

**Life Group Topic #20**  
**May 23, 2009**  
**Releasing Heaven on Earth (John 6:1-13)**

**WELCOME:** (15 minutes)

**Option 1:** Can you remember a time you were so hungry that you did something irrational?

**Option 2:** When you are super hungry and wander into your kitchen, what is the first thing you would devour?

**WORSHIP:** (15 minutes)

Use whatever means possible to turn the group's attention to the wonder and majesty of our God- including music, prayer, meditation on the Psalms, and other art forms.

**WORD APPLICATION:** (45 minutes)

Briefly read or paraphrase the following sermon summary before moving to the heart of this section: the discussion around the application questions.

**MIRACLES BEGIN ON THE PLATFORM OF A PROBLEM John 6:1-5**

*Problems are those situations engineered by God to bring us face to face with our deficiencies so we view His sufficiency as our only alternative.*

The crowds were following Jesus because of the miraculous healings he had performed...they were hungry. Jesus had the perceptive ability to identify hunger in people. Jesus knew they were hungry...they had not stated it...they had not asked for food. He immediately involved His disciples in finding a solution for their hunger.

This problem dealt with at least 5,000 people and could have actually been several thousand more if women and children were included in the totaling. There is a demand for which there is no apparent supply! This is so common to our human experience---it is happening all the time! Patience is gone, love is exhausted, fatigue has overwhelmed and circumstances demand more than you can pay. There is a massive crowd and you can't feed them. It is here that we see His much invade our little.

**WE ARE DRAWN TO THE PROBLEMS THAT JESUS IDENTIFIES: John6:5-9**

It is significant that Jesus turns first to Philip...he was from Bethsaida so this was his home turf. But the demand far outweighed the supply. Philip looked at the hunger need as physical and logistical...each belly requires this amount of food. But since the problem...the need far outweighed potential human solutions, Philip's solution would only provide a bite of food for everyone. He gave a human view to this problem, displaying a blindness to an unseen realm. Even if they had 8 months wages to buy bread, it would not be enough to satisfy the need. Our human knowledge is a gift and a good thing but it so often acts as a barrier to us expecting what Jesus could do.

Andrew was never given the assignment but he had already been involved with the people who were arriving. He knew a boy...knew he had a lunch...knew what it was. The implication is that the boy had offered the lunch and Andrew was torn with whether it could ever have any impact on the need. Could it be that God asks for a seed to be planted? **The planting of a seed is always demanded and**

**this boy's lunch would be the seed that provided a harvest and intervention of God that was mind-boggling.**

**This story is not a feeding display.** It is an object lesson, a miracle to illustrate Jesus ability to satisfy any and all hunger. The interchange between God and this boy...the offer of his lunch... A humanly bankrupt situation was transformed...the number of 5,000 was intended to overwhelm...it was impossible!

**ARE WE PREPARED FOR OVERWHELMING SUCCESS?...v 12-13**

Jesus can meet hunger, satisfy it, overwhelm it and have reserves left over...12 baskets full. **God's work always has the mark of abundance or excelling above and beyond the immediate need...John 10:10...**

This story is repeated in Mark 6 and Luke 9 and it is clear that this encounter with the 5,000 occurred during a time of rest, retreat and restoration. Jesus had taken them to a solitary place after a vigorous time of ministry for the disciples...they had been sent out to preach the kingdom of God and heal the sick. They needed rest, retreat and restoration but problems and needs are relentless.

Last week we spoke of the rest of God, the rest that can be received and enjoyed in the midst of life's challenges. In the midst of their ministry tiredness, Jesus provided this object lesson of humanly impossible need...

**Lord Jesus, please do this among us**

- Show us the overwhelming need of the seen world
- Show us the lunches that we carry and need to give to you as seeds
- Show us the overwhelming, miraculous supply of the unseen world

**Word Application Questions:**

1. **If miracles begin on the platform of a problem, what overwhelming needs in your life could be preparation for heaven to break through?**
2. **Jesus drew his disciples into the problem they faced. Andrew's offer of a little boy's lunch was the very seed to trigger God's supply. What are the "lunches" we hold in our hands that God can multiply?**
3. **Our logical human solutions to problems often completely miss what God is about to do. In what ways have you approached problems with human solutions and been blind to the unseen realm?**
4. **How might this lesson apply to your plans for a Life Group based Love Abbotsford outreach on June 13-20?**
5. **Pray together the above prayer, especially that God would show us the overwhelming miraculous supply of heaven to our human needs.**

**WITNESS: (15 minutes)**

- Focus today on developing your plans for LGLA (Life Groups Loving Abbotsford). Delegate roles and responsibilities to all involved.
- Be sure to contact Sylvia Pauls by May 31 for the \$100 seed money (little boy's lunch) [spauls@southabbotsford.com](mailto:spauls@southabbotsford.com)
- If you need a refresher of LGLA, check out the website [www.southabbotsford.com](http://www.southabbotsford.com) and follow the links: Ministries>Adult Ministries>Life Groups Love Abbotsford.