

## **Matt 14:13-21 NLT Jesus Feeds Five Thousand**

*<sup>13</sup> As soon as Jesus heard the news (of John the Baptist's death), he left in a boat to a remote area to be alone. But the crowds heard where he was headed and followed on foot from many towns. <sup>14</sup> Jesus saw the huge crowd as he stepped from the boat, and he had compassion on them and healed their sick.*

*<sup>15</sup> That evening the disciples came to him and said, "This is a remote place, and it's already getting late. Send the crowds away so they can go to the villages and buy food for themselves." <sup>16</sup> But Jesus said, "That isn't necessary—you feed them." <sup>17</sup> "But we have only five loaves of bread and two fish!" they answered. <sup>18</sup> "Bring them here," he said. <sup>19</sup> Then he told the people to sit down on the grass. Jesus took the five loaves and two fish, looked up toward heaven, and blessed them. Then, breaking the loaves into pieces, he gave the bread to the disciples, who distributed it to the people. <sup>20</sup> They all ate as much as they wanted, and afterward, the disciples picked up twelve baskets of leftovers. <sup>21</sup> About 5,000 men were fed that day, in addition to all the women and children!*

Q.1. Take a stab at describing the relationship between John the Baptist and Jesus.

Q.2. Read Matt 14:1-12. What emotions would Jesus have had upon hearing the news of John's death?

Q.3. Read Mark 6:30-32. What emotions do the disciples seem to have as the day begins?

Q.4. When do you think Jesus told the disciples about John's death?

Q.5. Why did Jesus choose to withdraw to a remote place v.13?

Q.6. What do you think happened on the boat as they crossed the lake? Speculate: Who's rowing? Can they eat? What's their conversation about? Did they get any 'R & R' in the boat?

Q.7. What led the crowd to follow the boat on foot?

Q.8. Jesus responds to the people in compassion; what might that look like and what he might have done with them for the next few hours?

Q.9. V.15 suggests it's late afternoon; how would you have approached Jesus about the next steps for: the crowd, Jesus himself & the disciples?

Q.10. When Jesus said, "*you feed them*", what was he expecting of them?

Q.11. What symbols are evoked in the feeding scene?

### **Application: for reflection, prayer and action**

Q.12. After a busy day how do you like to unwind?

Q.13. How would you have reacted if you had been in the boat as it landed and seen the crowds arriving?

Q.14. What insights into Jesus stick with you from this story?

**Matt 14:13-21 (my suggested answers)**

**NB.** Please answer the questions yourself. We all have different ways of answering; God may give you greater insights than mine. Put '*John thinks*' ... before each answer.

- Q.1. Close, friendly, strong bond of family & ministry
- Q.2. Jesus would have been deeply upset, sad and maybe a bit mad.
- Q.3. Excitement at their mission-endeavours over the last few days
- Q.4. Maybe as they came to him early on or maybe in the boat?
- Q.5. Two reasons have been offered: to process grief, or to escape from Herod's territory.
- Q.6. Who's rowing (all had turns); did they eat (probably); what did they talk about (John's death & stories about him); did they rest (no)
- Q.7. Jesus was a super-star so naturally the people wanted to be near him, see him do miracles, listen to him teach.
- Q.8. Compassion is active kindness – Jesus mixed and ministered to each person/family as needed; listening, healing, teaching, praying, blessing.
- Q.9. '*Hey, Jesus, for the sake of the people best send them home, for your sake (R & R) best send them home now; for our sake (ministering all day) best send them to their homes.*'
- Q.10. He was expecting his disciples to trust him, watch what he did and obey his instructions. Discipleship by osmoses.
- Q.11. As Moses was used to feed the Israelites in the wilderness, Jesus feeds them (with left-overs) as the greater Moses; Jesus takes the bread, blesses it, breaks it, gives it to the disciples to distribute it (as in Holy Communion); the 12 baskets of leftovers evoke the image of the 12 tribes & 12 Apostles – the new people of God.
- Q.12. A nano-nap, a blob in front of an escapist movie or TV show, a walk.
- Q.13. Dismayed, disappointed and a bit annoyed – wanting to be alone.
- Q.14. His compassion (despite grief & tiredness); his love & welcome for everyone in the crowd, his power to heal & provide, his trustworthiness and his challenge to engage in ministry with him.