

The Vineyard – A Multiplication Illustration

DO YOU THINK THEY REMEMBERED?

When Jesus got out of the boat, he saw a large crowd of people.

He felt sorry for them, and he healed the ones who were sick. Late that afternoon, the disciples came to Jesus and said, “No one lives in this place.

And it is already late. Send the people away so they can go to the towns and buy food for themselves.”

Jesus said, “The people don’t need to go away. You give them some food to eat.”

The followers answered, “But we have only five loaves of bread and two fish.”

Jesus said, “Bring the bread and the fish to me.”

Then he told the people to sit down on the grass.

He took the five loaves of bread and the two fish.

He looked into the sky and thanked God for the food.

Then he broke the bread into pieces, which he gave to the followers,

and they gave the food to the people.

Everyone ate until they were full. (5000) When they finished eating,

the followers filled twelve baskets with the pieces of food that were not eaten.

Matthew 14:13-20

This is a rather amusing story about multiplication in the Master’s business! Arriving on the shore of Lake of Gennesaret, Jesus was met by a large crowd. It was a desolate

place and the shades of evening were falling. Concerned about their own welfare, the Twelve urged Jesus to “*send the people away ... to buy food for themselves.*” Here’s the “**punch line**”! “**You give them something to eat!**” You’ll only get the impact of Jesus’ statement if you imagine yourself as one of the Twelve. Wouldn’t you be thinking, “*Yeah right! Give me a break!*”

“*Five loaves and two fish*” – that’s the supply, so they thought! Having received the meager resources, Jesus gave thanks to the Father, the Owner of the business, and then, gave the broken pieces to the disciples for distribution to over 5000 persons. Note the detail! They all ate “**until they were full.**”

✘ But, here’s the “*Rest of the Story!*” “*When the crowd finished eating, the disciples filled **twelve baskets with the pieces of food that were not eaten.***” Do you get it? **Twelve baskets** of food leftover ... for whom?

No doubt, as always, Jesus had deep compassion for the crowd. Nevertheless, this happening was a setup in equipping the disciples for multiplication in Father’s business! If you doubt this, note the following words! “*You did not choose me. I chose you. And I gave you this work: to go and produce fruit—fruit that will last. **THEN** the Father will give you **ANYTHING** you ask for in my name.*” (John 15:16)

Absolutely **NOT**! Jesus is **NOT** speaking of the “**name it and ✘ claim it**” gospel! Note the context! The Father will provide anything that has to do with producing fruit. Apart from that purpose all bets are off, 20,000 seat auditoriums to the contrary! By the way, there’s only one place in the world that’s experiencing such multiplication, as well as signs and wonders (Acts) like that of which Jesus spoke: **AFRICA!** I’ve been in contact with Jackton Pastor, a pastor, in Africa. Here’s what he recently wrote: “*48 people received Jesus in our Kisumu airport branch.*”

What I'm attempting to establish as **FACT** is, according to Jesus, that which produces glory for the Father is **MULTIPLICATION**. Many, I know, will assert this to be shallow and superficial. They will resort to what by now is an old argument that the Gospel is more than numbers. Any fool will understand that from the story above! Note, Jesus had deep compassion for the crowd for which the Twelve didn't have ... **yet**. But, they and the early church would have. *"At no other time in the history of Christianity did love so characterize the entire church as it did in the first three centuries. And Roman society took note. Tertullian reported that the Romans would exclaim, "See how they love one another!"* (History of the Early Church) At the same time the church conquered the Roman Empire! Go figure!

So, please spare me the patently absurd argument that **"numbers"** are just a modern invention. Return to church history, you sophisticated theologian! That which you so smugly espouse will not hold up to the muster of history.

Nor, is it able to hold a light to the current happenings in Africa and other third world countries. Let's face it. For all of our theological sophistication we've lost the fire of that which Jesus spoke in John 15.



To quote the great philosopher, Forrest Gump, ***"that's all I've got to say about that!"***