

## **GIVE THEM TO EAT**

### ***I.***

#### ***Introduction – purpose of Jesus' miracles***

Let's read John 6:1-2. John 6 opens with great crowd following Jesus to a place where Jesus went. Verse 2 says that they followed Him “because they saw His miracles which he did on them that were diseased.”

The miracles Jesus performed during His ministry on earth had their purpose. They testified about Jesus. Who Jesus is. That He is God in human flesh. That He has the power to help us with our problem of sin by forgiving us our sins and giving us eternal life (all that in view of His future sacrifice on the cross and resurrection from the dead). Let's look at two examples: Luke 5:20-26 - Here miracle is evidence that Jesus has the power to forgive sins. Only God has the power to forgive sins. John 11:23-26, 43-45 - Here miracle is evidence that Jesus can give eternal life. Only eternal and all powerful God can give eternal life.

### ***II.***

#### ***How can Jesus help us?***

I am not sure that people who followed Jesus in John 6 fully understood that miracles manifested Jesus' divine nature and power. The greatest obstacle for them was the balast of man made religious traditions and bias deeply in-rooted in their minds. On the other hand one could understand at least few things: 1) God's power must have been with Jesus for only God could make miracles, 2) Jesus used God's power to help other people, 3) Jesus can use God's power to help me as well.

Granted, people could have different ideas of how Jesus could help them. The sick could hope that Jesus would save them from their physical affliction by healing them. Jesus did it for many others so why not for them. And truly, Jesus healed their sick as we can read in a paralel account of the story in - Matthew 14:14. However, purpose of Jesus' coming to the earth was not to heal all sick people everywhere. He is the Creator of all that exists. He is the one who created natural mechanisms that make it possible for humans to develop sickness and had He wished He could have created different mechanisms that would prevent us from getting sick at all.

Sad is that often the bad things happening to us turn our undivided attention, our fervent prayers and our firm hopes to God. The worst are the things that happen to us, the stronger is our desire for God to help us. Can you imagine how great would be human ego if God created us in such a way that we could not get sick, get hurt or even die at all? What for we would need God then?

Other people in the crowd in John 6 could hope that Jesus would save them from other physical afflictions – e.g. hunger, injustice, etc. - by helping them in some other physical way.

But how many followed Jesus because they sinned against God and were seeking Jesus' spiritual help? I do not know. Maybe there were some people like that. We can find examples of both such kinds of people in the NT. Let's read Luke 12:13-15. Here is the example of a man who wanted Jesus to help him in some other physical way beside healing. Now, let's read Luke 7:44-50. Here is the example of a woman who desired Jesus' spiritual help.

Even today people have different ideas concerning what Jesus can do for them. Some believe that faith in Jesus can heal them miraculously from their sickness, others, that it can help them to improve materially their living standards, others, that they will be well off when Jesus comes to make what they believe to be a paradise on earth or a thousand year kingdom. But how many seek Jesus' spiritual help, His forgiveness of their sins and eternal life? Well, there are some people like that too. You are examples of that.

Jesus Himself did not keep anyone in ignorance regarding how He could help them. John 6:4 says that the passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand. During the passover feast Jews ate passover lamb to commemorate how God seeing the blood of the lambs upon the houses of Israelites who had obeyed Him, saved their firstborn from the dead by passing over them, while destroying the firstborn of Egyptians. After this event God delivered Israelites out from Egyptian captivity (Exodus 12).

### ***III.***

#### ***Jesus proves that He is our divine Savior***

Observation of passover was part of the old covenant God made with physical Israel to prepare Israelites for coming of God's promised Savior and spiritual salvation. Now that passover feast was at hand, it was a good opportunity for Jesus to prove to the people that He is the true passover lamb of God (Isaiah 53), whose blood will save those who put their faith in Him. He will save them not in a physical way, but spiritually, by forgiving them their sins and giving them eternal life. How will Jesus prove something that is beyond human comprehension and cannot be experienced by his audience with their physical senses? Namely, physical senses are the only means that God equipped us with that enable us to acquire information our mind can process for us to come to knowledge and understanding of truth in matters of life here on the earth. The way Jesus approached this was by doing something that was equally beyond human comprehension, but could be experienced by his audience with their physical senses.

Jesus used a situation that would be a problem for most people, but was not a real problem for Him. Let's read Mark 6:34-37. They were at a desert place and it was getting late. Disciples came to Jesus and told him to send people away that they may buy themselves bread in the country and villages, for they did not have anything to eat. Jesus responded to His disciples: you give them to eat. Disciples responded to Jesus: "Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread, and give it to them to eat?" Two hundred denarii was probably all the money they had. Should they spend all of it and for what purpose? Even if they bought bread for all their money, there were so many people, that it would not be sufficient to feed all of them.

Paralel account of the story in Mark 6 is in John 6. Here Jesus spoke to Phillip about feeding the crowd, but He was actually testing faith of the apostles in who He was and in His power. Let's read John 6:5-6 "Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?" Let's read Philip's answer in verse 7. Phillip was actually saying that they could not help the people, because they simply did not have enough money to help them. Now, Andrew felt like he needed to support Phillip in this awkward situation when their Teacher was suggesting something that from human perspective sounded unreasonable. Let's read verses 8-9. Only food there were little boy's five loaves of bread and two fishes which clearly was not enough to feed crowd of thousands of people. Do we see the line of thinking of apostles?

There were many hungry people at this literally desert place. If there was anyone who could help them in any way, it was Jesus, God in flesh. Yet, none of Jesus' disciples who repeatedly saw His

great miracles said, you have done great miracles, you are the Son of God, this thing is not impossible for you. **If it is your will, you give us the food and we shall give them to eat. Instead they thought of reasons, why it was impossible for them to help the people, such as lack of money or lack of food. Feeding of thousands of people in a deserted place was not a real problem. The real problem was little faith that apostles had in who Jesus is and in His power.**

Do we think sometime the same way as apostles thought in John 6? There are many people who are (figuratively saying) in a spiritual desert place due to their sins and separation from God. We meet some of them almost every day. They need spiritual help. They need spiritual salvation. But we think of the reasons why we cannot help them, such as that we do not have time to preach gospel to these people, or we do not know these people well enough to speak to them, or we do not have wisdom, how to address these people with message of gospel, or these people look like someone who will not accept Jesus, or whatever else. Jesus created men. He gave every person a spirit that gives life to his body. Likewise body has bodily needs, spirit has spiritual needs. In other words, every person has spiritual needs requiring to be satisfied. Many people satisfy their spiritual needs with all kinds of junk food - human philosophies and man-made religions. That only proves existence of something inside of men that needs to be satisfied in a spiritual sense. I would describe it as a desire for internal peace, security and love. Jesus wants us to help these people and give them healthy spiritual food for their spiritual salvation. If all we can think of are reasons why we cannot help them, we might have the real problem of little faith in who Jesus is and His divine power in this particular instance as well.

Now, let's read, what Jesus did to solve the situation concerning feeding of thousands of people as well as the real problem of little faith of His disciples. - John 6:10-13. Jesus ordered His disciples to make about five thousands men to sit down. This could be so they all could see what Jesus was going to do. Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks, distributed bread to the disciples and they to the men and likewise He did with fish. People got as much of food as they desired and yet twelve baskets were filled with the remaining fragments of bread.

Jesus proved to both, His apostles and the crowd of people that He had the power that none of the man possessed. They saw what Jesus did on their eyes. They heard what Jesus said with their ears. They touched the food. They smelled it. They felt it in their mouths and stomachs. Jesus simply employed all their physical senses for them to receive information and evidence that testified who Jesus is. Eventually they processed the information in their minds and what did they believe concerning Jesus? Let's read v. 14. "This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world." They meant the Prophet of whom God spoke in - Deuteronomy 18:18-19. They were expecting a prophet to come who would be like Moses. Do you remember what kind of prophet was Moses? He was a mediator of a covenant between God and people. People in John 6 confronted with Jesus' miracles arrived to partial truth about Jesus that He was prophet like Moses. However, Jesus was more than a prophet, that is more than a mere man. Jesus was the Son of God, that means equal to God. But the religious traditions and bias prevented the people from seeing this simple truth.

#### ***IV.***

#### ***Jesus' miracles can increase our faith***

In the beginning of John 6, Jesus made miracles which increased apostles' faith that Jesus is the Son of God and He has divine power to solve any problems apostles could face. This is evident from later verses of John 6 when many of His disciples left Jesus because of what He had taught them especially about eating His flesh and drinking His blood, while apostles remained with Jesus. Let's read John 6:51-69. Why did the apostles remained with Jesus? Let's read again John 6:68-69. "Lord, to

*whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."* After Jesus' resurrection and sending of the Holy Spirit with the spiritual food of gospel, apostles kept giving this spiritual food to eat to those who were lost. Just as Jesus told them in figurative language in Mark 6:37 or later in plain words before He was taken into Heaven in Mathew 28:19-20.

Miracles in John 6 and many other miracles which Jesus did that increased faith of apostles that Jesus is God and Has divine power, are recorded in the Scriptures. The same miracles have the power to increase our faith that Jesus is God and Has divine power as well. The spiritual food – gospel of Jesus Christ - for spiritual salvation of the lost that Holy Spirit delivered to apostles, is recorded in the Scriptures as well. The Scriptures are all that we need to be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2Timothy 3:16-17) Helping lost people to be saved from their sins is a good work.

Some people we will speak to about Jesus will not believe in Jesus at all. Some may believe that there is something on Jesus, but will want Jesus to serve their desires, like the crowd in John 6. The ballast of man-made religious traditions and bias blinded them to think that they could take Jesus by force to make Him their political king who will save their nation in a physical way from Roman power. Let's read v. 15. Another example how they wanted Jesus to serve their desires – v. 24 – 27. Jesus did not come to serve our fleshly desires.

Jesus died for sins of people and offers everyone who is willing to humble himself to Him the spiritual salvation, that is forgiveness of their sins and eternal life. If someone rejects spiritual salvation and choses to remain in a spiritual desert place, Jesus is not going to force such person to change his mind. If we meet such people, we should not be discouraged, because they choose to remain in their lost condition. However, we do not see in the hearts of other people and cannot tell for sure beforehand how they will respond to gospel. All we can do is increase our faith that Jesus is God, that He has divine power to solve any problem we could face, and do what Jesus said to the apostles: "give them to eat", that is teach gospel to the lost.

## **V.** ***Invitation***

No one ever did and will ever do as much for us as Jesus. Although being Son of God (meaning having dive nature), which He proved by His miracles, He dwelled among His creations (mankind) not in order to get glory from men, but to die terrible death on cross for our sins. He died for your sins as well. Now, He offers you to forgive you your sins and give you eternal life, because by raising from the dead He was victorious over death. All you need to do is obey His gospel recorded in New Testament Scriptures. Do not throw away this opportunity and be saved by Jesus today!

Prague, October 31, 2009  
Last revision June 10, 2010

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