to say to God, "Why don't you do something about that?" But God says, "Why don't you do it?" The world won't change as long as we think it's someone else's responsibility. Jesus doesn't expect any one of us to meet every need, but we can do something. But too often we, like the disciples, assume that it's not our responsibility, that someone else should do it, and we miss out on the opportunity to see God do something incredible through us. Jesus was training His disciples to take action and to believe that God could do something amazing through them when they did. Here's a second lesson:

**B. God can do a lot with a little.** Jesus took a lunch that was meant to feed one small boy and fed thousands with it. He was training His disciples to know that God isn't limited by what we have or who we are. Often we feel overwhelmed by the needs around us, and it's easy to

feel small and insignificant—because we are. But God wants us to know that He changes the world by taking our small gifts and doing big things with them. We may not have much faith, but God said that if we have faith the size of a mustard seed, we can move mountains. We may not have much money or strength, but God can do a lot with a little. Think back to our story. The disciples didn't have much, but what did they do? Three things.

**First, start with what you have.** Jesus asked the disciples, "What do you have?" It wasn't much, but it was something. When faced with difficult or challenging circumstances, we tend to think first of what we *don't* have. We don't have enough money, or knowledge, or people, or skill, or will. This was the disciples' default answer: we don't have enough to feed everyone. But Jesus didn't ask them what they didn't have. He asked them what they did have, because God can do a lot with a little. So we should start with what we have and not worry that it's not much.

**Second, bring it to Jesus.** Jesus asked, "What do you have?" The disciples said, "A Happy Meal." Jesus said, "Bring it to me." And then the fun started. A Happy Meal in Jesus' hands fed five thousand people. We should bring what we have to God and let the fun start. This is the adventure of being a Christian. Offering what we have—which isn't much—to Jesus, and seeing what He can do with it—which is a lot! We bring our lives, time, gifts, intelligence, and our determination to Jesus to see what He can do with it. He can do a lot with a little.

**Third, do what He says.** After they brought the Happy Meal to Jesus, He told them what to do next. Have the people sit in groups. Pass out the food. Pick up the leftovers. That's what Jesus told them to do—all pretty easy stuff and all very possible. And what did Jesus do? He prayed and thanked God, then He multiplied the food. He started giving them the food to distribute, and just kept giving and giving and giving. So Jesus did the miracle. Jesus asks us to do the possible, and He does the impossible. We simply do what He says, and let Him do a lot with a little. And there's one more lesson Jesus wanted them to learn:

**C. Jesus is God.** This, of course, is the big lesson. "Who is this?" they asked after He calmed the storm, and perhaps they asked it again after the feeding of the five thousand. This is no ordinary man. Jesus is God in the flesh, walking among us. And there is no predicting what He might do. The disciples didn't expect Him to calm the storm or raise Jairus' daughter from the dead, and they didn't expect Him to feed the crowd with a Happy Meal. They expected Him to behave like any other man, and He kept behaving like more than a man. They finally came to the conclusion that Jesus is God, and that He deserved their whole-hearted love, allegiance, and worship. Jesus is God. When we believe that, it changes everything. And when we start following Jesus, God will mess with our life! Walking with Jesus, we should expect the unexpected. We should live on the edge of our seats, wondering what He might do next, or ask us to do.

**C. Life Group Questions** (Select, revise, and add as desired: 20-40 minutes.)

1. As you think about Jesus and the compassion He has for the physical needs of the world, what seems to you to be the most crucial needs right now?
2. Do you feel Him calling you personally to act on any of those needs? What little resource could you offer up to Jesus for Him to multiply and use? What has prevented you from helping to meet the needs of others?
3. Brainstorm ideas about how you or your Life Group could make a difference. Refuse to let the potential cost stop you from considering an idea.
4. Share something unexpected that God has done or is doing in your life.

**D. Personal Application** (1-3 minutes)

This week, put one of your ideas into practice...at least start the ball rolling. List what you have that will help fill a particular need, pray about it, and do what God says to do.

**E. Prayer Time** (As a whole group or subgroups of 3-4; 10-15 minutes.)

- Thank God that He has chosen to use us to spread His compassion in our hurting world.
- Ask God to inspire and equip us to give whatever we have so He can multiply it and use it.
- Ask for His help in giving Jesus all of our love, allegiance and worship.