

The Feeding of the Five Thousand

Matthew 14	Mark 6	Luke 9	John 6
13 Now when Jesus heard this, [...] ¹	30 The apostles gathered themselves together to Jesus, and they told him all things, whatever they had done, and whatever they had taught.	10 The apostles, when they had returned, told him what things they had done. [...]	1 After these things, [...]
	31 He said to them, “You come apart into a deserted place, ² and rest awhile.” For there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat.		
13 [...] he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place apart. [...]	32 They went away in the boat to a deserted place by themselves.	10 [...] He took them and withdrew apart to a desert region of a city called Bethsaida.	1 [...] Jesus went away to the other side of the sea of Galilee, which is also called the Sea of Tiberias.
13 [...] When the multitudes heard it, they followed him on foot from the cities.	33 They saw them going, and many recognized him and ran there on foot from all the cities. [...]	11 But the multitudes, perceiving it, followed him. [...]	2 A great multitude followed him, [...]
	33 [...] They arrived before them and came together to him.		
14 Jesus went out, and he saw a great multitude. He had compassion on them [...]	34 Jesus came out, saw a great multitude, and he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd, [...]	11 [...] He welcomed them, [...]	
	34 [...] and he began to teach them many things.	11 [...] spoke to them of God’s Kingdom, [...]	

¹ This story begins with the disciples reporting back after their preaching trip through Galilee. The preceding story of John’s execution was Herod Antipas’ flashback to an earlier event—because when stories of Jesus began to circulate during this trip, Herod was reminded of John’s earlier ministry.

² A wilderness location

Matthew 14	Mark 6	Luke 9	John 6
14 [...] and healed their sick.		11 [...] and he cured those who needed healing.	2 [...] because they saw his signs which he did on those who were sick.
			3 Jesus went up into the mountain, and he sat there with his disciples.
15 When evening had come, [...]	35 When it was late in the day, [...]	12 The day began to wear away; [...]	4 Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand.
15 [...] his disciples came to him, saying, "This place is deserted, and the hour is already late. Send the multitudes away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves food."	35 [...] his disciples came to him, and said, "This place is deserted, and it is late in the day. 36 Send them away, that they may go into the surrounding country and villages, and buy themselves bread, for they have nothing to eat."	12 [...] and the twelve came and said to him, "Send the multitude away, that they may go into the surrounding villages and farms, and lodge, and get food, for we are here in a deserted place."	
16 But Jesus said to them, "They don't need to go away. You give them something to eat."	37 But he answered them, "You give them something to eat." [...]	13 But he said to them, "You give them something to eat." [...]	
	37 [...] They asked him, "Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii ³ worth of bread, and give them something to eat?"		

³ A denarius was approximately a day's wage. Even if they could *find* 200 denarii worth of bread on sale in the neighboring villages, it would not have been enough for around 5,000 families.

Matthew 14	Mark 6	Luke 9	John 6
			<p>5 Jesus therefore lifting up his eyes, and seeing that a great multitude was coming to him, said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread, that these may eat?"</p> <p>6 He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he would do.</p> <p>7 Philip answered him, "Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may receive a little."</p>
	<p>38 He said to them, "How many loaves do you have? Go see." [...]</p>		
<p>17 They told him, "We only have here five loaves and two fish."</p>	<p>38 [...] When they knew, they said, "Five, and two fish."</p>	<p>13 [...] They said, "We have no more than five loaves and two fish, unless we should go and buy food for all these people."</p>	<p>8 One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, 9 "There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish," [...]</p>
			<p>9 [...] "but what are these among so many?"</p>
<p>18 He said, "Bring them here to me."</p>			
<p>19 He commanded the multitudes to sit down on the grass; [...]</p>	<p>39 He commanded them that everyone should sit down in groups on the green grass.</p>	<p>14 [...] He said to his disciples, "Make them sit down" [...]. 15 They did so, and made them all sit down.</p>	<p>10 Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." Now there was much grass in that place. [...]</p>
	<p>40 They sat down in ranks, by hundreds and by fifties.⁴</p>	<p>14 [...] "in groups of about fifty each."</p>	

⁴ These numbers are approximate: the groups of around 50, sometimes as large as 100, remind us of just how many people there were to feed.

Matthew 14	Mark 6	Luke 9	John 6
21 Those who ate were about five thousand men, [...]	44 Those who ate the loaves were five thousand men.	14 For they were about five thousand men. [...]	10 [...] So the men sat down, in number about five thousand.
21 [...] in addition to women and children. ⁵			
19 [...] and he took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, he blessed, broke and gave the loaves to the disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitudes.	41 He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, he blessed and broke the loaves, and he gave to his disciples to set before them, and he divided the two fish among them all.	16 He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to the sky, he blessed them, broke them, and gave them to the disciples to set before the multitude.	11 Jesus took the loaves; and having given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to those who were sitting down; likewise also of the fish as much as they desired.
20 They all ate and were filled. [...]	42 They all ate, and were filled.	17 They ate and were all filled. [...]	12 When they were filled, [...]
			12 [...] he said to his disciples, "Gather up the broken pieces which are left over, that nothing be lost."
20 [...] They took up twelve baskets full of that which remained left over from the broken pieces.	43 They took up twelve baskets full of broken pieces and also of the fish.	17 [...] They gathered up twelve baskets of broken pieces that were left over.	13 So they gathered them up, and filled twelve baskets with broken pieces from the five barley loaves, which were left over by those who had eaten.
			14 When therefore the people saw the sign which Jesus did, they said, "This is truly the prophet who comes into the world."

⁵ The total may have been 15,000 people or more.