

SUMMER OF
FISH & BREAD



LIFE GROUP CURRICULUM

 VICTORY CHURCH

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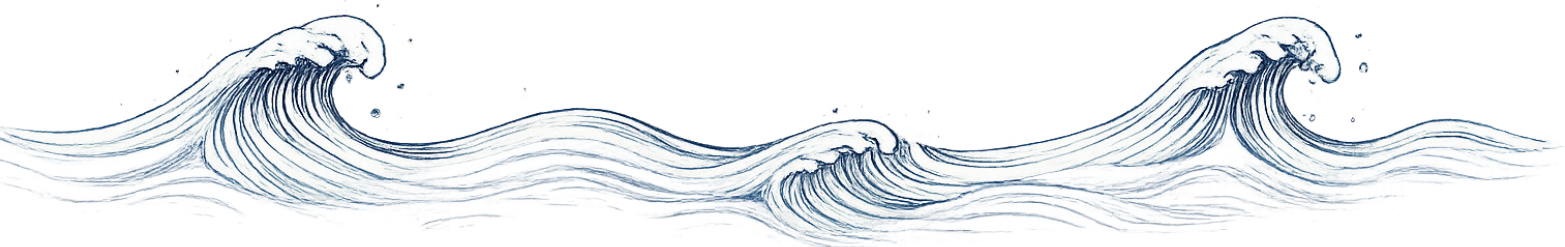
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Lesson One



He looked up into Heaven

Matthew 14:16-21 (TPT)

"They don't need to leave," Jesus responded. "You can give them something to eat." They answered, "But all we have is five barley loaves and two fish." "Let me have them," Jesus replied. Then he had everyone sit down on the grass as he took the five loaves and two fish. He looked up into heaven, gave thanks to God, and broke the bread into pieces. He then gave it to his disciples, who in turn gave it to the crowds. And everyone ate until they were satisfied, for the food was multiplied in front of their eyes! They picked up the leftovers and filled up twelve baskets full! There were about five thousand men who were fed, in addition to many women and children!

Blog Reflection

Pastor Frank Bailey writes, "This has to be the greatest of all the miracles in the Bible!! Why would I say that? This miracle does two major things as far as unveiling the plans of God. First, it displays the gospel plan and the church on earth that Jesus came to start. Think about it; He healed the people of their maladies, He fed them with fish and bread imaging Himself as the Bread of life, and He gathered together the people into a community feasting together on Christ. Secondly, this feast is a prophetic look into heaven when all the redeemed will sit together at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb and Jesus will serve us as eternity with Him in heaven begins. This passage defines our life together in the Christian community for eternity.

There is one sentence in this passage that really is central to the miracle. It is this - "He looked up into heaven, gave thanks to God, and broke the bread into pieces". Jesus looks up into heaven, displaying His total dependence on the Father for all things. Every good and perfect gift comes down from our Father in heaven. Next, Jesus gave thanks. This is the word in Greek: *eucaristeo*, it speaks of thanksgiving but also

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of the sacrificial death of Christ. Jesus is foreshadowing communion, which is at the heart of our Christian experience. Finally He broke the bread. This is a picture of His body that was torn for us that we might enjoy fellowship with the Father and the Son through the Holy Spirit. This is the life and bond of the Christian Church. At Victory Church, we are approaching our annual Feed the Multitudes celebration. This miracle is at the heart of all we do.”

Deep Dive: Key Points

1. Jesus Uses What We Already Have

The disciples saw lack - five loaves and two fish. Jesus saw enough when placed in His hands. God often begins His greatest works with our smallest offerings.

2. Dependence Comes Before Multiplication

Jesus looked up to heaven before breaking the bread. Miracles flow from dependence on the Father, not human ability.

3. Thanksgiving Releases Faith

Before the miracle was visible, Jesus gave thanks. Gratitude trusts God before the answer arrives.

4. Brokenness Can Become Blessing

Jesus broke the bread before it was multiplied. Sometimes what feels like breaking in our lives becomes the very thing God uses to feed others.

5. We Are Blessed to Become a Blessing

Jesus gave to the disciples, and the disciples gave to the people. God’s provision is meant to flow through us, not stop with us.

6. Christ Is Our True Bread

This miracle points beyond physical food to Jesus Himself—the Bread of Life who satisfies the deepest hunger of every soul.

Discussion Questions

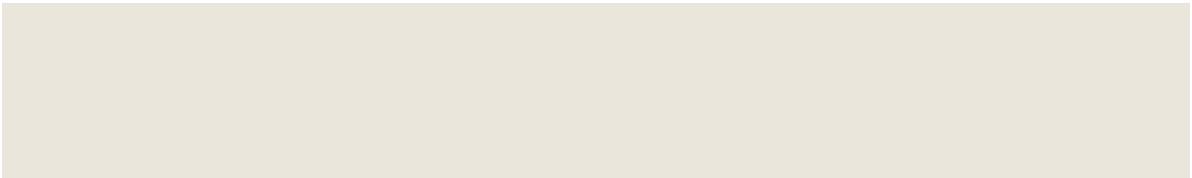
Understanding the Passage

1. Why do you think Jesus told the disciples, "You can give them something to eat," before performing the miracle?



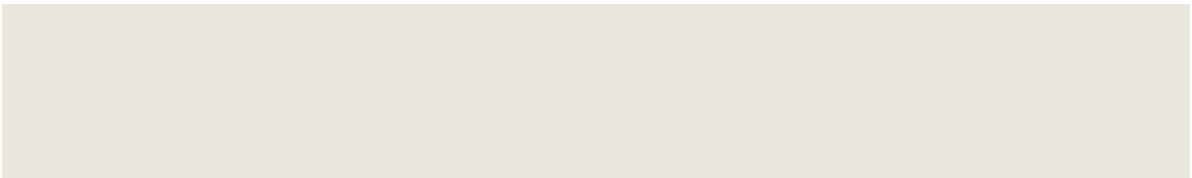
Spiritual Reflection

2. What area of your life currently feels like "only five loaves and two fish"? How might God want you to trust Him with it?



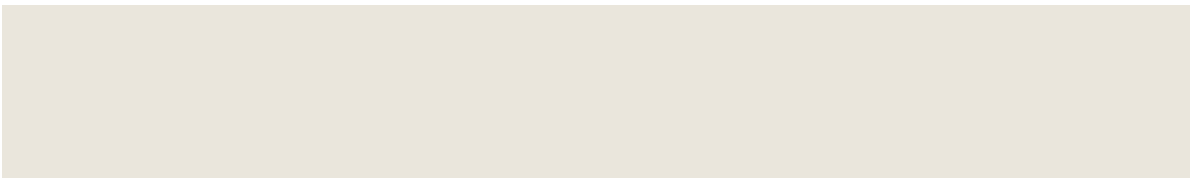
Practical Application

3. What is one gift, talent, resource, or opportunity God has already placed in your hands that you can use to bless someone else this week?



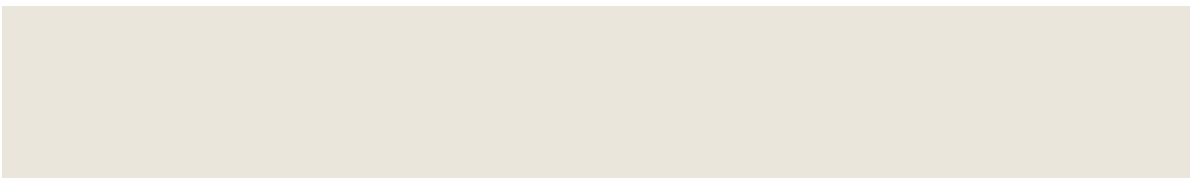
Personal Experience

4. Have you ever seen God multiply something small - time, finances, energy, influence, or effort -for a greater purpose? Share your story.



Group Challenge

5. As a small group, what is one practical way you can help "feed the multitudes" in your church or community this month?

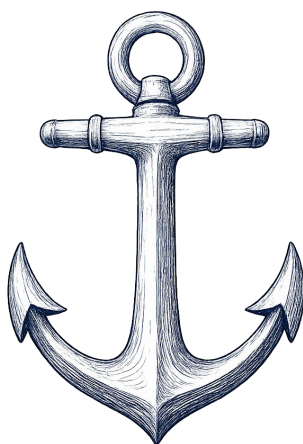


Key Takeaway

Jesus still takes what is surrendered, blesses it, breaks it, and multiplies it. When we place our limited resources into His unlimited hands, He turns scarcity into abundance. True satisfaction is found not only in receiving from Christ, but in joining Him as He feeds others through us.

Closing Prayer

“Lord Jesus, thank You for being the Bread of Life. Take what we have - our time, gifts, resources, and hearts - and use it for Your glory. Teach us to depend on You, to give thanks in every season, and to trust You to multiply what we surrender. Let our lives become nourishment to others. Amen.”



Lesson Two



*Stretching Faith:
Trusting in the God who already knows*

John 6:5-6 (TPT)

"Then Jesus lifted up His eyes, and seeing a great multitude coming toward Him, He said to Philip, 'Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?' But this He said to test him, for He Himself knew what He would do."

Blog Reflection

"Now Jesus already knew what he was about to do, but he said this to stretch Philip's faith." John 6:6 (TPT)

Pastor Frank Bailey writes, "Jesus already knew what He was about to do, that's the way He lived His life. He walked in fellowship with His Father and, because of that He could say, "I only say what I hear the Father saying," and He would also say, "I only do what I see the Father doing". This describes the omnipotence and the sovereignty of God. The Lord can do anything because all power is in His hands and because He rules as Sovereign, and all things are ultimately in His hands. This passage says that Jesus was using this instance to test His disciples to see what was in their hearts. Had they realized yet exactly who He was and is, and were they in a place to trust Him in apparently impossible circumstances?

But here is the amazing part about all of this, we now have access to the Holy Spirit and therefore we too have access to the mind of the Lord and His plans and purposes. Being able to see parts of our future by the Holy Spirit is what ministry is all about.

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Here is something Melodus, one of the early church fathers, said about this.

“Even though you consider carefully, can you as mere men
secure nourishment,
Or can you, though you are worried, feed the people?
Or, Life you cannot feed them, have you the power to keep silent?
I, alone, as Creator take thought for all.
I exist as good, God before the centuries.
And I provide every kind of food for all people;
But you, on beholding the multitude, are worried,
And you do not consider the One who provides abundantly,
As I am set before all, offering
The heavenly bread of immortality.
I know in advance what you are thinking and what you are saying
to each other,
As you see the people, the means of provision, and the hour.
You are reasoning, ‘Who will feed the entire crowd in the desert?’
Well, know clearly, friends, who I am.
I fed Israel in the desert;
I gave them bread from Heaven;
In a region without water, I made water to flow from a rock; ...
Since I am the heavenly bread of immortality.”

This miracle, the feeding of the multitudes, was a game changer for the disciples. Apparently, the veil of unbelief was gradually being peeled off of their eyes. The Lord Himself was there with them, and all things were possible. Today the Lord in the person of the Holy Spirit is with us and, yes all things are possible. Put your situation in the hands of the Lord and watch His miracle power unfold in your world.”

Deep Dive: Key Points

1. Jesus Knows Before We Do

Before the disciples had a plan, Jesus already knew what He would do. God is never surprised, confused, or unprepared by our circumstances.

2. Tests Are Often Invitations to Grow

Jesus asked Philip a question not for information, but for transformation. Sometimes God allows challenges to reveal where our faith needs to expand.

3. Human Limitation Meets Divine Power

The disciples saw lack, logistics, and impossibility. Jesus saw an opportunity for the Father's glory to be revealed.

4. The Holy Spirit Gives Guidance Today

Just as Jesus walked in fellowship with the Father, believers now have the Holy Spirit who leads, comforts, and reveals God's purposes.

5. Unbelief Can Be Gradually Removed

The disciples did not understand everything at once. Faith often grows layer by layer as we repeatedly witness God's faithfulness.

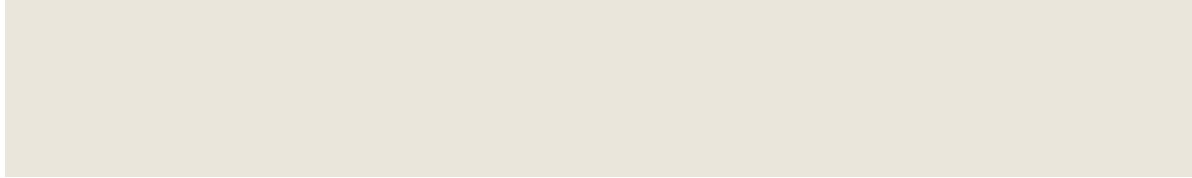
6. Impossible Situations Belong in God's Hands

What we cannot solve, God can transform. Our role is surrender and trust; His role is power and provision.

Discussion Questions

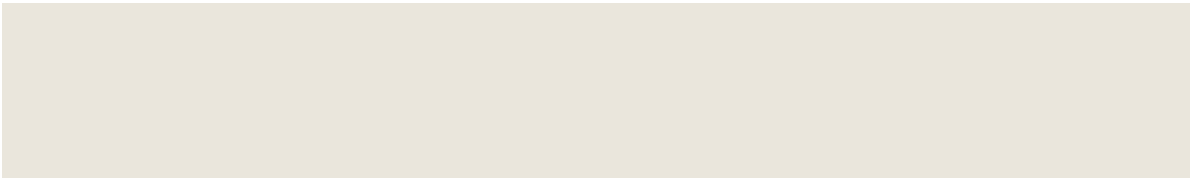
Understanding the Passage

1. Why do you think Jesus asked Philip a question when He already knew what He was going to do?



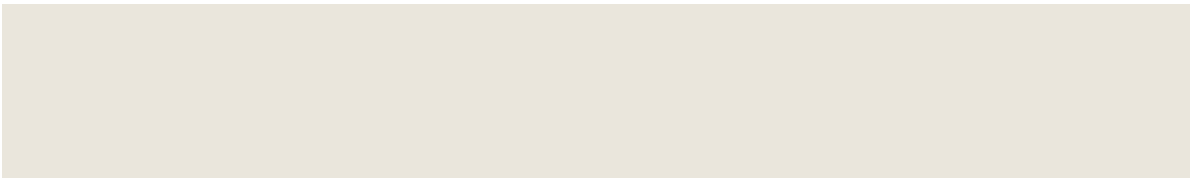
Spiritual Reflection

2. What current situation in your life feels impossible or overwhelming? How might God be using it to stretch your faith?



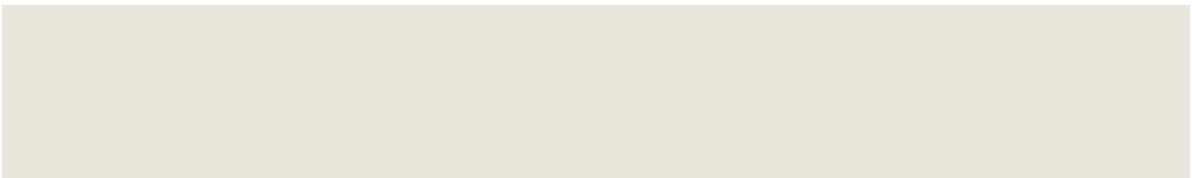
Practical Application

3. What is one practical way you can place that situation into God's hands this week - through prayer, obedience, patience, or seeking wise counsel?



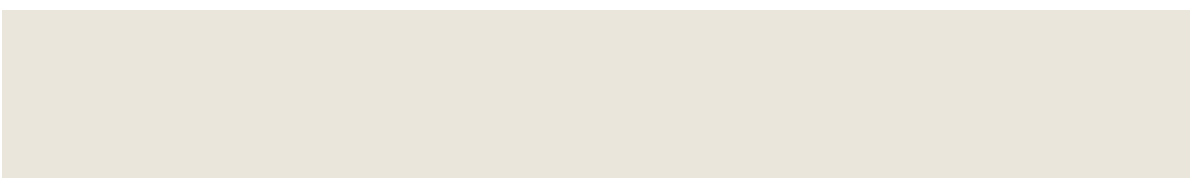
Personal Experience

4. Can you recall a time when God provided, guided, or intervened after you had no clear solution? What did you learn from it?



Group Challenge

5. As a group, identify one need in your church, workplace, or community that seems too large to meet. How can you trust God together and take one step of faith?

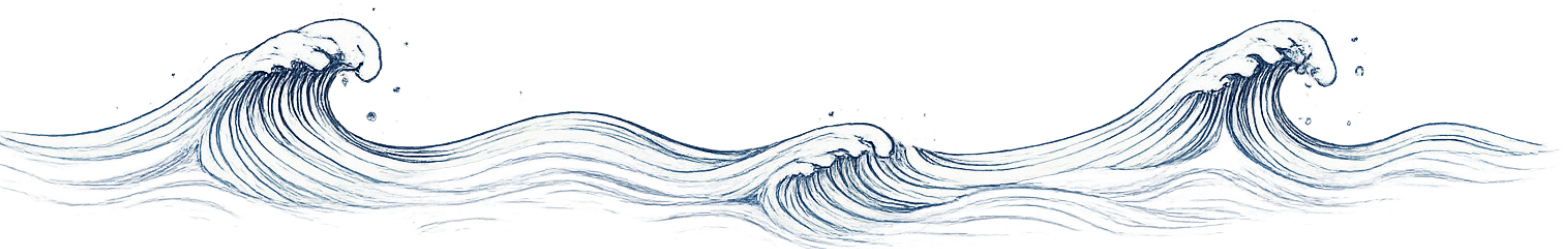


Key Takeaway

Jesus already knows what He is about to do in your life. What feels uncertain to you is already clear to Him. When we surrender our questions, fears, and limitations to the Lord, we make room for His wisdom and miracle power to unfold.

Closing Prayer

“Lord, thank You that nothing catches You by surprise. You already know what You are about to do in every area of our lives. Stretch our faith, remove unbelief, and teach us to trust You in impossible situations. Holy Spirit, guide us into God’s plans and help us rest in Your power. Amen.”



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Lesson Three



Daily Bread: The Hunger only Jesus can Satisfy

Matthew 6:9-11 (NKJV)

"In this manner, therefore, pray:
Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be Your name.
Your kingdom come.
Your will be done
On earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread."

Blog Reflection

Pastor Frank Bailey writes, "Jesus was moved with compassion when He saw the crowds of people rushing to be near Him. He didn't see crowds so much but, He saw hurting people in the crowd. He saw the widow struggling to support her family, the blind man that had no way to work a job, the leper who lived in bitter isolation, and the paralyzed folks who were dependent on handouts to survive. He saw those needs but, He also saw an even greater need in each life; they were like sheep without a shepherd. Their souls were hungry, and they had no bread. This is the basis of the prayer Jesus taught us to pray, 'give us this day our daily bread'. That day when Jesus healed the sick and multiplied the fish and bread, He knew that all healings and feasting weren't enough; they all needed the bread from heaven. Each one needed Christ to come into their lives and change everything.

This is what the event Feed the Multitudes is all about. There will be barbecue chicken, jambalaya, red beans, hot dogs, snowballs, watermelons, pastries, and plenty of drinks. There are also groceries and free shoes as part of this special day. All of these things are good, and we love doing this but, after everything is said and done, we all know that these things are only temporary help. That other nagging hunger just won't go away. We all need Jesus, we all need that other bread; the Living Bread that comes down from heaven. Inside all of us is

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that simple prayer crying out from the deepest part of us, 'give us today our daily bread'. Our heart is crying out for God, our soul is hungry for real food, the kind that satisfies the soul.

So come out to Feed the Multitudes, enjoy some chicken, snowballs, watermelons, and jambalaya. But also, don't forget that other food on the menu today, the real bread that comes down from heaven. This bread will satisfy you forever. How do you get this bread? Just look to the Lord and ask; you won't be disappointed."

Deep Dive: Key Points

1. Jesus Sees Individuals, Not Just Crowds

Where others saw masses of people, Jesus saw personal stories, pain, and need. God sees every person and knows every burden.

2. Compassion Moves the Heart of God

Jesus was moved with compassion toward the hurting. His love is active, personal, and responsive to human need.

3. Physical Needs Matter, but Spiritual Needs Matter

Food, clothing, and practical help are important expressions of love, but only Christ can satisfy the deeper hunger of the soul.

4. Daily Bread Is Both Provision and Presence

Jesus taught us to pray for daily bread because we need God every day—for natural provision, spiritual strength, and ongoing relationship with Him.

5. Temporary Help vs. Eternal Satisfaction

Many things can relieve pain for a moment, but Jesus alone gives lasting peace, identity, forgiveness, and fulfillment.


6. Ask and Receive

The invitation is simple: look to the Lord and ask. God responds to hearts that hunger for Him.

Discussion Questions

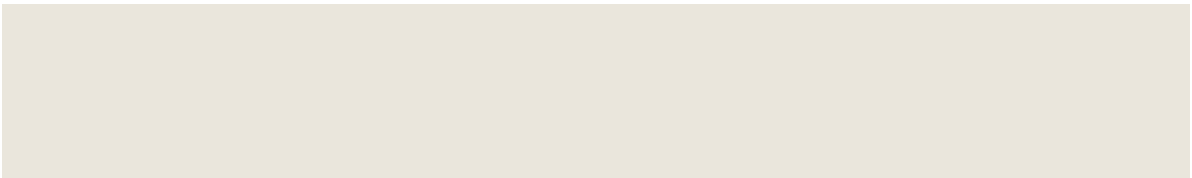
Understanding the Passage

1. Why do you think Jesus included "Give us this day our daily bread" in the model prayer?



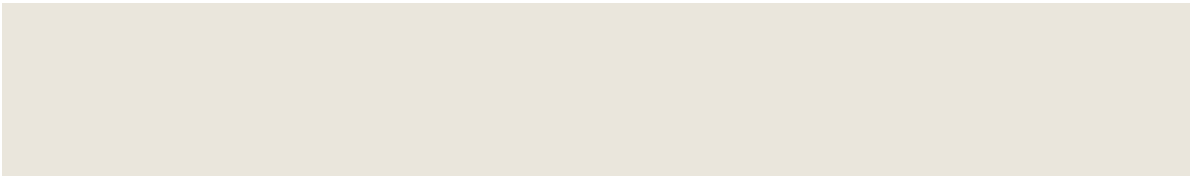
Spiritual Reflection

2. What kinds of "hunger" do people experience today beyond physical hunger? Where do you see that in your own life or community?



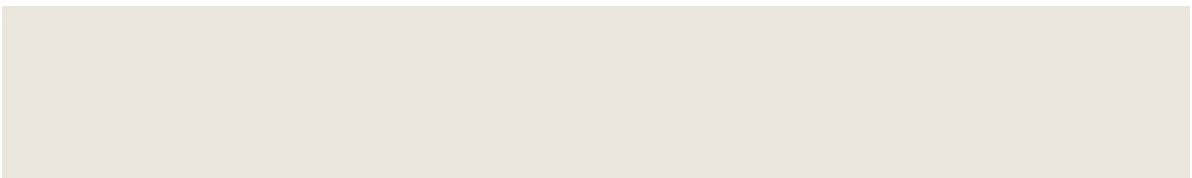
Practical Application

3. What is one way you can meet a practical need for someone this week while also sharing the love of Christ?



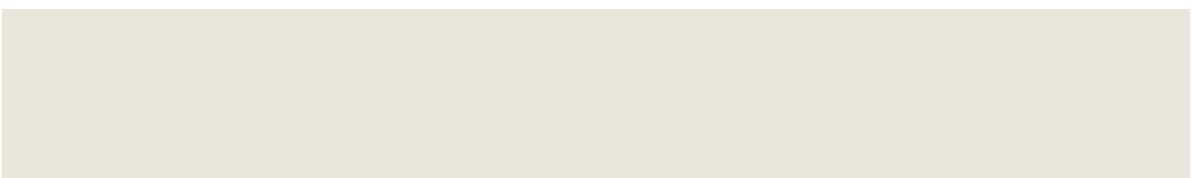
Personal Experience

4. Have you ever tried to fill a spiritual hunger with temporary things? What helped you realize only Jesus truly satisfies?



Group Challenge

5. As a group, how can you combine compassion ministry (meeting needs) with gospel ministry (sharing Christ) in your neighborhood this month?

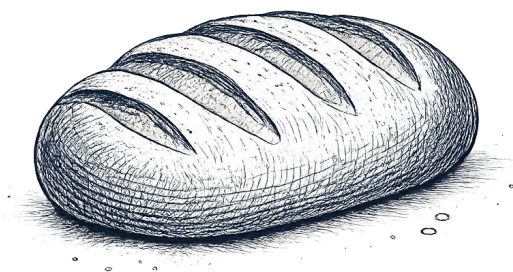


Key Takeaway

Jesus cares about every need we face, but He also knows our deepest hunger is for Him. The bread of this world may help for a moment, but the Bread from Heaven satisfies forever. When we come to Christ daily, we find the nourishment our souls have been longing for.

Closing Prayer

“Father, thank You for caring about every part of our lives. Give us this day our daily bread -provide for our needs and feed our souls with Your presence. Help us to see others with compassion like Jesus did. Use us to meet needs and point people to the true Bread of Life. Amen.”



Lesson Four



*Spiritual Food: Finding True
Satisfaction in God's Work*

John 4:31-34 (NKJV)

"In the meantime His disciples urged Him, saying, 'Rabbi, eat!' But He said to them, 'I have food to eat of which you do not know.' Therefore the disciples said to one another, 'Has anyone brought Him anything to eat?' Jesus said to them, 'My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.'"

Blog Reflection

Pastor Frank writes, "This is our nourishment, our spiritual food. We are feasting on God and feasting on distributing this food to whosoever will. This is Feed the Multitudes, this is Mary's Song, this is BTG, this is small groups, this is youth ministry, and ministry to children. Victory Church is celebrating 47 years of ministry here in New Orleans. One thing we have learned is that, we are not really satisfied until we give what we have received to others. The Lord has blessed us with many various ministries and outreach opportunities over the years, each one gives us an opportunity to break the bread of life with hurting people in our community. Three hundred years ago, Mathew Henry realized this as well. Here is something he said about this passage.

"They suspected he had had food brought to him in their absence... He had so little appetite for his dinner that they were ready to think he had already eaten. He made his work his meat (food) and drink. The work he had done in instructing the woman, the work he had to do among the Samaritans, this was meat (food) and drink to him. Never did a hungry man, or an epicure, expect a plentiful feast with so much desire or feed on its delicacies with so much delight as the desire and delight with which our LORD Jesus expected and grasped an opportunity to do good to souls. He said about this: That it was such meat (food) as the disciples knew not of. This may be said of good Christians too, that they have food to eat that others know nothing about, joy no stranger can

share.”

The disciples were literally confused when Jesus told them about His spiritual food. They did not yet know the deep satisfaction and nourishment that comes from ministry. We are blessed when we feast on the bread from heaven and doubly blest when we distribute this bread to others. This is our heavenly food. As we celebrate what the Lord has done in us and through us all these years maybe it is a good time to reconnect with our mission as a church. Find your place of blessing and begin to pour out. I am certain as you do you will discover this awesome spiritual feast that Jesus was talking about.”

Deep Dive: Key Points

1. Jesus Redefines Satisfaction

The disciples were focused on physical food, but Jesus pointed to something deeper - doing God’s will. True satisfaction isn’t just about what we consume, but what we participate in spiritually.

2. Ministry Is Nourishment, Not Just Obligation

Jesus describes doing God’s work as “food.” Serving others isn’t meant to drain us; it’s meant to sustain us. There is a unique joy that comes from being used by God.

3. Receiving and Giving Go Together

We are “doubly blessed” when we both receive from God and give to others. Spiritual stagnation often comes when we only receive but never pour out.

4. Mission Brings Meaning

The church’s mission - whether through outreach, small groups, or serving others - is not just activity; it’s the pathway to spiritual fulfillment.

5. Temporary Help vs. Eternal Satisfaction

Many things can relieve pain for a moment, but Jesus alone gives lasting peace, identity, forgiveness, and fulfillment.

6. Ask and Receive

The invitation is simple: look to the Lord and ask. God responds to hearts that hunger for Him.

Discussion Questions

Understanding the Passage

1. Why do you think the disciples misunderstood what Jesus meant by "food"? What does that reveal about how we sometimes view spiritual things?

Spiritual Reflection

2. Jesus said His "food" was to do the will of God. What do you think it looks like for God's will to truly become your source of joy and satisfaction?

Practical Application

3. In what specific ways can you begin (or continue) to "pour out" to others - through serving, encouraging, or sharing your faith - in your current season of life?

Personal Experience

4. Have you ever experienced joy or fulfillment from helping someone spiritually or serving in ministry? What did that feel like, and how did it impact you?

Group Challenge

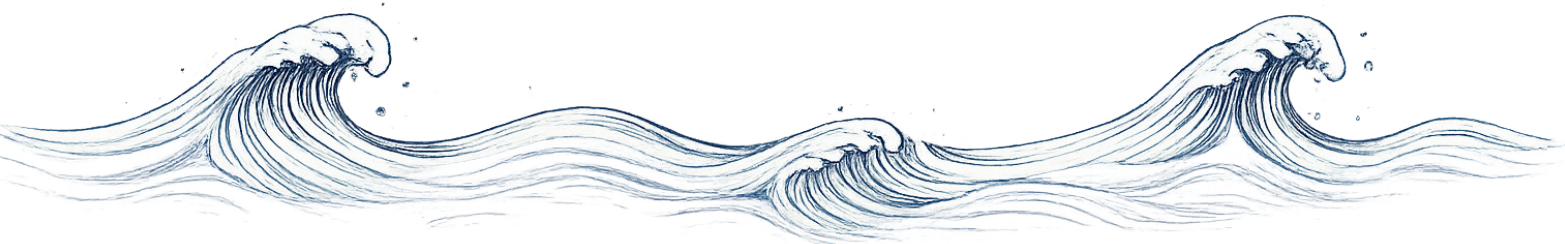
5. As a group, what is one practical way you could serve your community together this month?

Key Takeaway

Jesus invites us into a life where doing God's will is not a burden but a source of deep satisfaction. When we step into His mission, we discover a kind of "food" the world cannot offer - a lasting joy that comes from both knowing Him and making Him known.

Closing Prayer

"Lord, help us to hunger for what You hunger for. Teach us to find our satisfaction in doing Your will. Show each of us where we can serve and pour out what You've given us. Let us experience the joy of this spiritual food that only comes from You. Amen."



Lesson Five



If anyone thirsts, let them come to Me and drink

John 7:37-38 (NKJV)

“On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, ‘If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’”

Blog Reflection

Pastor Frank Bailey writes, “I remember hearing this strange terminology in August of 1994 at a revival meeting in Rockwall, Texas. The Evangelist Rodney Howard Browne was preaching about drinking; maybe not the kind of drinking you are familiar with, but drinking the new wine of the Spirit. That week, I was caught by surprise by the intoxicating effect of the Holy Spirit in my life. You may think this is kind of off the wall but there it is in the words of Christ, ‘If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink.’ That week was life changing for me; my world was radically and permanently changed by simply learning how to drink in the Holy Spirit. Let me share with you today **four simple ways to drink** that may change your life as well.

First, worship the Lord. When you spend extended periods of time worshipping the Lord, the glory of God will come and fill you. You have to take time for this; there is nothing like soaking in His presence that can change your world.

Second, spend time soaking in the Word of God. My favorite passages to drink from are the Psalms, the gospels, and the epistles of Paul. Drinking in His word will definitely change your life.

Third, get into a church where the anointing is welcomed and is obviously present. Stay in meetings as often as you can; this atmosphere is essential in order to receive His life changing anointing. If there is a prayer line, receive prayer and learn how to soak and wait in His

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presence.

Finally, spend time daily worshipping the Lord in other tongues. This is critical. I am not talking about petition or intercession but simply intimate worship. Speaking mysteries in the Spirit will change your life. If you pay close attention, drinking will become another word for receiving. This is not about giving out but simply learning how to receive from the Lord. Remember, God is the giver, we are the receiver. Opening our hearts and drinking in His presence as a lifestyle will bring you into another kind of life, the life of God pouring into you again and again."

Deep Dive: Key Points

1. Spiritual Thirst Is Real

Every person has a deep inner thirst that natural things cannot satisfy. Success, possessions, relationships, and entertainment cannot fill what only God can satisfy.

2. Jesus Is the Source of Living Water

Christ does not merely give water - He is the source of life. When we come to Him, we receive refreshing, cleansing, renewal, and strength.

3. Receiving Requires Coming to Him

Jesus said, "Let him come to Me and drink." Spiritual life flows from relationship, not distance. We must intentionally draw near to Him.

4. Worship Opens the Heart

Times of worship soften our hearts and make room for the Holy Spirit to refresh us. His presence restores what stress and pressure have drained.

5. God's Word Nourishes the Soul

Just as water refreshes the body, Scripture refreshes the inner man. Time in the Word strengthens faith and renews the mind.

6. Overflow Is the Goal

Jesus said rivers would flow out of believers. God refreshes us not only for ourselves, but so His life can touch others through us.

Discussion Questions

Understanding the Passage

1. Why do you think Jesus used the word thirst to describe spiritual need?

Spiritual Reflection

2. What areas of your life feel dry, weary, or empty right now? How might Jesus be inviting you to come and drink?

Practical Application

3. Which of these practices could help you receive from God this week: worship, Bible reading, church fellowship, prayer, or quiet time in His presence?

Personal Experience

4. Have you ever experienced a season where God refreshed or renewed you spiritually? What happened?

Group Challenge

5. As a small group, how can you create an atmosphere where others feel encouraged, refreshed, and strengthened in God?

Practical Applications for this Week

Daily Refreshing Time - Set aside 10–15 minutes each day to worship, pray in tongues, and sit quietly before the Lord.

Drink from the Word - Read one Psalm each day this week and ask the Holy Spirit to speak personally to you.

Stay Connected - Attend church, small group, or prayer gathering expecting God to meet you there.

Overflow to Others - Encourage one person this week with prayer, kindness, or a Scripture.

Key Takeaway

Jesus still stands and calls to thirsty hearts today. He does not condemn thirst—He invites it. When we come to Him consistently, dry places become rivers, weakness becomes strength, and emptiness becomes overflow.

Closing Prayer

“Lord Jesus, I come to You thirsty. Fill every dry place in my heart with Your living water. Teach me to receive from You daily through worship, Your Word, and time in Your presence. Let Your life flow through me so others may be refreshed as well. Amen.”

Lesson Six



Times of Refreshing

Acts 3:19 (NKJV)

“Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord,”

Blog Reflection

Pastor Frank Bailey writes, “Learning to live in a constant state of renewal is critical in light of the day that we live in. Our hearts and minds are continually attacked by the spirit of the world, cloaked in entertainment and the attitude that ‘everybody is doing it.’ Just take a look around; folks are on their screens at dinner, in the line for coffee or fast food, in church, while someone else is trying to talk to you...you get the picture. And what exactly are they looking at? Only God knows as anything – I mean anything – is liable to pop up on your screen at any moment. That’s one of the reasons why renewal is so critical. It is imperative that we are transformed by the renewing of our minds and our hearts by the power of the Spirit; if not, we will easily be influenced by the spirit of the world. Peter used an interesting word in his message ***anapsuxis*** which can be translated as renewal, refreshing, or the recovery from the effects of heat. Peter recognized how dangerous and influential the world is and brought it out in his preaching. Here is how the Fire Bible describes this verse.

“Although difficult times will come before Christ returns, and many will abandon their faith in God, he still promises to send times of spiritual revival, renewal, and refreshing to encourage his faithful followers. Christ’s presence, spiritual blessings, miracles and evidence of the Spirit’s power will be a reality for those who endure opposition from the world, reject its evil influences and remain true to God during the difficult times ahead.”

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I think it is quite interesting that Peter connected repentance with refreshing and renewal. What exactly was Peter getting at? He saw the danger of sin, which brings the need for repentance into our lives. Repentance can only come by the power of the Spirit, not human will power. So the renewing and the refreshing of the Holy Spirit empowers us to change or to repent. The Spirit can deliver us from the power of sin as we come under His influence; He can also keep us free as we learn to walk and live in renewal. Now is a great time to make renewal a way of life, when that occurs you can expect to see all sorts of spiritual breakthrough in your life."

Deep Dive: Key Points

1. Refreshing Comes from God's Presence

Peter teaches that true renewal does not come from circumstances, entertainment, or self-help - it comes from the presence of the Lord.

2. Repentance Opens the Door to Renewal

Repentance is not punishment; it is an invitation to turn away from what drains us and return to what restores us.

3. The World Drains, the Spirit Restores

The constant pull of worldly influences can exhaust the heart and cloud the mind. The Holy Spirit renews clarity, peace, and spiritual strength.

4. Renewal Must Become a Lifestyle

Refreshing is not meant to be a rare event. God desires continual renewal as a daily way of life.

5. Transformation Requires the Holy Spirit

Lasting change cannot come by human effort alone. The Spirit empowers us to overcome sin and walk in freedom.

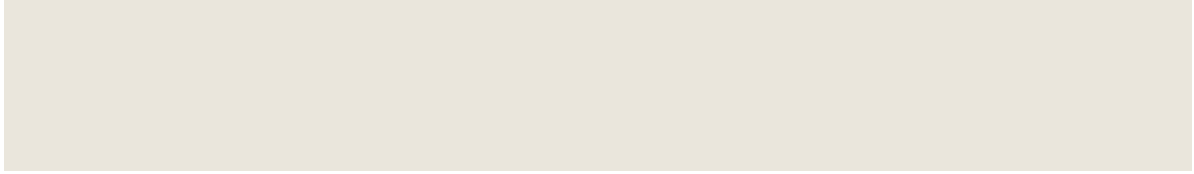
6. Renewal Leads to Breakthrough

As believers remain spiritually refreshed, they become stronger, clearer, and more ready to receive God's breakthrough in every area of life.

Discussion Questions

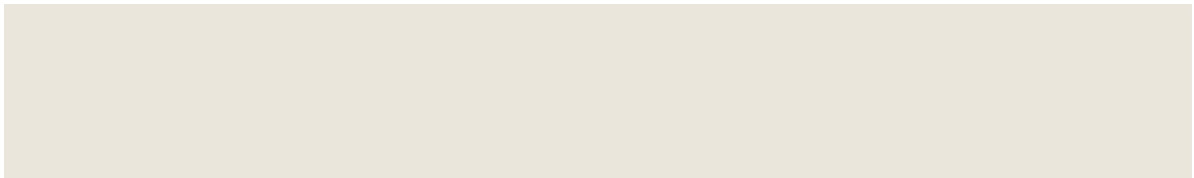
Understanding the Passage

1. Why do you think Peter connected repentance with “times of refreshing”?



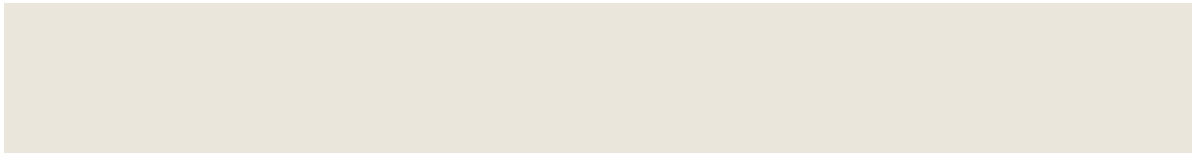
Spiritual Reflection

2. What influences in today’s culture most try to drain your focus, peace, or passion for God?



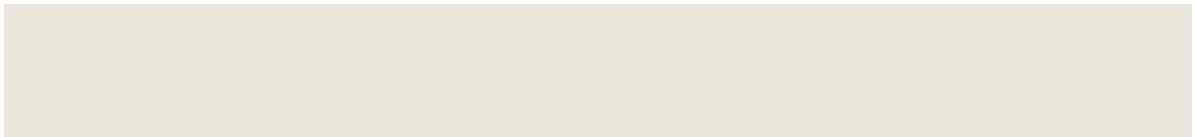
Practical Application

3. What is one practical change you can make this week to create more room for God’s renewing presence?



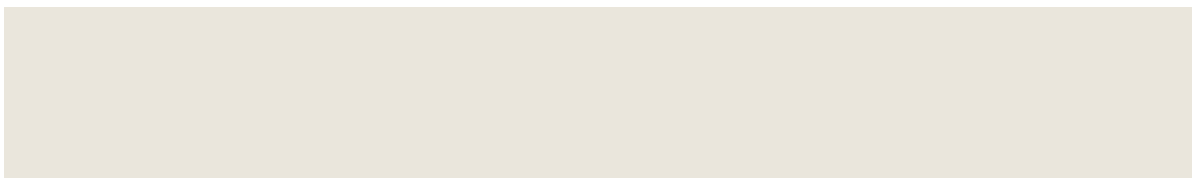
Personal Experience

4. Can you share a time when God refreshed your heart after a difficult or dry season?



Group Challenge

5. How can your small group help one another stay spiritually renewed and less influenced by the world?



Practical Applications for this Week

Daily Renewal Time - Spend 10–15 minutes each day in prayer and worship, asking the Lord to refresh your heart and mind.

Screen Fast Moment - Choose one block of time each day to put away devices and focus on God's presence.

Practice Repentance Quickly - When convicted by the Holy Spirit, respond quickly instead of delaying. Freedom grows through obedience.

Renew the Mind - Read Romans 12:1–2 and meditate on it throughout the week.

Encourage Someone Else - Reach out to one person who may need spiritual encouragement or prayer.

Key Takeaway

God never intended His people to live spiritually exhausted, distracted, or defeated. He offers times of refreshing from His presence. As we turn to Him and walk in continual renewal, strength returns, joy rises, and breakthrough becomes possible.

Closing Prayer

"Father, thank You for promising times of refreshing from Your presence. Renew my mind, restore my heart, and free me from every worldly influence that weakens me. Teach me to live a lifestyle of repentance, renewal, and dependence on Your Spirit. Let breakthrough come as I walk closely with You. Amen."

Lesson Seven



God Has Visited Us

Luke 7:16 (TPT)

"A tremendous sense of holy mystery swept over the crowd as they witnessed this miracle of resurrection. They shouted praises to God, saying, 'God himself has visited us to bless his people! A great prophet has appeared among us!'"

Blog Reflection

Pastor Frank Bailey writes, "God Himself has visited us to bless His people." This is the unsaid cry in every man's heart; his heart longs to know His maker, he is just not quite in touch with his real needs. The strange thing about the Lord is that He tends to be so unusual and quite unpredictable. He loves to show up at funerals and deathbeds or even tombs four days late, you would think His timing could be a little different. Apparently, He has a flare for the dramatic. Why just rush over and heal a sick person when you can wait a few days and raise someone from the dead? Like I said, He can be quite unpredictable in all that He does. Here is how the Pillar Commentary describes this visitation.

"A gust of awe and praise seized all who were present — the "all" being emphatic (hapantes) in a number of weighty Greek manuscripts. "A great prophet has appeared among us. God has come to help his people". The Greek word for "come to help" (episkeptesthai) was the first and last word of Zechariah's song in the infancy narrative. Its subject is God — not a distant and uninvolved God — but the God who visits, even intrudes into, His creation in grace in order to "redeem" and raise up a "horn of salvation" for His people "from heaven". The exclamation of the people in v. 16 is a confession of faith that, in the raising of the boy in Nain, this prophet from Capernaum is the fulfillment of the longing of Israel for God's eschatological intervention of salvation. Luke underscores the radical nature of the divine visitation in v. 17 when he says that "this word about Jesus spread throughout Judea and the surrounding country."

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Visitations from God can come in many different ways. He shows up in churches that have been quite dead themselves for quite a while, or He may show up in remote regions that most people forgot existed. Yeah, He does what He wants, and when He wants and His visitations change the world. It's hard to forget the horse stable in Azusa Street or the frontier church in 1734 in Western Massachusetts or the teenage revival in Wales, of all places, in 1904. Visitations are what we long for. Maybe there is an unscheduled one in your future that will change your whole world."

Deep Dive: Key Points

1. Every Heart Longs for God

Deep within every person is a desire to know their Creator. Many search in other places, but only God can satisfy that longing.

2. God Still Visits His People

The Lord is not distant or uninvolved. He enters human situations with grace, power, and compassion.

3. God Often Moves in Unexpected Ways

His timing and methods may surprise us. He can show up in places of sorrow, delay, weakness, or impossibility.

4. Divine Visitations Bring Resurrection Life

Jesus raised the widow's son, revealing that where God visits, dead things can live again - hope, faith, purpose, and even impossible situations.

5. One Encounter Can Impact Many

When Jesus moved in Nain, the news spread everywhere. God's touch on one life can influence an entire community.

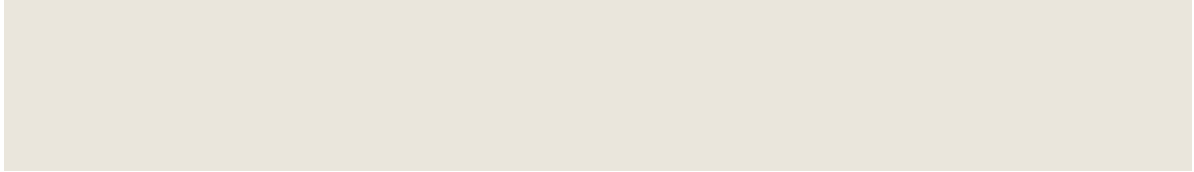
6. We Should Live Expectant

History is filled with revivals and sudden moves of God. Believers should remain hungry and ready for fresh visitation today.

Discussion Questions

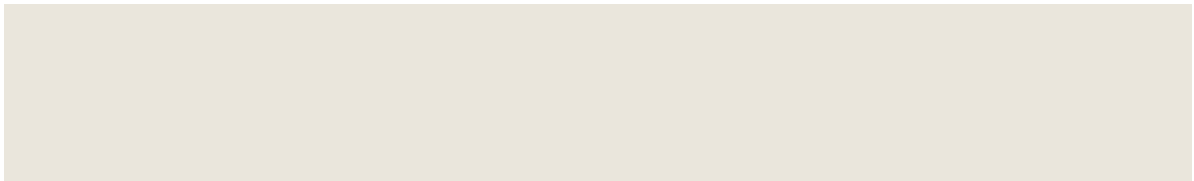
Understanding the Passage

1. Why do you think the crowd responded by saying, "God Himself has visited us"?



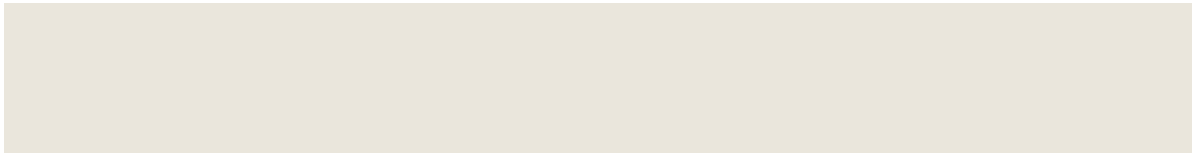
Spiritual Reflection

2. What area of your life feels like a funeral procession or hopeless situation where you need God to intervene?



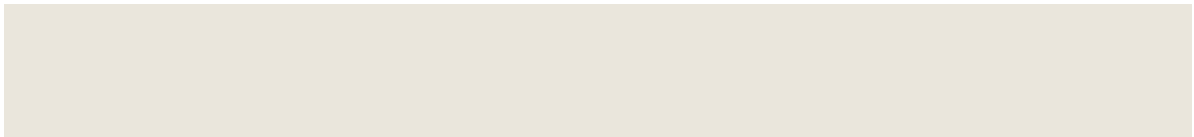
Practical Application

3. How can you cultivate expectation for God to move in your daily life rather than assuming ordinary routines?



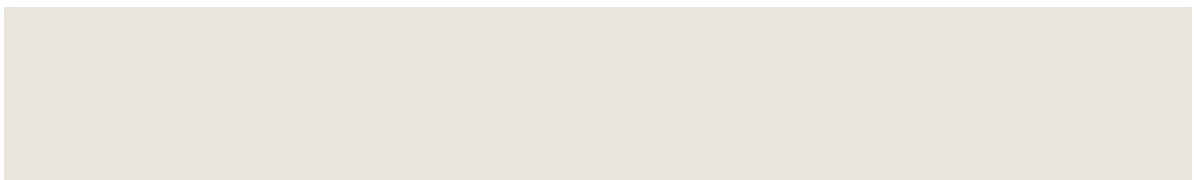
Personal Experience

4. Have you ever experienced an unexpected moment where God touched your life, family, or church in a powerful way?



Group Challenge

5. How can your small group create an atmosphere of prayer, hunger, and faith for a fresh move of God?



Practical Applications for this Week

Live Expectant - Begin each morning praying, "Lord, visit me today with Your presence and purpose."

Invite God into Difficult Places - Bring one hopeless or delayed situation before the Lord daily this week.

Remember His Faithfulness - Write down past moments where God intervened unexpectedly in your life.

Pray for Revival - Spend time praying for your church, city, and family to experience God's visitation.

Encourage Someone - Share hope with one person who may feel discouraged or spiritually dry.

Key Takeaway

God is not absent from human pain or forgotten places. He still visits people with mercy, power, and resurrection life. What seems delayed or impossible to us may become the very stage where His glory is revealed.

Closing Prayer

"Father, thank You that You are not distant, but You visit Your people with love and power. Come into every hopeless place in my life and bring resurrection life. Stir fresh expectation in my heart, and let me be ready for every way You choose to move. Visit my family, my church, and my community with Your presence. Amen."

Lesson Eight



The River and the Fishermen

Ezekiel 47:1, 3-5 (NKJV)

“Then he brought me back to the door of the temple; and there was water, flowing from under the threshold of the temple.... And when the man went out to the east with the line in his hand, he measured one thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; the water came up to my ankles. Again he measured one thousand and brought me through the waters; the water came up to my knees. Again he measured one thousand and brought me through; the water came up to my waist. Again he measured one thousand, and it was a river that I could not cross; for the water was too deep, water in which one must swim, a river that could not be crossed.”

Blog Reflection

Pastor Frank Bailey writes, “This passage is the famous vision of the River given to the prophet Ezekiel. In it, we see Ezekiel wading out into the River as a picture of the Lord touching His people in the last days. There have been many interpretations of this passage, and like most prophecy, they can have multiple applications. This is what this vision says to me. As Ezekiel goes to the edge of the River up to his ankles, this speaks to me of having the first taste of the supernatural; you are basically testing it out. Next, he proceeds to his knees. This is where we begin to pray and hear from God; the spiritual world becomes real to us. Next, we are up to our waist, covering our loins. Here we begin to be productive and bring forth fruit. The final stage is when the River goes over your head; this is the place of breakthrough, where anything can happen. Ezekiel then begins to see the effect of the River on the world reflected in this next passage.

Ezek. 47:7, 9-10 – When I returned, there, along the bank of the river, were very many trees on one side and the other.... And it shall be that every living thing that moves, wherever the rivers go, will live. There will be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters go there; for they will be healed, and everything will live wherever the river goes. It shall be that fishermen will stand by it from En Gedi to En Eglaim; they will be places for spreading their nets. Their fish will be of

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the same kinds as the fish of the Great Sea, exceedingly many.

The trees in this vision are a picture of the healthy church in the last days, planted by the River of Life. This is where the church begins to affect the world. Ezekiel then sees the healing power of the River bringing spiritual life to everyone touched by it. Next, Ezekiel turns his attention to the fishermen and the fish. This, of course, reminds us of Jesus calling His disciples to follow Him and become fishers of men. This is God's work; the large multitude of fish is the harvest at the end of the world. The fishermen are His disciples, casting their nets into the waters for a final harvest of souls."

Deep Dive: Key Points

1. Life and Renewal are Found in the River of God's Presence

The water flowed from the temple, reminding us that true spiritual life begins with God. Renewal always starts in His presence.

2. God Invites Us Deeper

Ezekiel moved from ankles to knees to waist to waters to swim in. God calls believers beyond shallow experiences into deeper surrender and trust.

3. Prayer Opens Spiritual Reality

At knee-depth, Pastor Bailey describes learning to pray and hear from God. Prayer awakens sensitivity to the Holy Spirit.

4. Fruitfulness Comes with Maturity

Waist-deep water represents strength and productivity. As believers grow, their lives begin to bear fruit that blesses others.

5. Breakthrough Happens in Full Surrender

When the water is over our heads, control is surrendered. This is where God's power moves beyond human ability.

6. The River Brings Life to Others

Wherever the river flows, life follows. God fills us not only for ourselves, but so healing, salvation, and hope can reach others.

Discussion Questions

Understanding the Passage

1. Why do you think God showed Ezekiel a river that kept getting deeper?

Spiritual Reflection

2. Which stage best describes your spiritual life right now: ankles, knees, waist, or swimming? Why?

Practical Application

3. What would it look like for you to step deeper into God this week?

Personal Experience

4. Have you ever experienced a season of breakthrough where God moved beyond what you could do on your own?

Group Challenge

5. How can your small group become like trees planted by the river, bringing life and strength to others?

Practical Applications for this Week

Step Deeper Daily - Spend 10–15 minutes each day in prayer, asking God to draw you deeper into His presence.

Listen for His Voice - Take time after prayer to sit quietly and listen for what the Lord may be speaking.

Bear Fruit - Choose one practical way to serve someone this week through kindness, encouragement, or generosity.

Cast the Net - Pray for one person who needs Jesus and look for an opportunity to share hope with them.

Key Takeaway

God never intended His people to remain ankle-deep. He invites us into deeper waters where faith grows, fruit increases, and breakthrough becomes possible. As we surrender to His river, our lives become channels of healing and hope to the world around us.

Closing Prayer

“Father, thank You for the River of Life that flows from Your presence. Draw me deeper into You. Teach me to pray, hear Your voice, and trust You fully. Let my life bear fruit and bring healing to others wherever I go. Use me in Your harvest and let Your river flow through me. Amen.”

Lesson Nine



300 Fishermen

Mark 1:16-18 (NKJV)

"And as He walked by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. Then Jesus said to them, 'Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men.' They immediately left their nets and followed Him."

Blog Reflection

Pastor Frank Bailey writes, "This passage has been important in my life since the very beginning of my walk with Jesus. As most of you know, my walk with the Lord began on the shores of Lake Pontchartrain in the City of New Orleans when Jesus called me to follow Him, speaking to me from the mouths of young Jesus freaks. From those first days, I saw myself as one of His fishermen, fishing for souls became my life's calling. That was confirmed many years later when Jesus visited me in a hospital room and called me 'Fisherman'; I suppose to Him that is my name. As Parris and I followed the Lord from those early days up until now, we have found ourselves pioneering and pastoring a church in the New Orleans area for 47 years, which brings me to what I want to speak to you about today.

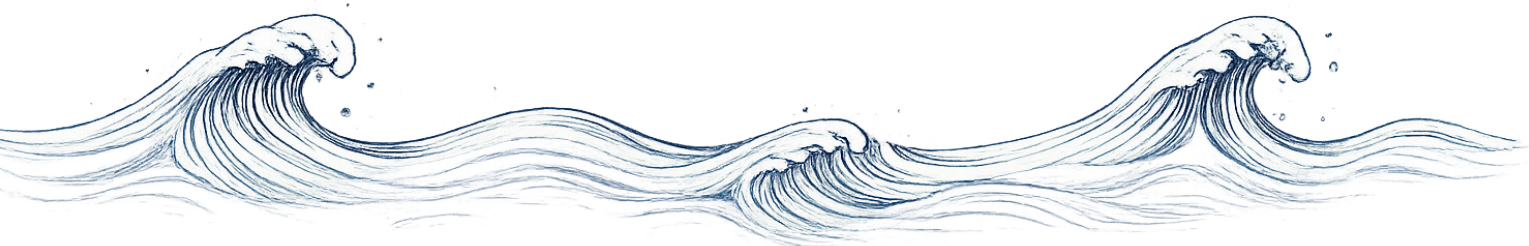
Parris and I feel urged to complete this half century of pastoring Victory Church with all of our might. We see these next three years as critical and we are asking the Lord for a large team of fishermen to finish these 50 years with fire. Maybe you are going to be one of the 300 as we finish these 50 years of harvesting souls in NOLA.

What exactly do we feel the Lord is leading us to do as a church in this critical season? We want to raise up fishermen, Christian workers, and ministers, to reap a harvest in this special season appointed by the

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Lord. There are three areas of fishing that we are asking you to join with us. First, simply winning souls for Christ. This may be intimidating for some, but it is natural for a Christian. The easiest way to win a soul is by reaching out to your circle of family and friends and bringing them into the house of God. You can start a prayer meeting or a Bible Study in someone's home, place of business, or school and make winning people to the Lord personal and intentional in your life. This is the most effective form of evangelism.

Secondly, is to become a mender of nets. If you read a few verses down from today's scripture, you will see that John was mending nets when he received his calling. I believe this is also prophetic. John was a restorer of broken lives, a net mender. This, too, is a vital part of being a fisherman; restoring broken lives is the work of a net mender. We see this happen in small group ministry as well as in net mending specific ministries like Christ Centered Recovery gatherings or outreach into prisons, hospitals, or recovery ministries. Finally, we see the importance of partnership in this call to be a fisherman. Luke's gospel, chapter 5 made this clear; twice, Luke emphasized that these disciples were partners in the fishing business. This is also part of being one of our 300 fishermen. All of us become partners together, offering our time, resources (tithing), and talent into the work of God. All of us can fit into all three of these categories. Maybe one of the three will stand out more in your life, but all of us are called to become His fishermen. Join with me for three years and see what the Lord can do through us."



Deep Dive: Key Points

1. Jesus Calls Ordinary People

Simon and Andrew were fishermen doing everyday work when Jesus called them. God often calls people in the middle of normal life.

2. Following Comes Before Fishing

Jesus first said, "Follow Me." Ministry flows from relationship with Christ before activity for Christ.

3. God Transforms Identity

Jesus said, "I will make you become." He changes who we are and shapes us into people who impact others.

4. Every Believer Can Reach Souls

Winning people to Christ is not limited to pastors or evangelists. Every Christian can invite, share, pray, and love others toward Jesus.

5. Some Are Called to Mend Nets

Restoring broken lives is part of kingdom work. Healing, recovery, discipleship, and encouragement are all forms of net mending.

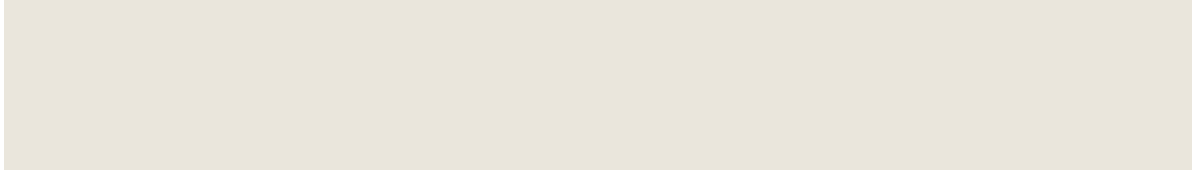
6. Partnership Multiplies the Harvest

The mission of God is stronger when believers serve together with time, gifts, and resources.

Discussion Questions

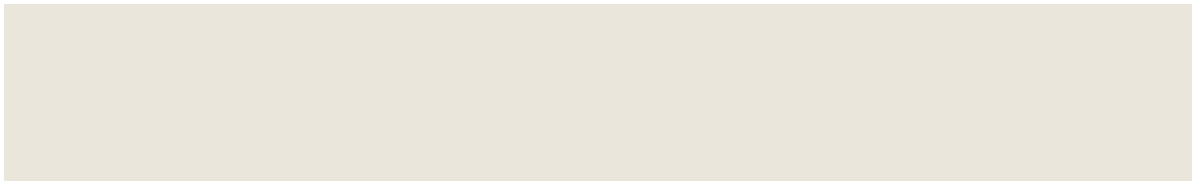
Understanding the Passage

1. Why do you think Jesus used fishermen as an example for reaching people?



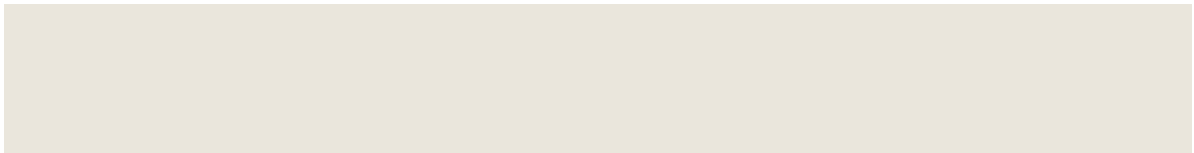
Spiritual Reflection

2. What does it personally mean for you to “follow Jesus” in this season of your life?



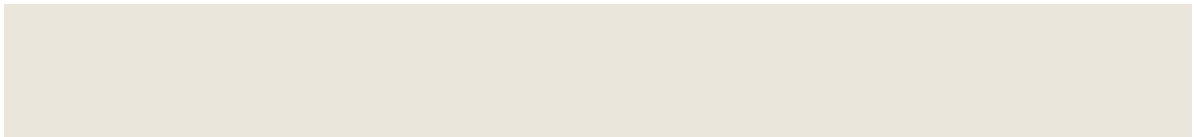
Practical Application

3. Which of these areas do you feel drawn to right now: winning souls, mending nets, or partnership in the mission?



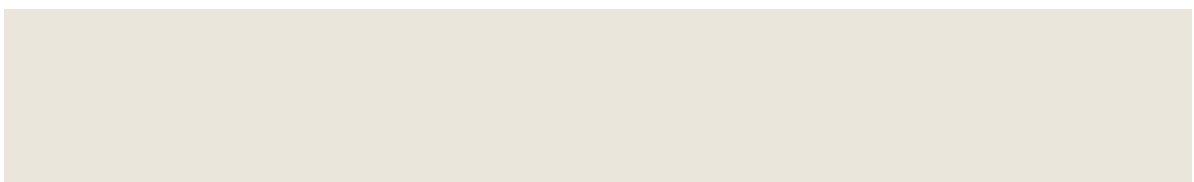
Personal Experience

4. Has someone ever “fished” for you or helped restore your life spiritually? What impact did that have?



Group Challenge

5. How can your small group become a team of fishermen together in your community?



Practical Applications for this Week

Pray for One Person - Ask God to place one person on your heart who needs Christ, and pray for them daily this week.

Make an Invitation - Invite someone to church, small group, coffee, or a spiritual conversation.

Help Mend a Net - Encourage someone hurting, struggling, or disconnected through prayer, kindness, or support.

Partner Intentionally - Ask God how you can give your time, gifts, or resources more fully to His work.

Key Takeaway

Jesus still walks by the shorelines of ordinary life calling people to follow Him. His invitation is not only to believe, but to become. As we follow closely, He transforms us into people who gather souls, restore lives, and build His kingdom together.

Closing Prayer

"Lord Jesus, thank You for calling ordinary people like me. Teach me to follow You closely and let my life be used for Your harvest. Help me reach the lost, restore the broken, and partner faithfully in Your work. Make me into all You have called me to become. Amen."

