

**“It’s a Hungry World”**

**Matthew 14:1-21**

**Scripture Ref: Mark 6:17-20, 2 Kings 4:1-7**

1. **“I want....”** The phrase “I want \_\_\_\_ (fill in the blank) is possibly one of the most often used phrases in our culture.
  - a. **People seem to have a void that demands to be filled, and they spend tremendous amounts of time and energy trying to fill that void.**
  - b. **The problem is that people will often try and fill the void with empty substitutes.**
  - c. **It’s akin to trying to satisfy your hunger with a Twinkie. You get a quick sugar fix, but the hunger is still there.**
2. **In Matthew 14, Jesus feeds a crowd of 8000-9000 people with a few fishes and loaves of bread.**

**John the Baptist Beheaded**

14:1 At that time Herod the tetrarch heard the report about Jesus 2 and said to his servants, "This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead, and therefore these powers are at work in him." 3 For Herod had laid hold of John and bound him, and put him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife. 4 Because John had said to him, "It is not lawful for you to have her." 5 And although he wanted to put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet. 6 But when Herod's birthday was celebrated, the daughter of Herodias danced before them and pleased Herod. 7 Therefore he promised with an oath to give her whatever she might ask. 8 So she, having been prompted by her mother, said, "Give me John the Baptist's head here on a platter." 9 And the king was sorry; nevertheless, because of the oaths and because of those who sat with him, he commanded it to be given to her. 10 So he sent and had John beheaded in prison. 11 And his head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, and she brought it to her mother. 12 Then his disciples came and took away the body and buried it, and went and told Jesus.

3. **Now this section is not really tied to the main point of my message today, but in the spirit of not skipping any scripture, we’ll take a moment to look at it.**
4. **The setting here is that John is in prison for speaking out – telling Herod that it was not right to steal his brothers wife.**
  - a. **The interesting thing is that Herod actually had respect for John, spending time with him and listening to him.**
  - b. **Mark tells us:**

**Mark 6:17-20**

*17 For Herod himself had sent and laid hold of John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife; for he had married her. 18 Because John had said to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife."*

*19 Therefore Herodias held it against him and wanted to kill him, but she could not; 20 for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just and holy man, and he protected him. And when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly.*

- c. **It was Herod's wife, Herodias, that was out for John.**
- d. **Herod had a birthday party, and the wine was flowing, and his step-daughter danced for him, and Herod was into it!**
- 5. **The thing to note is the environment. Herod had put himself into a vulnerable position – he was intoxicated, he was in a “party mentality”, he was surrounded by sensuality – all things that appeal to the flesh.**
  - a. **And that is when the enemy struck – at his most vulnerable time. And he agreed to something that later on he regretted.**
- 6. **We, especially men, should heed the lesson of Herod – be careful of the situations that you allow yourself to go into.**
  - a. **You cannot surround yourself with sensuous things, add a little alcohol, let your guard down, and expect yourself to be strong in that situation!**
  - b. **You are just asking for trouble – and you'll get it!**

**Feeding the Five Thousand**

*13 When Jesus heard it, He departed from there by boat to a deserted place by Himself. But when the multitudes heard it, they followed Him on foot from the cities. 14 And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick.*

- 7. **After hearing about his friend and cousin John, Jesus needed some alone time – just to grieve.**
  - a. **But the people wouldn't hear of it – they found out where he went and followed him!**
  - b. **You have to wonder – should Jesus have sent them away, didn't He have the right to mourn in private?**
- 8. **There are times in all of our lives when we feel we need some ‘alone time’, we need some time to be alone with God and work through things.**
  - a. **But then an opportunity presents itself - And we have to make a decision: Do I get involved, or do I pass?**
  - b. **(we have to deal with this every week here at the church: There are many “good” things we can get involved in, but we have to seek the Lord – “what is God leading us to do?”)**

9. The answer seems to be presented here: As with Jesus,
- a. if there is *compassion within* you,
  - b. if there is an *anointing on* you,
  - c. and you sense that God is *leading through* you,
  - d. ...then you need to get engaged with the situation *around* you.  
(and watch God work miracles!)
10. So Jesus engaged – and began ministering to the people
- a. But as the day got later there was a problem – they were far from the cities, it was getting late, and there no food – (hard as it is to imagine, apparently there wasn't a McDonalds nearby.)

15 When it was evening, His disciples came to Him, saying, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is already late. Send the multitudes away, that they may go into the villages and buy themselves food."

11. Sounds reasonable to me – ‘we’re way out in the boonies, there is no food, let the people go to the villages’.
- a. Really, what could the disciples do?
  - b. But Jesus had something different in mind – something He wanted to teach the disciples

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

12. You know Jesus is up to something because these guys did not have any food to offer
- a. But still Jesus tells them to feed the people out of what THEY have. (I can see them now, looking at one another!)

17 And they said to Him, "We have here only five loaves and two fish."

13. I can see their faces – “Oh, you want us to give them OUR dinner! Right. But we only have enough for ourselves.”
- a. There are two things I get from their response:
    - i. “This is MY dinner”
    - ii. “It’s not enough to get the job done”
  - b. ...this sounds familiar – like I’ve heard it before...hmmm
14. You know, it sounds just like something I would say – it sounds like the place where many Christians exist every single day...
- a. “this is my stuff – I cant give it away, then I wont have any!”
  - b. “Besides, it wouldn’t make a difference anyway”

**15. But wait – there is another factor involved here – another force that can be brought to bear on the situation – JESUS!**

18 He said, "Bring them here to Me." 19 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. 20 So they all ate and were filled, and they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments that remained. 21 Now those who had eaten were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

**16. Their key statement – “Bring them here to Me.”**

- a. **Think about it – given the magnitude of that situation – feeding 5000 men PLUS women and children – how many ideas could a group of twelve come up with to solve that situation?**
- b. **You could spend days – weeks – months – throwing out options, and you would still come to the conclusion: it’s impossible!**
- c. **There was no way in the natural physical world we live in to solve that problem**
- d. **So – the answer had to come from OUTSIDE of our world – it would have to be a Supernatural solution. But none of those guys could do that – right?**
- e. **Or, could they? – Maybe they did have access to the supernatural - they had Jesus!**
- f. **I wonder if while they were handing out food, Peter looked over the John and said “I was about to suggest this...”**

**17. There are two points I want to take away from this:**

**Point #1 – Take it to Jesus**

***2 Kings 4:1-7***

*A certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets cried out to Elisha, saying, "Your servant my husband is dead, and you know that your servant feared the LORD. And the creditor is coming to take my two sons to be his slaves." 2 So Elisha said to her, "What shall I do for you? Tell me, what do you have in the house?" And she said, "Your maidservant has nothing in the house but a jar of oil." 3 Then he said, "Go, borrow vessels from everywhere, from all your neighbors -- empty vessels; do not gather just a few. 4 And when you have come in, you shall shut the door behind you and your sons; then pour it into all those vessels, and set aside the full ones." 5 So she went from him and shut the door behind her and her sons, who brought the vessels to her; and she poured it out. 6 Now it came to pass, when the vessels were full, that she said to her son, "Bring me another vessel."*

*And he said to her, "There is not another vessel." So the oil ceased. 7  
Then she came and told the man of God. And he said, "Go, sell the oil and  
pay your debt; and you and your sons live on the rest."*

- 18. In our lives we are going to be faced with situations and ministry opportunities that are simply beyond our abilities – things that far outstrip our resources**
- a. And when we hit those situations, we want to be careful and not just throw up our hands and think “that’s impossible – no way it can happen.
  - b. Instead we need to ask “does God want to do something here?”
  - c. If so - follow Jesus model: Take what we have, give it to the Lord, and see what He does with it!
  - d. God can take a little – and make it feed thousands!
- 19. Why does God want us to bring our little fishes? I believe so that we can be part of what He is doing.**
- a. Sometimes one of my kids will want something, and I’ll tell them “you save up some, and I’ll make up the difference”
  - b. When they put something in, they are part of the process, they are learning to be engaged, they will have some ownership.
    - i. Just the opposite if I just give it to them!
  - c. And because I have more resources, I contribute the bigger part – I want to bless them!
  - d. Our Heavenly Father wants to bless us too!
- 20. We are working to finish the youth building, and some might think “I can’t give thousands – so why bother”**
- a. Certainly we have received a few large donations – praise God!
  - b. But a majority of what has come in has been \$10 - \$20 - \$50 - \$100
  - c. And God has taken those “little fishes” and is doing a mighty work!

**Point #2 – There is a hungry world!**

- 21. This miracle is much more than meeting the physical need of the crowd.**
- a. It’s a sermon in action: A mass of spiritually hungry people, with nothing in sight to fill them.
  - b. But there is one, the Bread of Life, who has exactly the thing that will satisfy even the deepest spiritual craving.
  - c. And He gives it freely!
- 22. Think about it - Our world is spiritually hungry – the masses of people who are hurting, struggling, literally spiritually starving! And spiritual Twinkie’s simply won’t do.**

- a. We have the Bread of Life, ready and available to a hungry world – God wants to give it freely – touching lives – healing - feeding
  - b. And notice – Jesus asked the disciples to serve the people – they were part of what God was doing – engaged in the process – working!
  - c. Will you help serve it?
- 23. Bring what you have to Jesus – give Him your life – your energy – your talent – your money – and SEE what He will do with it!**
- 24. Be a part of what God is doing – SERVE! Get engaged! Don't be one of the Pharisee's watching from the sidelines – get in the game!**

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