



CHAPTER 6

Lessons in Faith: Jesus Feeds the 5000

→ *What would it have been like to have been there that day? What would you have felt? How would it have influenced what you thought about Jesus? Would it have inspired you, overwhelmed you, challenged you or would you just have fallen to your knees?*

THE DISCIPLES LEARNING LESSONS OF FAITH

- * No doubt, travelling with Jesus was full of TEACHABLE MOMENTS, but Jesus was systematically TRAINING, PREPARING, MENTORING them for gospel ministry.
- * The disciples (and us) needed to UNLEARN natural, worldly, reactionary, fleshly ways.
- * The disciples (and us) needed to RELEARN Kingdom, Holy Spirit, New Testament, faith realm ways.

→ *Why do we need training in the ways of faith? How do the ways of the world differ from the ways of the Kingdom? Why is it 'upside-down?' Do you find it easy or hard to walk by faith?*

Three quick lessons in the ways of faith

1. GOD CAN TAKE YOUR ORDINARY AND MAKE IT EXTRAORDINARY

- * He can take your NATURAL and add His SUPERNATURAL.
- * What's LIMITED in YOUR hands isn't LIMITED in HIS.
- * When we have a God who can FEED 5000, WALK on WATER, cast out DEMONS and HEAL sick people, why would we LIMIT OURSELVES to what WE CAN DO?

→ *Can you recount any times when God has taken your ordinary and made it extraordinary? Do you have any such needs right now?*

→ *How do we move it from our hands into His? Can He do it when it is still in our hands? Why does He often start with something we're already holding in our hands?*

→ *'Natural solutions just won't cut it!' Discuss!*

→ *'When I go into battle, I'm going to tuck myself right in behind my big brother, Jesus.' Discuss!*

2. FAITH ALWAYS COMES FIRST

- * The world says, "SEEING is BELIEVING."
- * In the Kingdom, BELIEVING precedes SEEING.

→ *Who are you like, by instinct or training? Thomas who doubted. Peter who leapt without thinking. Paul who was prepared to put his life on the line repeatedly. Or perhaps another Bible character?*

- * What's the sequence in Mark 16:17? BELIEVE first and signs FOLLOW ... SEED first and HARVEST follows ... FAITH first and SEEING follows.
- * We have to LEARN the WAYS of FAITH.
 - i) God is a FAITH God.

ii) God's Kingdom is a FAITH kingdom.

iii) To OPERATE in God's Kingdom, we too have to WALK by FAITH.

- * Everything God has ever done, He has done by FAITH (Genesis 1:1-3, Psalm 33:6, Hebrews 11:3, Romans 4:17).
- * In creation, God EXERCISED His FAITH and brought SUBSTANCE and REALITY out of MATERIAL NOTHING.
- * The operation of faith = Calling things that ARE NOT as though they WERE ALREADY THERE.
- * Our 5 SENSES enable us to interact with the NATURAL realm; Faith enables us to interact with the SPIRIT / FAITH realm where God dwells.
- * To OPERATE SUCCESSFULLY in God's Kingdom, we need to learn to function according to its RULES, PRINCIPLES, LAWS (Isaiah 55:8-9).
- * 2 Corinthians 5:7 = We live by FAITH, not by SIGHT.
- * "I am NOT MOVED by what I SEE / FEEL / OTHER PEOPLE SAY / BELIEVE; I am ONLY MOVED by the WORD of GOD, because I CHOOSE to LIVE / WALK / OPERATE by faith."

→ *How did Jesus walk by faith? What was the relationship between His bold obedience, the prompting of the Holy Spirit and His Father's lavish power?*

→ *'The trouble is, we try to function in God's Kingdom using earthly principles.' Discuss!*

→ *Do you think we would see more miracles in our lives and in our church if we better learned to practise the principles of faith?*

3. AMAZINGLY, YOU & GOD TOGETHER ARE THE SOLUTION

- * God almost never does it ENTIRELY INDEPENDENT OF US.
- * We usually have a PART to PLAY, however SMALL, but nevertheless SIGNIFICANT.
- * So much of what happens in God's Kingdom STARTS with YOUR SMALL FAITH SEED which God takes, MULTIPLIES and EXPLODES.
- * Which means that EVERYONE OF US is USEFUL in the Father's hands, because it's not going to be our NATURAL ABILITY, but the WONDER-WORKING POWER of heaven.

→ *We mentioned Samson, Joshua, Gideon and Elijah who all played a small part before the awesome power of God took over. Any other Bible characters, OT or NT, spring to mind?*

→ *'Every one of us is useful in the Father's hands. After all, it's not going to be your natural ability, skill, charm and good looks, but the wonder-working power of heaven.' Discuss!*

RESPONSE QUESTIONS

→ *Is your life entirely natural or do you ever see evidence of the supernatural? Should you?*

→ *Would you say that you 'walk by faith' or by sight / feelings? What could you do to change that balance?*

→ *Do you need God to do something significant for you / through you right now, and, if so, does anything from this message grab your attention?*