

Open Bible Stories — Jesus Feeds Thousands of People

Introduction

Key Idea

The story of Jesus feeding the crowd of five thousand teaches us that Jesus is all-sufficient: he provides for all the needs of his people.

Core Belief Verse

"And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:19

God's Big Story

The eternal God created all things in six days.

He made a good and perfect world.

He made humans in his image to fill the earth and rule over creation.

But humans rebelled against God and ruined God's creation.

God set to restore his world through his promise.

God made a covenant with Abraham. He promised to bless all nations through Abraham.

God kept his promises across the generations.

God provided Abraham with a promised child, Isaac.

God gave Isaac a wife and she bore twins, Jacob and Esau.

God blessed Jacob and his sons, and the blessing continued to the next generation.

God rescued Joseph, one of Jacob's sons, and used him to rescue his family.

God caused his people, the Israelites, to multiply in the land of Egypt; eventually, they became slaves.

But, God raised up a deliverer, Moses, to deliver his people from their slavery.

God judged the Egyptians with harsh plagues; in the final judgment, he passed over his people who covered their doorposts with the blood of a sacrificed lamb.

Then, God delivered the Israelites by bringing them out of Egypt and crossing the Red Sea on dry land.

God made a covenant with the Israelites and made them his people.

God tested Israel in a series of wilderness wanderings and eventually brought his people into the promised land of Canaan.

God raised up deliverers to lead Israel and rescue them from their enemies.

God formed Israel into a kingdom. He made a covenant with King David and promised to send a king that would rule his people forever. Many of Israel's kings were evil and the kingdom of Israel divided into two kingdoms.

God sent prophets to warn his people of God's judgment and call them to repent.

When Israel did not repent, God sent his people into exile. After many years, he brought them back to the land.

Throughout the Old Testament, God promised to send his Messiah to deliver his people from their sin.

After many years, the prophet John was born. He would prepare people for the coming Messiah.

At the perfect time, God sent his Son, Jesus, to be born of a virgin Mary.

When John and Jesus grew up, John baptized Jesus as a sign that Jesus was God's beloved Son.

Jesus endured all manner of temptation without ever sinning.

When he was thirty years old, he launched a public ministry of preaching, teaching, and healing.

He taught his disciples about the life of compassion, sacrifice, and forgiveness.

He performed many miracles: he fed a crowd of five thousand

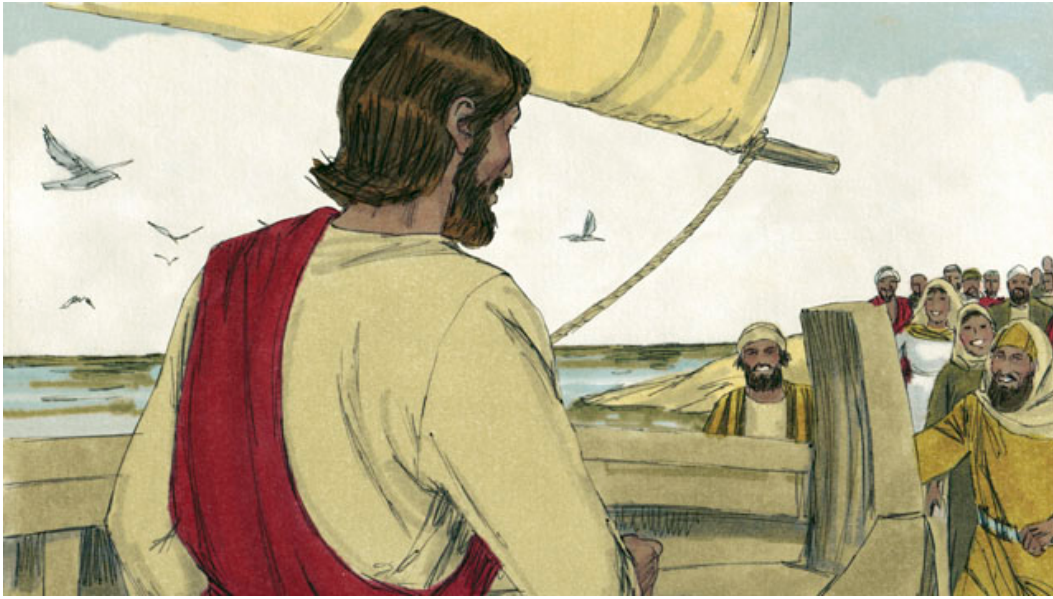
The Story: Jesus Feeds Thousands of People

30-01



Jesus sent his apostles to preach and to teach people in many different villages. When they returned to where Jesus was, they told him what they had done. Then Jesus invited them to go with him to a quiet place across the lake to rest for a while. So, they got into a boat and went to the other side of the lake.

30-02



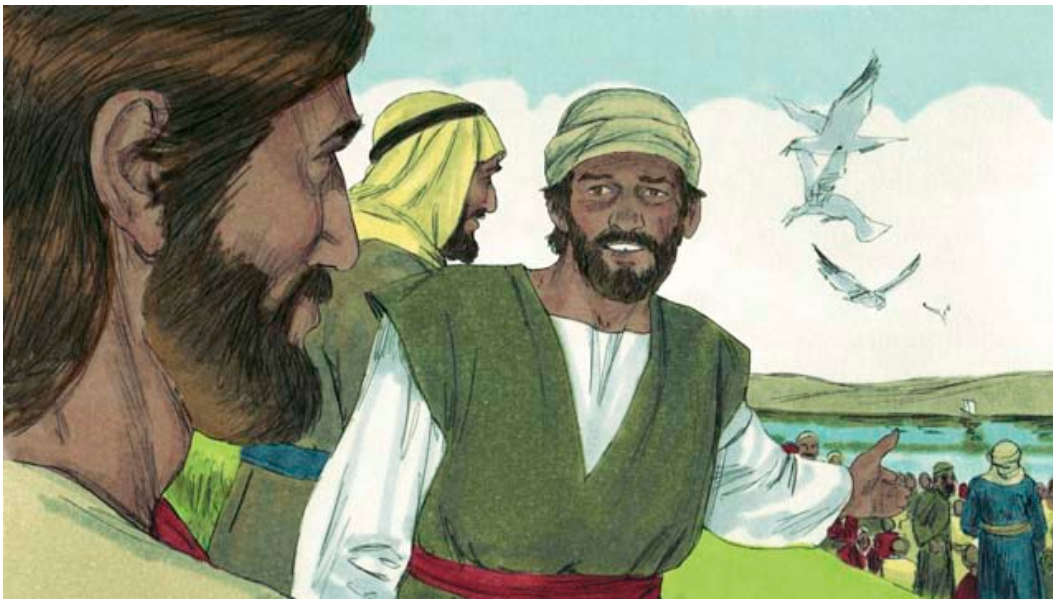
But there were many people who saw Jesus and the disciples leave in the boat. These people ran along the shore of the lake to get to the other side ahead of them. So when Jesus and the disciples arrived, a large group of people was already there, waiting for them.

30-03



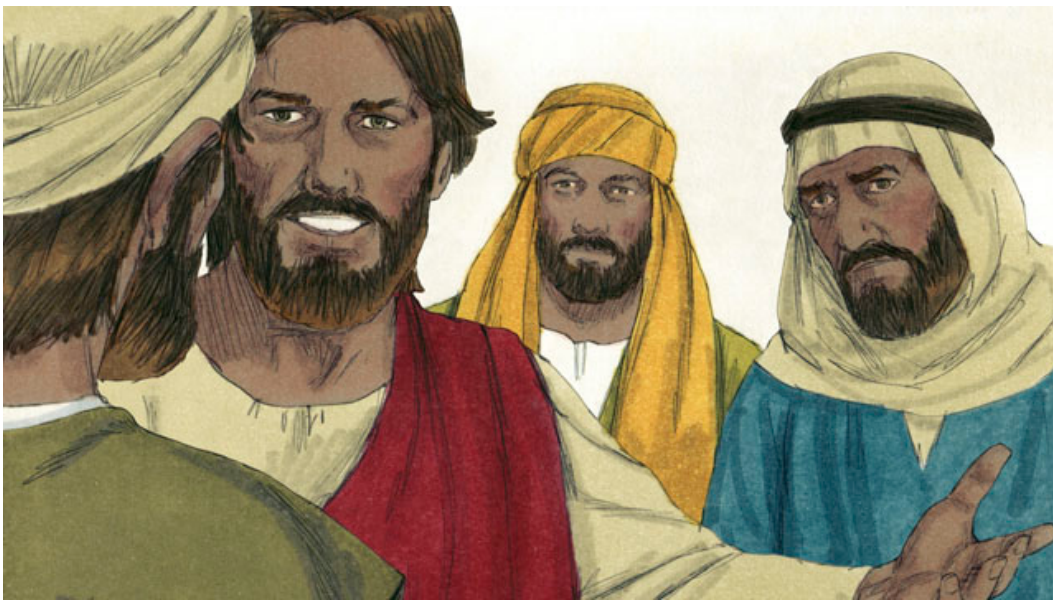
The crowd had over 5,000 men in it, not counting the women and children. Jesus felt great compassion toward the people. To Jesus, these people were like sheep without a shepherd. So he taught them and healed the people among them who were sick.

30-04



Late in the day, the disciples told Jesus, "It is late and there are no towns nearby. Send the people away so they can go get something to eat."

30-05



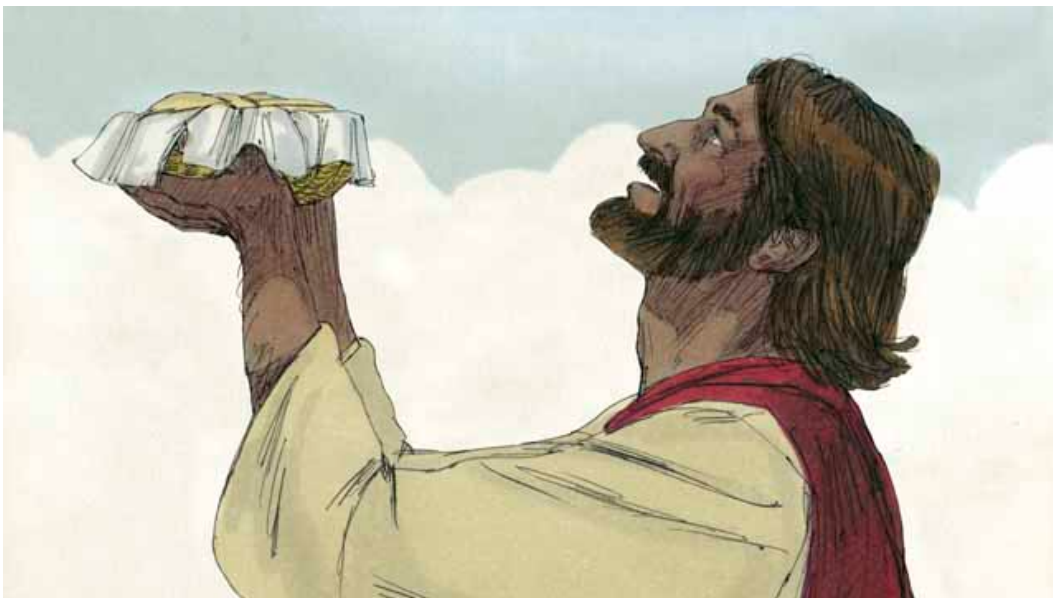
But Jesus said to the disciples, "You give them something to eat!" They responded, "How can we do that? We only have five loaves of bread and two small fish."

30-06



Jesus told his disciples to tell the people in the crowd to sit down on the grass in groups of 50 people each.

30-07



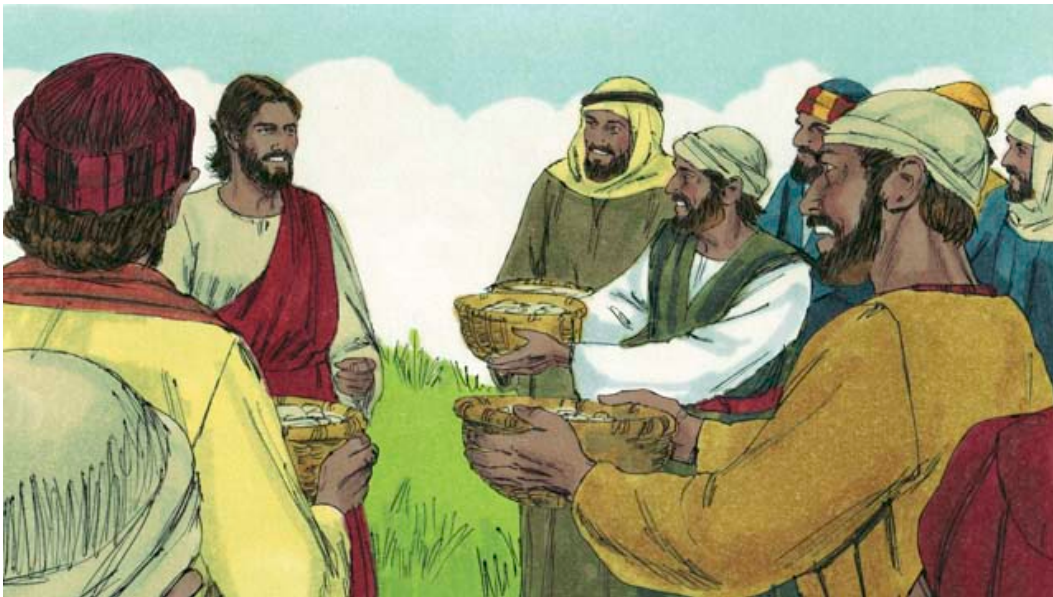
Then Jesus took the five loaves of bread and the two fish, looked up to heaven, and thanked God for the food.

30-08



Then Jesus broke the bread and the fish into pieces. He gave the pieces to his disciples to give to the people. The disciples kept passing out the food, and it never ran out! All the people ate and were satisfied.

30-09



After that, the disciples collected the food that had not been eaten. It was enough to fill 12 baskets! All the food came from the five loaves of bread and two fish.

A Bible story from: Matthew 14:13-21; Mark 6:31-44; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:5-15

Community Study: Do Not Be Surprised— Expecting and Enduring Suffering as a Christian

- **Key Idea:** enduring suffering with Jesus' peace and provision
- **Key Passage:** 1 Peter 4:12-19
- **Main Session:** OBS 30 (Jesus Feeds Thousands of People)

Recite the Creedal Verse (3-5 minutes)

The verse below summarizes the teaching of the current passage. Read the verse out loud as a community. Read it again several times as a group until the whole community can recite it from memory.

19 My God will meet all your needs according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:19

OR

I have spoken these things to you so that you will have peace in me. In the world you have troubles, but have courage, I have conquered the world. John 16:33

Read the Passage (3-5 minutes)

Disciples of Jesus should expect suffering, hardship, and persecution. As a community, read the following Bible passage together to understand what it means to be committed to Jesus and his work.

12 Beloved, do not regard as strange the testing in the fire that has happened to you, as if something strange were happening to you. 13 Instead, however much you experience the sufferings of Christ, rejoice, so that you may also rejoice and be glad at the revealing of his glory. 14 If you are insulted for Christ's name, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and the Spirit of God is resting on you. 15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or a meddler. 16 But if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; instead, let him glorify God with that name. 17 For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God. If it begins

with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey God's gospel? 18 And "If it is difficult for the righteous to be saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?" 19 Therefore let those who suffer because of God's will entrust their souls to the faithful Creator in well-doing. 1 Peter 4:12-19

Explore the Passage (10-15 minutes)

Believers should not be surprised when they experience suffering. Unbelievers will oppose those who are committed to God and his work. As a community, use the following questions to discuss the teaching of the biblical passage.

1. What does this passage tell us to do when we experience suffering and persecution?
2. What suffering or persecution have you experienced because of your faith in Jesus?
3. How can your community prepare itself to endure suffering as you commit to God and his work?

Remember God's Provision (5 minutes)

Remember the ways that God has provided for you. Think about how God's past provision can give you confidence as you face suffering and persecution. Use the following sentence to express your ideas.

God provided for me in this way... This gives me the confidence to face suffering and persecution because...

Pray to God (5 minutes)

Pray that God would make your community prepared for suffering and persecution. If anyone is facing suffering and persecution at the present time, have the community pray for those specific needs.

Sing a Song (3-5 minutes)

Choose a song to sing to praise God and encourage one another.

Movement 1: Understand the Story

Read each question aloud. Give the group time to answer before sharing the answer.

Observation Questions

30-01

What did Jesus send his apostles to do in the villages?

Jesus sent them to preach and teach.

What did the disciples tell Jesus when they returned?

When the disciples returned, they told Jesus what they had done.

Why did Jesus take his apostles to the other side of the lake?

Jesus invited them to a quiet place to rest for a while.

How did Jesus and his disciples travel to the other side of the lake?

They got into a boat and went to the other side of the lake.

30-02

What did the crowd do when they saw Jesus and his disciples leave?

Many people saw Jesus and his disciples leave in the boat and they ran along the shore to get to the other side.

Were Jesus and his apostles able to be alone and rest?

No, many people ran to the other side ahead of them and were waiting for them to arrive.

30-03

How big was the crowd of people?

The crowd had over 5,000 men in it, not counting the women and children.

What was Jesus' attitude toward the crowd that was waiting for them?

Jesus felt great compassion towards them, seeing the people like sheep without a shepherd.

How did Jesus demonstrate his compassion for the people?

Jesus taught them and healed the sick.

30-04

Why did the disciples want to send the people away?

It was late in the day, and there were no towns nearby so they wanted to send the people away to get something to eat.

30-05

How did Jesus respond to the disciples when they wanted to send the people away to get food?

Jesus told the disciples to give them something to eat.

What did the disciples say to Jesus' instruction to feed the crowd of people?

The disciples asked how they could feed them.

Why were the disciples unable to feed all the people?

They only had five loaves of bread and two small fish.

30-06

What did Jesus tell his disciples to do with the crowd of people?

Jesus told his disciples to tell the people to sit down in the grass in groups of 50 people.

30-07

What did Jesus do with the five loaves of bread and the two fish?

Jesus looked up to heaven and thanked God for the food.

30-08

What did Jesus do with the five loaves of bread and the two fish after he broke them?

Jesus thanked His Father in heaven, and gave the pieces to his disciples so they could give them to the people.

How many people ate from the five loaves of bread and two fish?

The disciples kept passing out the food, and it never ran out. All the people ate and were satisfied.

30-09

What did the disciples do with the leftover food?

The disciples collected the food that had not been eaten.

How much food was left over after everyone had eaten?

There was enough to fill 12 baskets.

Where did all the food come from?

All the food came from the five loaves of bread and the two fish.

Movement 2: Theological Questions

What Does This Story Teach Us?

1. How should Jesus' disciples minister to others? What does Jesus' ministry of preaching, teaching, and healing teach us about serving others in ministry?
2. What does it mean to be a disciple of Jesus? How does this story teach us about what it means to be a faithful disciple of Jesus?
3. In what ways does Jesus meet the needs of his people? What does this story teach us about the person and work of Jesus?

Movement 3: Live It Out

Personal Implications & Applications From The Story

Guide the group to discuss practical obedience from this story and name concrete next steps.

1. How do you think you would have responded if you were among Jesus' disciples and Jesus asked you to feed the crowd?
2. When can you remember a time when Jesus clearly provided for your needs?
3. What are various ways you need God to provide in your life?
4. Think about this week. Where does "Jesus Feeds Thousands of People" challenge you to obey God in a practical way?
5. How does this key idea shape one decision you need to make right now: The story of Jesus feeding the crowd of five thousand teaches us that Jesus is all-sufficient: he provides for all the needs of his people.

Movement 4: Retell the Story

Invite the group to retell the story several times until they can tell it clearly and faithfully.

1. Can someone retell "Jesus Feeds Thousands of People" from beginning to end in their own words?
2. Retell this story again, but focus on what God did at each key moment.
3. Retell the story in three parts: beginning, middle, and ending. What changed in each part?
4. If you were teaching this story to your family tonight, how would you tell it simply and clearly?

Church Ministry

Reflect on how this story can edify and mature the Christian community. Design a way to minister this story to your church community.

Ministry Preparation: Take time to consider how you could minister this story to others. Record some ministry ideas below.

Ministry Implementation: Minister this story to a group of believers as you had planned. Use the information in this study to help develop a teaching/lesson or lead a discussion of this story with other believers. Record your ministry plan below.

Ministry Reflection: Think about what you learned from ministering this story to other believers. Reflect on your experience below.

Movement 5: Share It

Help each person plan how they will share this story with others before the next gathering.

Report-back next meeting: Who did you share with, and what happened?

1. Who is one specific person you will share "Jesus Feeds Thousands of People" with this week?
2. When and where will you share this story with them?
3. What is the one main truth from this story you want them to remember?

Mission Engagement

Consider how you will witness this story to unbelievers. Design a way to share this story and engage them in what it teaches about Christianity and the gospel.

Witness Preparation: Take time to consider how you will witness this narrative to unbelievers. Record some ideas below.

Witness Implementation: Share this story with an unbeliever. Use the information in this study to help develop a teaching/lesson or lead a discussion of this story with others. Record your witness plan below.

Witness Reflection: Think about what you learned from sharing this story with unbelievers. Reflect on your experience below.