

## Daily Readings

**Please note:** In a culture of scarcity, these passages show us the God of abundance that provides for us in our hour of need. The Study Guide readings allow you to dig deeper.

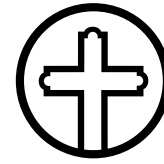
**Monday, October 20** – Read Mark 6:32-44; Matthew 14:13-21; Luke 9:11-17. These passages from Matthew, Mark and Luke share the story of Jesus' feeding of the multitudes. How do these stories differ from the gospel of John? How do these stories differ from each other? Why do you think they are different?

**Tuesday, October 21** – Read Exodus 16:1-21. This is the story of the provision by God of manna and quail for the Hebrews. They have lost their faith as we hear in verse 3, **"The Israelites said, 'If only we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots and ate our fill of bread; for you brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.'"** How is our response to the "hard times" like the response of the Hebrews? Do you believe God will provide in every circumstance? Have you seen the provision of God in your life?

**Wednesday, October 22** – Read II Kings 4: 42-44. In this story from II Kings, we see the prophet Elisha multiplying corn and bread for 100 hungry men. The word from God was all that was needed to multiply the food. What is needed in our lives today? How can we experience abundance in a culture of scarcity?

**Thursday, October 23** – Read Mark 8:27-30. Jesus asked his disciples, **"Who do people say that I am?"** His disciples answer, **"John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets."** Then Jesus asked them, **"But who do you say that I am?"** And the disciple Peter answers, **"You are the Christ, the Holy one of God."** If you were to answer these two questions today, what would your answer be?

**Friday, October 24** – Read Psalm 104. The Psalmist praises God's care of all creation. Read this passage in the morning and evening today. How does God provide for you? Are you blocking God or encouraging God's blessings in your life? Does your attitude invite God to be generous on your behalf?



TRIETSCH

**October 19, 2008**  
**Study Guide & Daily Readings**

## Fields of Gold Week 2 of 3 "Let It Rain"

### **John 6:1-15**

**Some time after this, Jesus crossed to the far shore of the Sea of Galilee (that is, the Sea of Tiberius), and a great crowd of people followed him because they saw the miraculous signs he had performed on the sick. Then Jesus went up on a mountainside and sat down with his disciples. The Jewish Passover Feast was near.**

**When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?" He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do.**

**Philip answered him, "Eight months' wages would not buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!"**

**Another of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, spoke up, "Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?"**

**Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." There was plenty of grass in that place, and the men sat down, about five thousand of them. Jesus then took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed to those who were seated as much as they wanted. He did the same with the fish.**

**When they had all had enough to eat, he said to his disciples, "Gather the pieces that are left over. Let nothing be wasted." So they gathered them and filled twelve baskets with the pieces of the five barley loaves left over by those who had eaten.**

**After the people saw the miraculous sign that Jesus did, they began to say, "Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world." Jesus, knowing that they intended to come and make him king by force, withdrew again to a mountain by himself.**

The Word from the Bible New Revised Standard Version

### **John 15:1-15**

The miracle of the feeding of the five thousand is shared in different forms in the Synoptic Gospels (Mark 6:32-44; Matthew 14:13-21; Luke 9:11-17). In John's account, we see the appearance of Phillip and Andrew, two disciples who are almost absent in the other gospels.

The moral of the story is that the disciples do not yet believe that Jesus can satisfy the needs of so great a multitude from so small an offering. But the unnamed lad who gives his lunch represents everyone who gives what they have, without reservation, into Jesus' hands, that He may make it serve many. The extravagance of Jesus' miracle is seen in the excess of leftovers that are

collected in **twelve baskets** — one for each disciple.

The **feeding of the five thousand** in all the gospels is a decisive conclusion to Jesus' Galilean ministry. The people recognize the sign, but they misinterpret it. They wish to make him a **king**. But Jesus' "**kingship is not of this world**" (18:36)

The fact that all four gospel writers include this passage in their writings is significant. Most assume that this story struck a cord with the early followers about the providence of God through Christ. God can use our humanity to accomplish God's work. We are to give freely so that the abundance of God's harvest can come forth.

## ***The "I Am" Sayings***

For John, the story is a literal expression of Jesus saying, "**I am the bread of life.**" As Jesus feeds the multitude, He provides for his disciples another sign of his divinity; He further shows that He is Lord of **ALL** life. He calms the storm, walks on water, turns water in to wine, heals the sick, cast out demons, and provides food for the hungry. John also knows that the physical Lordship of Jesus is only the beginning. Not only is He Lord over the physical creation, but more importantly, Lord over all that is spiritual. Thus, when the people try to crown him king, He refuses.

John knows that Jesus' purpose must not be limited to the physical things of this world. For this gospel writer, the identity of Jesus is more clearly seen in the eight "I am" saying of Jesus recorded in the gospel of John.

Jesus said, "**I am the bread of life. He who comes to me shall never hunger, and he who believes in me shall never thirst.**" (John 6:35, 41, 51)

Jesus said, "**I am the light of the world. He who follows me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.**" (John 8:12, 9:5; 12:46)

Jesus said, "**I am the door, If anyone enters by me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.**" (John 10:7-9).

Jesus said, "**I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep.**" (John 10:11, 14)

Jesus said, "**I am the Son of God.**" (John 10:36)

Jesus said, "**I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in me shall never die.**" (John 11:25, 26)

Jesus said, "**I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.**" (John 14:6)

Jesus said, "**I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without me you can do nothing.**" (John 15:1, 5)

## ***Other Miracle Stories in the Gospel of John***

John records other miracles performed by Jesus. Each of these gives us insight into the full nature of Jesus purpose and ministry. The miracles are: changing water to wine (2:1-11), healing of the nobleman's son (4:43-54), healing the paralyzed man (5:1-9), feeding the five thousand (6:1-15), walking on water (6:16-21), healing the blind man (9:1-12), raising Lazarus from the dead (11:38-44), and the miraculous catching of fish (21:1-6).

## ***Discussion Questions***

- With which character in the story do you most identify? Andrew, the disciple who brought the boy to Jesus? Phillip, the disciple who was counting the cost? The unidentified boy who was willing to share?

- If you were in a similar situation, would you be willing to share your lunch? Do you believe it would make a difference?

- In your giving, do you worry about how it will be used? Does this inhibit your growth in generosity?

- When you see other's generosity, does it inspire you to give?

- Do you believe Jesus can use your resources to do great things?

- Does your giving really matter?

- The gospels point out Jesus use and comments on two meager gifts. No other gifts are really mentioned. The widow's mite and boy's lunch in the story of the feeding of the five thousand. Jesus speaks of the widow's mite as the largest gift given on that Sabbath day and uses the boy's lunch to feed a multitude. With this in mind, why do we question our gifts?

- In the book *Fields of Gold*, by Andy Stanley, he talks about the four P's of giving. How do the four Ps of giving (priority giving, percentage giving, progressive giving and prompted giving) encourage us to be generous in all areas of our being (heart, mind, strength and soul)?