

Matthew 14:13-21 (NIV)

¹³ When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns. ¹⁴ When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick.

¹⁵ As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a remote place, and it's already getting late. Send the crowds away, so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food."

¹⁶ Jesus replied, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat."

¹⁷ "We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish," they answered.

¹⁸ "Bring them here to me," he said. ¹⁹ And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. ²⁰ They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. ²¹ The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children.

Sermon for August 6, 2023: www.collegechurch.org/college-church-online

KNOW ... *God and his Word.*

- Our passage begins by telling us that Jesus withdrew to the wilderness. Describe what you think a wilderness might look and feel like? Why do you think Jesus withdrew there?
- Why do you think the crowds and the disciples did not read the clues surrounding Jesus' departure to a solitary place? What kept the people and disciples there despite the threat of evening, darkness and hunger?
- Despite the difficult news Jesus was facing that day, he interacted with the crowd. How did Jesus respond to them? Did Jesus' responses surprise you? Why or why not?
- The disciples took an honest assessment of the hours' long interaction between Jesus and the crowd, the pending darkness, lack of food, perhaps their own weariness and their non-existent resources to meet the needs ahead. Their conclusion to it all was to send the crowd away but Jesus' response was to meet the need. What in the miracle of feeding the 5,000 surprises you most? Why?

ACT ... responding to & applying what we know.

- What news or circumstances might cause you to withdraw from others into the “wilderness”? Do these moments draw you closer to God? Why or why not?
- Wilderness moments are often where we are the most depleted of resources — mind, emotions, strength, finances and more. Yet, as Pastor Mark shared, “It is when we are in the wilderness ... when we have nothing left to give that God can use us the most.”

Share a time when you felt like you had nothing left to give. Think back and look for the way God used you in that wilderness.

BE ... living in light of what we've heard, becoming more like Christ.

Have you run out of resources? Do you feel you have nothing left to give? This may just be the time God wants to use you to serve him in meeting a need.

PRAY and ASK God to give you strength to meet the need he's been speaking to you about or may reveal this week.

CONSIDER the miracle of the feeding of the 5,000 and TRUST God will provide what you need to do what he is asking of you.

KEEP becoming more like Jesus!

Grace and peace,
Pastor Angela

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