

Pleasant Valley
Church of Christ

3317 Amidon
Wichita KS 67204
(316) 838-4195
www.letjesusleadus.org

Schedule of Services

Sunday

Classes 9:30 am
Worship 10:30 am
Evening 6:00 pm

Wednesday

Classes 7:30 pm

The Pleasant Valley Church of Christ is a non-denominational group of believers who are committed to following Jesus in our attitudes, our relationships, and our worship. If you want the same thing in your life, please contact us. We'd like to help.

Unless otherwise noted, all scripture quotations are from the New King James Version Bible, Thomas Nelson Publishers.

Wings



*"But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles" (Isaiah 40:31)*

November 9, 2008

The feeding of the 5,000

by David King

"Then He commanded the multitudes to sit down on the grass. And He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke and gave the loaves to the disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitudes. So they all ate and were filled, and they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments that remained. Now those who had eaten were about five thousand men, besides women and children" (Matt. 14:19-21).

We call this miracle "the feeding of the 5,000," but that is a misnomer. As the last verse indicates, this figure does not include the women and children, so the actual number was probably well beyond the 5,000. Whatever the exact number, this was an extraordinary miracle. In fact, this is the only miracle of Jesus that is recorded in all four gospel accounts. That distinction suggests there was something unique about this one.

Take a few moments to consider the circumstances surrounding this miracle. First, look at the timing. John's account mentions that the feast of the Passover was drawing near (Jn. 6:4). So this miracle occurred exactly one year before the final Passover, when He was crucified. It marked the beginning of the end of His ministry and His life.

Look at the preceding chapters, and it is obvious that the wild enthusiasm that had accompanied Jesus' early ministry was beginning to wane. Although He still enjoyed a large following, others were beginning to tire of His enigmatic teaching (Matt. 13:53-58). His enemies were becoming more bold and confronta-

tional (Matt. 12:2, 14, 24). The ultimate blow came when Jesus received word that His cousin John the Baptist had been executed (Matt. 14:1-13). It was in response to that news that Jesus took His apostles into a remote area to "rest a while" (Mk. 6:31).

Finally, look at the outcome of this miracle, recorded only by John. The crowd wanted to make Jesus their King, but He declined their demand and went away (Jn. 6:15). The multitude followed Him, seeking at least more free meals. When Jesus refused to deliver, they lost interest. "From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more" (Jn. 6:66). Jesus was left with only a handful of followers. Scholars call this event the collapse of Jesus' Galilean campaign. It was the turning point that eventually led to His death.

With that background, take a closer look at the miracle itself. Despite His own personal disappointments and His desire to get away from the crowds, Jesus could not turn His back on them. He "was moved with compassion for them" (Mk. 6:34), so He taught them, healed them, and fed them. More significantly, He challenged His apostles to feed them: "You give them something to eat" (Matt. 14:16). It was an impossible task — but Jesus made it possible: He "gave the loaves to the disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitudes" (v. 19).

There is a simple lesson here for disciples of Jesus today. Despite our disappointments and doubts, we can be instruments of God's grace to the world. We just need to do what He asks us to do, and great things will follow.