

Friday, 4 July 2025

Jesus the Provider and King

John 6:1-15

Introduction

Has anyone ever visited an all-you-can-eat buffet-style restaurant?

When you go to an all-you-can-eat buffet, there is an excess of options, you tend to overindulge, and the food is plentiful.

Sometimes we see abundance and think it means excess—piling on more than we need. But in John 6, Jesus shows us that *God's abundance is different*. It's not about overindulgence—it's about *providing more than enough* for everyone, even starting with just five loaves and two fish. God's math is always miraculous, especially when generosity, trust, and gratitude are involved.

Context

The feeding of the five thousand is a remarkable miracle for many reasons. One is just the simple fact that it is the only miracle, other than Jesus' resurrection, that is mentioned in all four gospels. It was so memorable, so important and life-changing that all the authors of the gospel had to include it in their eyewitness accounts.

Tell the Story

Let's just remind ourselves of what we have read.

Jesus has crossed the Sea of Galilee, and the vast crowds have followed him.

Verse 3 points out that Jesus went up a mountain, presumably to a place well-known, as this is around his hometown. And why does he go up there? To be with his disciples, so he can benefit from their company and teach them.

As this great crowd approached, Jesus saw an opportunity to teach and probed with a question. Philip is asked, '*Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?*'. He asks this to test Philip.

It's important we see that little point, isn't it? Jesus tests Philip. Often we are tested in different ways, aren't we?

Philip's response is logical to the testing question from Jesus. We can't do it.

Then, Andrew steps forward. He brings a boy's supper, and the boy gives five loaves and two small fish. 'But how far will they go among so many?'

From there, Jesus takes over, he gets the disciples to organise the people, prays for the food and distributes it for everyone to eat as much as they want, with 12 baskets of extra food collected after.

This miracle takes what is small, uses it to satisfy and then shows an overflow of abundant provision for all people.

The crowd then respond with intent to make Jesus King, all for the wrong reasons and Jesus retreats.

This morning, I hope to lead you through three areas of consideration. Firstly, what can we learn from some 'Lessons for the Disciples'? Then we must focus on the miracle itself, looking at how it is an abundant miracle of provision. And lastly, I hope that we can ask ourselves, 'How do we see Jesus?'

Lessons for the Disciples

How do you best learn? - Many of you are or have been involved in education, and I'm sure you're well aware of the different learning types.

Jesus uses an apprentice model to teach the disciples. He has moments of verbal teaching, such as telling parables or sermons. But more often than not, he uses practical examples and puts his disciples in the field to learn on the job.

So, where do the disciples learn?

Verses 5 to 9 show us Jesus' interaction with the disciples and point out to us something that they learn and, in turn, we can learn from.

This interaction with Philip and Andrew is a highlight for us. Why are these two highlighted here? Why does Jesus direct this test toward Philip?

Well, who was Philip? Philip was most likely a fisherman; he had an association with Peter and Andrew, and he was from the same area and hometown, as shown to us in John 1:44.

Philip is a rather analytical, careful man; he is a dedicated Jew and knows the scriptures well. John 1:43-45 points out to us that Philip immediately followed Jesus when he called him, and he got his friend, Nathanael, to join as well.

So Jesus tests Philip, really, to show all the disciples a flaw in their faith.

Jesus says, 'Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?'

Philip responds with logical reasoning. 'It would take more than half a year's wages to buy enough bread for each one to have a bite.'

Philip's response isn't so much faithless, it's faith-limited.

Do you ever find yourself in that position? You have faith in a situation, we know God can do something, he is going to provide an answer, but only within the boundaries we put on what he could actually achieve.

Andrew then takes a different approach. Andrew is the brother of Peter. Peter is big, bold, and probably one of the most famous disciples.

John MacArthur says this of Andrew, *"Andrew is the picture of all those who labour quietly in humble places... He didn't preach to multitudes, but he brought one—Peter—and Peter brought thousands."*

Andrew took action quietly but effectively; he is the one who brought Peter to Jesus. Although quiet, he action has been effective.

Philip looks at what stops the issue from being solved, and Andrew looks to find the little things that may help.

‘Five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?’

He isn't sure how Jesus could use this small offering, but he still brings it. He represents people who are faithful in small things.

The disciples all learn from this interaction. Stop boxing God in and instead bring the little you have.

What we can say the disciples' credit is that despite their lack of understanding and different personalities, they all serve.

Jesus says Have the people sit down. They organise that. They distributed the loaves. They then collected all the leftover pieces in the baskets.

So whatever your learning type, however you work and take action, whether you are a faith-pessimist, a faith-realist or a faith-optimist. You can serve God. In small ways and big, we are all part of God's purpose in this world.

An Abundant Miracle of Provision

Verses 10 to 13 take our focus away from the disciples and to the miracle that Jesus has had planned for this moment.

I wonder if you've heard of George Müller. He was a Christian Evangelist in the 1800s and was one of the founders of the Plymouth Brethren movement.

George Müller ran orphanages that cared for over 10,000 children—all without ever asking anyone directly for money. He simply prayed.

One morning, the house mother of the orphanage came to George Müller and said, “The children are dressed and ready for school. But there is no food for them to eat. “Müller responded, “Take the 300 children into the dining room and have them sit at the tables.” Then he prayed, thanking God for the food, even though none was in sight. Just as he finished praying, a knock came at the door. It was the baker. “Mr. Müller,” he said, “last night I couldn’t sleep. Somehow, I knew you would need bread this morning. So I got up at 2 a.m. and baked three batches for you. I’ll bring it in.” Moments later, another knock. It was the milkman. His cart had broken down in front of the orphanage. The milk would spoil. Could they use it?

God provided greatly for the needs of those orphans. He provided all that was needed physically,

But the miracle in the feeding of the 5000 isn't seen in just providing enough, is it, it's found in a provision of abundance.

Andrew has presented this small offering of five loaves and a couple of fish, and what does Jesus do? He shows everyone that, if we take the little that we do have to God, he will use it in mighty ways.

Verse 11 says ‘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.’

We’ve taught our girls to give thanks before a meal. What’s great here is that Jesus gives thanks for the little that is offered, not for the abundance of provision that is to come. God rejoices when we bring the little we have to him.

We should regularly give thanks in our lives. One, so that we remain thankful for what God has blessed us with, but also so that we remember that even the little we do have can be used to serve God.

The real beauty in this miracle is seen in the fact that God take what is little, insignificant in the world and uses it 10-fold.

Philip’s logic is surprisingly logical, isn’t it? You will never feed all these people. Andrew’s actions mean the ball starts rolling; he brings 5 loaves and 2 fish. Jesus prays, then places the offering and the problem in front of God the Father, leading to the miraculous.

But the miracle continues to grow. Not only does it offer some food, it offers enough for everyone to have their fill; they are full, they are satisfied with what has been provided for them. Amazing, thank you, Jesus.

But once more, it doesn’t stop there, does it? The disciples start the clear up, 12 baskets full, overflowing, with what is left, none of it to be wasted.

You see the promise here, a promise for all people, that being in relationship and submitting your life to Jesus, won’t just give you a top-up meal, but it will satisfy you. But beyond that, it won’t just satisfy, it will completely fill you, and then it won’t just fill you, it overflows to be an abundant blessing.

Have you ever found something in life to not as satisfying as you might have anticipated?

I remember when I was young, saving up to buy a new game for my laptop. I remember washing the car, doing jobs to earn a few pounds to have enough. I remember going to the shop to buy the game, getting home, loading it up, bursting with excitement, playing it for the first time and then, within minutes, I just had the feeling, oh it’s a nice game, but I’m already unsatisfied with it.

I’m sure everyone has had that feeling, something might be nice, a new phone, car, holiday, even a house, but it doesn’t bring long-lasting satisfaction?

Tom Brady is probably the greatest NFL player of all time; he has had the ultimate success and achievement in the sport. But he said this in an interview in 2005.

“Why do I have three Super Bowl rings and still think there’s something greater out there for me? I mean, maybe a lot of people would say, ‘Hey man, this is what it is.’ I reached my goal, my dream, my life. Me, I think: God, it’s gotta be more than this.”

Even the pinnacle of sport of physical achievement doesn’t bring satisfaction.

What does satisfaction in life look like, then?

Well, our lives are pretty comfortable, aren't they? We probably feel we don't need God's intervention to have food on the table, health, family, and a home.

What satisfaction can this miracle be teaching us about, then?

Well, this miracle is setting up Jesus' next section of teaching. And I just want to point us toward one verse out to us.

John 6:35 says, *"Then Jesus declared, 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.'"*

Jesus is saying, when you are hungry or thirsty, food or drink satisfies. But that satisfaction doesn't last; soon you'll need another meal or another drink. Its satisfaction is momentary.

That is what things of this world offer you, momentary satisfaction, that doesn't last.

But Jesus promises that true satisfaction is found in him, food and drink that satisfy forever.

Because the only way to enjoy true satisfaction in life now and life eternal is to be found with the one who provides everlasting satisfaction.

Imagine a glove. It has a material lining, five finger slots, and a clear design that shows it was made for something—gripping, protecting, working. You can look at it and see its potential. But no matter how well it's made, the glove is lifeless and inactive until a hand fills it. Only then can it fulfil its true purpose.

In the same way, our lives were created with purpose—but that purpose isn't fully realised until God is living within us. Without Him, life may look functional on the outside, but it lacks the fullness it was meant to have. When God dwells in us, we begin to live out the reason we were created: to walk in relationship with the One who designed us, and in doing so, we find true meaning and satisfaction.

How do you see Jesus? (v14-15)

And here is the challenge, really, verses 14 and 15, we see that the crowds want Jesus to be King.

Jesus retreats, knowing they intend to make him King so that he can keep performing miracles and give them physical things that will satisfy them.

Sam, Will and Rebecca have all stood up this morning and shared their testimonies. Their story of how they have come to put Jesus as King in their lives.

Not because they want more stuff from Jesus, but because they have seen Jesus' claims as true, that satisfaction is found in him and that he has saved them.

The invitation of the Bible is to see Jesus as King. And it's to know the Good News that this great King brings to all people.

The Good news is this. That God created all things, the world, you and me.

Humans have sinned, as the Bible calls it, it's just the truth that all of us have done wrong things in our lives. This means our relationship with God is broken.

Jesus came into this world, was born in human form, lived a perfect life, died on the cross, in our place. So he took all the bad stuff upon himself and made us blameless. Like a judge in a court wiping away our sentence and accepting the jail time for himself.

This give us the chance to believe in Jesus, make him king of our life and find fullness and satisfaction in him, in this world and most importantly in eternity.

And the question they have had to answer, and everyone here has to answer. Are you going to make Jesus King? Because his promise is a life is satisfaction. Not that it'll be easy, not that it'll leave you wealthy or in good material position, in fact, it often does the opposite.

But through all the ups and downs of life that there is a satisfaction that only Jesus can fill. That's his promise. That he is the bread of life that satisfies for all eternity.

I'm sure most of you will have seen the news of Diogo Jota's death recently. He was 28, just married, with three kids, in the prime of a Premier League football career. He is just a visible example of the reality that life is short and can be gone in an instant.

The reality is Jesus' message says, the world won't satisfy, I will, are you going to come to me.

Application

Let me just leave you with a few points to reflect upon as we finish.

Firstly, for those here who know Jesus already. The disciples have a great variety of personalities and characteristics. But they all serve. Whether you're a realist, optimist, or pessimistic, use the character that God has given you to serve him, through your flaws and despite them. Faithfully bring the little you have, and God will use it in great ways.

Secondly, trust in God's abundant provision. That's the promise shown to us in this miracle. God will bless us abundantly and bring great fullness to us. Not in worldly possession but in spiritual treasures. Do you, as a believer, need reminding that Jesus promises fullness of life? It's so easy to rely upon my own way of doing things, readjust, realign and place Jesus in his rightful place.

And lastly, who are you going to make king of your life?

Jesus promises satisfaction. Maybe you've never considered Jesus, maybe you've walked through life for a long time with nice things, but have ultimately never felt satisfied. Well, come to Jesus, let him show you life and life to the full.