

Title: THREE VIEWS ON THE LOAVES AND FISH, MATTHEW 14:13-21
(Chatham, NJ; 07/31/11, AM) [E – Narrative Perspective]

Theme: Three people/groups look at the miracle of the loaves and fish, and we learn something from each one.

Purpose: To incorporate the different learning experiences of different perspectives: seek first the Kingdom of God, man does not live on bread alone, and believe in Jesus.

Introduction:

1. Jesus fed 5,000 and 4,000 people with a small amount of food.
2. Teaching and healing were involved each time.
3. Let's see what we can learn from different people who attended.
4. I'm going to blend the accounts together.

I. Same Event in Several Gospels

Mt. 14:13-21

- Originally an attempt to get away from the crowds
- Jesus tells the disciples to feed them
- Five loaves and two fish; no mention of the boy
- They sat on the grass
- They recovered 12 baskets of leftovers
- 5,000 men besides women and children – an army in the making?

Mark 6:32-44

- "He taught them many things." (34)
- Mentions a 200 denarii price for the food
- They sat on *green* grass

Luke 9:10-17

- Follows a comment about Herod without mentioning John's death
- Location of Bethsaida is given

John 6:1-15

- Jesus tests Philip
- Andrew finds the boy with the loaves and fish
- The people identify Jesus as "the prophet"
- They seek to make him king – they wanted the rebellion to begin

II. Participants and Their Perspectives

A. The boy with the food – call him Joey

1. He is at home after the day is over and he has brought home what he took.
2. He tells the story to his mother: the conversation was...
3. His father comes in; he has heard about the incident though he wasn't there.
4. The boy keeps thinking about what he saw and heard.

B. The boy's father – he can represent the crowd

1. His father is intrigued by the abundance of food even if he didn't want to be a part of an armed conflict with Rome.
2. He goes the next day to catch up with Jesus, John 6:24ff.
3. He hears Jesus speak instead about eternal food; not what he expected.
4. He leaves empty-handed, bewildered, and disappointed.

- C. Andrew and Philip – the disciples
 - 1. These two are mentioned.
 - 2. Jesus tests Philip.
 - 3. Andrew finds the boy with the food.
 - 4. We must wonder what they thought of the miracle.
 - 5. What might a conversation between these two have been like?
 - 6. They represent all of them.

III. What They Learned

- A. The boy
 - 1. What he left with was more than enough for many others thanks to Jesus.
 - 2. He had seen the healings and heard the teachings.
 - 3. Could he have learned that with Jesus all things are possible?
 - 4. How about give and you'll receive?
 - 5. How about a young boy who could not forget any of this...ever?
- B. His father
 - 1. He heard Jesus rebuke the crowd for seeking only material food, Jn. 6:26-27.
 - 2. This was no mild rebuke. "Don't work for food that spoils."
 - 3. Among those he addressed may have been these attitudes: those who spent all their waking moments seeking material goods (Mt. 6:31), those who know how to work the system, those who seem to think that life (and others, the government, civic or religious groups) should provide for them, and maybe even those who are envious of what others have.
 - 4. Even more, he challenges the materialist view that makes these things the highest priority.
 - 5. When Jesus speaks of bread from heaven giving life to the world, they say, "Give us this bread to eat," (34), like the woman at the well, "Give me this water so I won't have to keep coming here to draw water." (NOTE: modern conveniences for these things haven't made us better people)
 - 6. Jesus hit a nerve: they grumbled (41), they disputed (52), they couldn't listen anymore (60), and many left (66).
 - 7. Could his father have been one of them?
- C. The disciples
 - 1. When given the chance to leave, Peter spoke for them, "You have the words of life," (Jn. 6:68).
 - 2. More came later; Jesus warned about the leaven of the Pharisees, Mt. 16:6.
 - 3. Immediately they were concerned about bread (16:7), but Jesus was talking about teachings.
 - 4. This was a faith problem (8). They should have remembered that bread was not important since Jesus could provide that easily.
 - 5. He wanted them to see the deeper issues, things that bring eternal (not just temporal) life.

Conclusions:

- 1. "Seek first the Kingdom of God, and all these things will be added to you," (Mt. 6:33).
- 2. "Man does not live on bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God," (Mt. 4:4).
- 3. Believe in Jesus who is the bread of life.
- 4. Belief is not only an initial confession, it is a daily devotion.
- 5. Repentance and baptism follow, and a life consecrated to God follows from that.