

To Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, forever and ever. Amen.

¹³ When Jesus heard [about the death of John the Baptist], 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. 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." ¹⁶ But Jesus said to them, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat." ¹⁷ And they said to Him, "We have here only five loaves and two fish." 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.

Text: Matthew 14:13-21 A 9/13/26 Jeremiah 23:1-6 1 Peter 5:5-11 Psalm 4 Resp. Ps.: 121
Hymns: 18, 537, 785, 47

JESUS CARES FOR YOU

Every morning mercies new Fall as fresh as morning dew;
Every morning let us pay Tribute with the early day;
For Thy mercies, Lord, are sure, Thy compassion doth endure.

Dear fellow believers in Christ,

What words would you use to describe the kinds of gods the world comes up with? Super human. Aloof. Fickle. Vengeful. Cruel. Bloodthirsty. What a contrast between the world's gods and the living God! God is almighty. God knows everything. God truly cares about us. God is always faithful. God is loving, merciful, forgiving, kind, and generous. In today's text about the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand, we see all of these wonderful qualities in Jesus.

We're told that "when Jesus heard [about the death of John the Baptist], He departed from there by boat to a deserted place by Himself." Jesus is God. Why should almighty God have anything to do with a sinful human being? Jesus was extremely busy with all the healing and preaching and teaching He was constantly doing. Why should He concern Himself with one individual? And yet Jesus cared very much about John, and was deeply moved by John's death. The Bible says that Jesus cried when He was told that His friend, Lazarus, had died (Jn. 11:35).

The fourth chapter of Hebrews tells us about Jesus, "We do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin" (v. 15). As God, and as God and Man through personal experience during His earthly life, Jesus knows what we're going through. Jesus cares about us. Many times during His earthly ministry

the Bible tells us that Jesus was “*moved with compassion*” for the people and their needs (Mt. 14:14; 15:32; 20:34; etc.). We’re not just another number to Jesus. Jesus loves us. Jesus truly cares about how we’re doing and what’s going on in our lives: our problems and stresses and worries and fears and sorrows. Scripture says, “[*Cast*] *all your cares upon Him, for He cares for you.*” (1 Pet. 5:7)

Jesus had needed some time away from the crowds. But after awhile, the people found out where He was. We’re told, “*The crowds followed Him on foot from the cities. Jesus ... was moved with compassion for them*” (the idea from the original is that “*Jesus was filled with tenderness toward them,*” “*Jesus’ heart went out to them*”) “*and [He] healed their sick.*” Jesus made the blind see, the deaf hear, the dumb speak, the lame and paralyzed walk, the injured and diseased well again, cast demons out of people, and raised the dead back to life. Jesus can do all those things because He is God! And “*with God all things are possible.*” (Mt. 19:26)

The writer to the Hebrews tells us that Jesus “[*sympathizes*] *with our weaknesses.... Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need*” (4:15-16). Our heart often goes out to others who have a problem. There usually isn’t a whole lot we can do to make that person’s problem go away. But Jesus can do anything. Jesus invites us, “*Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest*” (Mt. 11:28). “*Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me*” (Ps. 50:15). Whatever our problem or need, Jesus cares about us. Jesus wants to help us, and Jesus will help us.

How foolish we are when we don’t come to Jesus when we need help. James says, “*You do not have because you do not ask*” (Jms. 4:2). Too often we carry part or all of our burden instead of bringing it to Jesus. **JESUS CARES FOR YOU.** Come to Jesus with whatever burdens you’re bearing, and receive the help you need.

Mark says in his Gospel that “[*Jesus*] *was moved with compassion for [the people], because they were like sheep not having a shepherd*” (Mk. 6:34a). Jesus had healed all who were sick. But He knew the great need they all had – their spiritual need. Mark adds, “*So He began to teach them many things*” (Mk. 6:34b). Jesus would later feed their bodies through a miracle, but before He did that, He offered them an even greater miracle in feeding their souls. Jesus told them about salvation in Him.

Speaking of Jesus’ “*compassion,*” it was because of His great compassion on all people in our sin-sick, helpless condition that He offered up His life on the cross to save us. Ephesians 5:2 says that “*Christ ... loved us and [gave] Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God.*”

We’re told, “*When it was evening, His disciples came to [Jesus], 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.’ But Jesus said to them, ‘They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat.’*” Remember, there “*were about five thousand men, besides women and children*” there. In a parallel account in John we’re told that Jesus told His disciples to give all those people something to eat in order to test His disciples. By this time the disciples had seen Jesus perform many miracles, including making more wine at the wedding in Cana (Jn. 2:1-11). John says that Jesus “*knew what He would do*” (Jn. 6:6). Jesus knew that He was going to feed

these people. But He wanted to teach His disciples to rely on Him. John says, *“Philip answered Him, ‘Two hundred denarii’ (about seven month’s wages) ‘worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may have a little.’ ... Andrew... said to Him, ‘There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish, but what are they among so many?’”* (vv. 7-9)

All too often when confronted with a difficult situation, we react like the disciples did: “I can’t see any way for this to work out!” “I can do a little, but what good is it, really?” We focus on the situation and how impossible it looks to us, instead of focusing on God. We can’t see how the situation can be solved or resolved. How many times didn’t Jesus say to His disciples, and doesn’t He have to say to us, *“Oh you of little faith, why did you doubt?”*? (Mt. 8:26; 14:31; 16:8)

Sometimes Jesus puts us in a situation in which we realize that there’s no way we can handle things on our own. That’s good. Then we relearn the lesson that we’re not in charge. God is. We can’t handle everything in life by ourselves. We need God’s help. Philippians 4:6 says, *“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.”* The Apostle Paul learned that God’s strength is made perfect in our weakness (2 Cor. 12:9). Paul said, *“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”* (Phil. 4:13)

The disciples told Jesus, *“We have here only five loaves and two fish.”* Jesus replied, *“Bring them here to Me”* (my emphasis). Sometimes we’re in a difficult situation, and we don’t know what to do. But thanks to God, we really do know what to do: turn to Him. Jesus expects us to use our brains and abilities and what He gives us and do what we can, but not to stop there. We need to look to Him first, and place our faith and trust in Him. The Bible says, *“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding. ... Do not be wise in your own eyes”* (Prov. 3:5, 7a). Jesus took the few loaves of bread and the few fish that were brought to Him, and used them to miraculously feed over ten thousand people! Don’t focus on how big your problem is and how helpless you are to fix it. Focus on God! God teaches us to say, *“Our help is in the name of the LORD, Who made heaven and earth”* – Psalm 124:8 The God who made the whole universe and rules over it all is our Helper. He can handle whatever problem or need we have.

“And [Jesus] 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. So they all ate and were filled, and they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments that remained.” Jesus gave all of the ten thousand + people plenty to eat, and there was even food left over!

First Jesus fed the peoples’ souls, then He fed their bodies. Sadly, they didn’t learn from that. The Bible tells us that afterwards they wanted to force Jesus to be their earthly king to take care of all their physical wants and needs (Jn. 6:14-15). When we pray, we want to bring all our needs to Jesus, especially the needs of our souls. Jesus, *“the bread of life”* (Jn. 6:35a), takes care of all of our earthly needs. Best of all, Jesus forgives all of our sins, and saves us!

Because He is almighty God, Jesus has the power to be aloof and cruel and fickle and so much worse. But Jesus is none of those things. Jesus is our loving, forgiving, gracious God. “Thank You, Jesus, that You care for us.” Amen.