

## FEED THEM IF YOU CAN // Luke 9:10-17

*From the series, The Gospel of Luke*

The feeding of the five thousand is the only miracle recorded in all four gospels. How each gospel writer handles this story points to their specific purposes and audience.

In Luke, chapter nine is the hinge of the gospel narrative--from this point forward, everything is moving toward Jerusalem, toward the crucifixion. This particular story is bookended by the question “Who is Jesus?” (verses 7-9 and 18-20). The feeding of the five thousand answers that question. Although the disciples had been sent out to do ministry at the beginning of the chapter, they must recognize that they are, in and of themselves, inadequate. Fortunately, **our Lord is not limited by our inadequacies.** In fact, your inadequacy is actually God’s strategy.

Five Observations about Dependency on God in Faithful Ministry:

### **1. Self-dependency is always a temptation in ministry.**

In verse 10, the disciples are probably celebrating their success in ministry, but Jesus needs to remind them of their own inadequacy.

### **2. The Lord tests us to reveal weaknesses.**

Self-delusion is a problem. The disciples thought they were strong, but a crowd of hungry people reveals their weakness.

### **3. Effective ministry is only done in God's strength.**

In verses 15-16, Jesus takes over; our job is only to be a “butler for the bread;” a vessel, a conduit for God’s work.

### **4. Your ministry must be God's ministry or it is no ministry.**

We can “do ministry” and not actually accomplish anything. We must ask: “Are they fed?” All we need to do is bring the bread.

### **5. The broken bread points to the broken body.**

There is an inadequacy that goes past the hunger pains: there are spiritual hunger pains that can only be satisfied with the Bread of Life. Jesus seeks not just to forgive sins, but to make you his own and to satisfy your deepest hunger.

## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. When are we most tempted to depend on our own strength? How can we be intentional about resting in the sufficiency of Jesus?
2. What does it mean to be the “butler for the bread” in your own particular ministry context?
3. Are we praising God for his provision? As we consider the connection between this miracle and Psalm 23, let us thank him for leading us as a shepherd, making us sit in green pastures as he prepares a table before us that will satisfy our spiritual hunger.