

The Christ of Many Members

by G.W. North

Jesus used the miracle of the loaves and fishes to teach the apostles about the importance of serving others and the spiritual implications of giving and receiving.

Scripture: Matthew 14:19, Matthew 28:19-20, Mark 6:41, Luke 9:16, John 6:11, John 15:15, Acts 1:8, 1 Corinthians 11:24-26, Ephesians 4:12, 1 Peter 4:10

Topics: "Participation in Ministry", "Spiritual Lessons from Miracles"

Description

G.W. North emphasizes the significance of the miracle of feeding the multitudes, illustrating how Jesus involved His apostles in the act of feeding rather than performing it Himself. This act was not only a demonstration of His power but also a teaching moment for the disciples, showing them their role as co-workers in His ministry. The sequence of taking, blessing, breaking, and distributing the bread highlights the importance of participation in the work of God. North points out that while the miracle served as a lesson in faith and provision, its deeper spiritual implications would be revealed later during Communion. Ultimately, the event was designed to be an unforgettable lesson for the apostles about their mission and the nature of Christ's ministry.

Transcript

Observing the Lord's procedure and instruction during the administration of the miracle, we see how He used the occasion to teach us the very truth we need to learn about Communion. Reading through the four accounts, we find that the Lord insisted that the apostles themselves should feed the multitudes. It is clear from the very first that He had no intention of feeding them Himself; knowing they did not have the ability, He actually commanded the apostles themselves to do it. This was far beyond their resources, but John tells us 'He knew what He would do'. Jesus knew exactly the way He would use the situation, and had determined He would make it an absolutely unforgettable occasion for them all. His apostles would feed the people that day, as He said, and they would never forget how it was done, nor the lesson they learned.

The sequence of events leading to the discovery of the lad with the five loaves and two fishes is so well-known that we need not recount it. We will, however, detail the activities that followed upon the discovery: He took the bread, gave thanks, broke it, gave it to the disciples, and the disciples to the multitudes. That was the order of events by which the miracle was manifested. The Lord, according to His word, did not give the bread to the multitudes Himself. What He actually did was to give the bread to the disciples and the disciples with the bread in their hands to the multitudes.

The implications of His actions are perhaps very different from what we may at first have thought, and more amazing. The disciples did not break the bread themselves at that time, but could they have had prior knowledge, they would have learned a wondrous lesson from what they observed that day. By insisting that they give the broken bread to others, the Lord involved them in the act. In performing the miracle the Lord made them co-workers with Himself, and applied a basic principle of eternal truth to them and the multitudes. He could only go so far at that time though; He would teach them the greater spiritual implications of the miracle later, under far different circumstances. The Lord reserved the deepest meaning of the miracle to be learned privately by His own at the Communion. The miracle, though illustrating part of the truth, was still only anticipatory.

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