

SHARE THE BIBLE LESSON

WEEK 12

Jesus feeds the 5,000

John 6:1–15



DAY 1

Jesus planned a miracle to show He was the One Moses spoke about • John 6:1–15

READ

John 6:1–15

EXPLAIN

The truth of John 6:1–15

Jesus displayed great power and love in His many miracles. No one denied His power, and huge crowds came to Him for healing of all kinds. However, most did not believe Him when He said He deserved the same honor as God the Father. Instead of honoring Him (John 5:23), they opposed Him, because He did not follow their traditions (5:16). They said their traditions were from Moses, but Jesus said He was the one Moses had written about (5:46). The Jews had trouble believing this: had Moses really written about Jesus? To help the people believe this, Jesus planned a miracle that would remind them of Moses. By feeding the 5,000—the only miracle recorded in all four Gospels (Matt 14:13–23; Mark 6:30–46; Luke 9:10–17)—Jesus showed that He was the One Moses had spoken about so many years before: He was “the Prophet,” the Messiah sent by God to lead His people (Deut 18:15).

ASK

1. Why did multitudes flock to Jesus?
Because Jesus displayed great power and love.
2. Did most people accept His claims of equality with God the Father?
No. Instead of honoring Him, they opposed Him.
3. Why did the people oppose Jesus?
He violated their traditions.
4. How did Jesus prove that He was the Messiah Moses had spoken about?
By planning a miracle that would remind the people of Moses.

DISCUSS

1. Can you remember some miracles that showed Jesus' power and love? Which is your favorite?
2. Have you come to Jesus? Why have you come to Jesus? How are many “Christians” today like the crowds that followed Jesus?

DAY 2

Jesus saw a fickle crowd on a formative day • John 6:1–4

READ

John 6:1–15

EXPLAIN

The truth of John 6:1–4

The crowds that followed Jesus treated Him like a giant vending machine. They did not want Him. They only wanted to use Him to get stuff: food, healing from sickness, and freedom and protection from their enemies. So Jesus planned a miracle to prove that the crowd should honor Him as the Promised One. The setting was just right. They were on the east side of the Sea of Galilee on the Golan Heights (John 6:1–3), in an out of the way place where food was scarce (Mark 6:31). It was dinner time (6:35). There was a huge crowd, probably around 20,000 counting women and children (Matt 14:21). But, more importantly, it was almost Passover (John 6:4). It was the time when the Jews remembered not only the Passover lamb, but also their deliverance from Egypt, manna from heaven, and Moses. On this day, the Jews were looking for a Messiah like Moses, someone who would set them free from Roman rule and miraculously feed them. Jesus chose this day to create food so that people would realize: He is the Messiah Moses talked about. Therefore, they must listen to Him.

ASK

1. How large was the crowd?
Probably around 20,000 counting women and children.
2. What Jewish feast was just about to take place?
Passover.
3. What did the people remember at Passover?
The Passover lamb, deliverance from Egypt, manna from heaven, and Moses. It was also the time when God's people looked forward to future deliverance and prosperity under the leadership of a prophet like Moses.

DISCUSS

1. How do holidays help us to remember and think about God's goodness?
2. What do you look forward to (Rev 19:11–21; 22:20)?

DAY 3

Jesus challenged faithless disciples • John 6:5–9

READ

John 6:1–15

EXPLAIN

The truth of John 6:5–9

By performing this miracle at the time of Passover, Jesus connected His miracle to the miraculous feeding of Israel in the wilderness. Also, His question to Philip is like Moses' question to God (Num 11:13). His testing of Philip is like God's testing of Israel (Exod 16:4). And Andrew's words about not having enough for so many call to mind Moses' similar doubts (Num 11:21–22). These parallels show Jesus setting up a new miracle

to match the old. This sign was for the crowd, but it was also for the disciples, whose faith was still weak. He asked them questions to reveal how hopeless the situation was. He was challenging the disciples' feeble faith. They knew they could not satisfy the people's hunger on their own, so the disciples would have to look to Jesus to provide. Yet they could not take his eyes off the problem: not even 8 months' wages would be enough for everyone to have even a little. Instead of trusting in the Son of God standing right in front of him, they doubted as they looked at all the people. Jesus' miracle would challenge their doubts.

DAY 3 CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

ASK 

1. What did Jesus ask Philip?
Where they could buy bread to feed the people.
2. What was Philip's response?
Not even 200 denarii (8 months' wages) would be enough for everyone to have even a little.
3. Why did Jesus ask Philip about buying bread?
To test if the disciples believed who He really was.
4. How many loaves, fish, and people were there?
5 loaves, 2 fish, and around 20,000 people.

DISCUSS 

1. Have you ever had a large group of people over to your house for dinner? Can you imagine preparing a meal for 20,000 people?
2. Why do you doubt God in times of trouble? Are you focused on how great God is, or on how big your problems are?

DAY 4*Jesus provided a fulfilling sign • John 6:10–13***READ** 

John 6:1–15

EXPLAIN **The truth of John 6:10–13**

The miracle was filling and fulfilling. It was a filling dinner because everyone ate until they were very full! But more importantly, this sign shows that Jesus is the One who fulfills the prophecy of a coming Messiah. Moses said God would raise up “a prophet like me” (Deut 18:15), and Jesus arranged this miracle to show that He was this second Moses. He performed a feeding miracle at the time of Passover to remind people of the feeding miracle in the wilderness (Exod 16:15). He provided more than enough food to remind them of how more than enough food was provided in the wilderness (Ps 78:24–25). So Jesus was reminding them of Moses, but Jesus was also showing that He was even greater than Moses. Moses did not actually provide the manna; he only said what God would do. But Jesus made the food Himself. He was proving that He was God and was able to meet all their spiritual needs. He was also proving that people needed to honor Him just as they honored the Father (John 5:23), for Moses testified about Jesus (5:46).

ASK 

1. Why did Jesus make this miracle like the miracle of the manna?
To show that Moses testified about Him; that He was God and deserved the people's honor.
2. How was Jesus like Moses?
He provided more than enough food for the crowd.
3. How was Jesus greater than Moses?
He Himself created food to feed the crowd.
4. After everyone was full, how many baskets of food were left over?
Twelve baskets.

DISCUSS 

1. List some other ways you can see Jesus' power in the world and in your life (Heb 1:3).
2. Even if you haven't seen a miracle, have you seen enough to know that God deserves to be honored (Ps 19:1–6; Rom 1:18–20)?

DAY 5

Jesus rejected a false coronation • John 6:14–15

READ

John 6:1–15

EXPLAIN

The truth of John 6:14–15

The crowd didn't get the message. They rightly concluded that Jesus was **the Prophet** Moses spoke about, as Peter later confirmed (Acts 3:22–23). Jesus was **the Messiah** who will bring times of refreshing, when no one will hunger again (3:20). But even though they were willing to accept Him as Messiah, they were not willing to accept Him as God. They wanted to control Him, to make Him a king who would satisfy their earthly needs. They saw only a human king, not the King of kings who also became human. They felt only their physical needs, not their deep spiritual need. So Jesus went away from them, just as God took His blessing away from Israel when they settled for manna and quail but rejected God Himself (Num 11:20, 33). The next day Jesus explained to the crowd that He was what they really needed, not bread. Those who ate the bread and fish He created would continue to experience physical hunger, but all those who received "**the bread of life,**" **Jesus Himself**, would permanently satisfy their spiritual hunger (John 6:35; Matt 5:6).

ASK

1. Who did the people decide Jesus was?
The Prophet Moses said would come; the Messiah who would feed and deliver.
2. What did the people try to do to Jesus?
They tried to make Him king.
3. Why did Jesus go away from them?
Because they only wanted to use Him to get what they wanted.
4. What did Jesus later call Himself? Why?
He called Himself the "bread of life" to show that we need to receive and trust Jesus Himself.

DISCUSS

1. How often do you eat physical food? How often do you feed on spiritual food? Do you hunger for Jesus Himself?
2. Why does Jesus go away from people who come to Him only to satisfy their selfish desires?

NEXT WEEK

Jesus walks on water

Matthew 14:23–33

