

- The opening verses of the 23rd Psalm read:

[PSA. 23:1](#) The LORD is my shepherd,
I shall not want.

[PSA. 23:2](#) He makes me lie down in green pastures;
He leads me beside quiet waters.

- The first half of John's 6th chapter is the apostle's case for Jesus as the Good Shepherd
 - Jesus is our shepherd who cares for our needs
 - And Jesus is our comforter in times of distress
 - The events of this chapter are set a full year after the events of chapter 5
 - We're within one year of Jesus' crucifixion
 - This corresponds to the late Galilean period of Jesus' earthly ministry
 - That period dominates the narratives in the other three Gospels
 - But John devotes only chapters 6 and 7 to this period of Jesus' ministry
 - So let's see did John wanted to emphasize about this important period of Jesus' life

[John 6:1](#) After these things Jesus went away to the other side of the Sea of Galilee (or Tiberias).

[John 6:2](#) A large crowd followed Him, because they saw the signs which He was performing on those who were sick.

[John 6:3](#) Then Jesus went up on the mountain, and there He sat down with His disciples.

[John 6:4](#) Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was near.

[John 6:5](#) Therefore Jesus, lifting up His eyes and seeing that a large crowd was coming to Him, said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread, so that these may eat?"

[John 6:6](#) This He was saying to test him, for He Himself knew what He was intending to do.

[John 6:7](#) Philip answered Him, "Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, for everyone to receive a little."

- John opens by saying "after these things..."
 - John doesn't mean immediately after the events of chapter 5
 - At the beginning of chapter 5, Jesus traveled to Jerusalem for the Passover feast
 - Now in 6:4 John mentions an upcoming Passover feast, which means a separate Passover event
 - So a whole year has passed between chapters 5 & 6
 - John skipped over the many events that took place in that intervening year in the Galilee

- Probably because the other writers covered those things in detail
- Still John did chose to include the following account of the feeding of the 5,000 and the disciples' subsequent sailing back to Capernaum
 - In fact, this is the only miracle recorded in all four Gospels
 - Clearly, this moment is important
 - And John had something to add to the other writers' accounts of these events
 - So we'll make some comparisons between his account and the other Gospels as we move along
- According to Mark's account, Jesus travels from His home area near Capernaum on the Northwestern coast of the Sea of the Galilee to Bethsaida again
 - John simply says they went to the "other side" of the Galilee
 - Jesus sails about 3 miles (4.5 km), cutting across the northern tip of the sea
 - Prevailing winds in that area blow from West to East
 - So assuming they were sailing with the wind, it would have taken about an hour or two to make that journey
 - The place Jesus lands is a relatively remote place, sparsely inhabited
 - The disciples must have wondered why Jesus chose to travel into such a remote area
- In v.2, we're told a large crowd follows Jesus as He makes this journey because they seek more of Jesus' healing ministry
 - We learn later in this chapter that they traveled by foot walking around the northern tip of the Galilee
 - In this case, the journey by foot is only a slightly longer than sailing, maybe about 4 miles of walking
 - An adult walks about 3 mph
 - So they probably arrived in Bethsaida only slightly later than Jesus
 - Jesus takes advantage of this head start to retreat with His disciples into the nearby mountains about a kilometer away
- At this point John mentions that the Passover of the Jews was near
 - Consider the details in this story that John has provided already
 - Jesus crosses a body of water
 - A large crowd of needy people are following Him
 - He leads them to a wilderness with no apparent way to sustain them
 - And then Jesus retreats up the side of mountain leaving the people below
 - And all these things are happening in conjunction with the time of Passover, which is a memorial of Israel's exodus out of Egypt?
 - Do these details ring any bells yet?
 - Right away we notice that John is constructing his narrative to draw our minds back to the

story of Moses leading Israel out of Egypt

- There is something about this account that ties back to the Exodus
- Obviously, we know that Jesus fulfills the Passover as the Lamb of God sacrificed for the sins of the world
 - John has already made that connection for us through the words of John the Baptist
 - And later in the Passion of Christ, we see Jesus completing the picture in His death on the cross
 - But now John is working to really bring Jesus' connection to the Exodus account into clear focus
- In fact, John has already been at work in a previous chapter making this same connection, though it was subtle
 - Remember, after the first Passover and the resulting Exodus, the Israelites required water and food to survive in the desert
 - The Lord provided them water from a rock
 - And we know from 1Corinthians 10 that Paul says the rock was a picture of Christ
 - So in chapter 4, John showed us how Jesus fulfilled that picture when He told the Samaritan woman that He was the source of living water
 - Jesus is the Rock that gives us the water that leads us to thirst no more
 - And now one year later, the Passover has come again and this time Jesus will fulfill yet another picture from that most important of Jewish experiences
- So as Jesus stands on the mountain, He lifts up His eyes and sees the crowd gathering at the base of the mountain waiting for Jesus to descend
 - He turns to one of the disciples, Philip, and asks him what should be done to feed so many people
 - The question is relevant, because the place was remote and the people were numerous
 - Jesus is telling the disciples to assume responsibility for them
 - Since the people have evidently followed Jesus without giving much thought to how they will eat
 - I like to imagine that as Jesus asked Philip the question, Jesus' eyes glanced upward, toward the sky
 - Offering Philip a hint for how to answer the question
 - Hoping Philip's memory of the Exodus story might kick in at this moment and he might remember how God supplied food for His people
- In v.6, John makes sure we understand His question was just a test, since Jesus already had a plan
 - What was the test?
 - I think the test was whether the disciples were recognizing the picture of the Exodus that Jesus was carefully orchestrating around them
 - Did they realize they were re-enacting that moment, only with Jesus playing the part of Charlton Heston?

- Would they put 2 and 2 together and realize that God was capable of solving this problem in His power?
- Most importantly, would they understand that Jesus is the Lord Who fed the people manna the first time, and He was prepared to do it again?
 - The test emphasized Jesus' identity
 - Just as with the woman at the well, the question is, "Who is Jesus?"
 - If you know Jesus is Lord and if you recognize the picture of the Exodus, then you would suggest that Jesus provide bread for the people
- But that was a bridge too far for the disciples, and Philip missed the whole point of the question
 - Philip responds with a sense of hopelessness and defeat
 - He says not even 200 denari would be enough money to buy even a little food for everyone
 - His statement gives us an indication of how many people were assembled below
 - 200 denari represents about 8 months salary for a working man
 - In present day U.S. standards, that might be around \$40,000
 - Though that's an enormous sum of money, it still wasn't enough to even give the crowd even a little food each
 - Philip makes a matter-of-fact assessment of the situation and reports his findings
 - There is no spiritual dimension to his answer
 - He doesn't consider supernatural possibilities
 - He's thinking only of what men are capable of doing to solve a problem of this magnitude
 - And since the disciples lack the capability, he reasons the situation is hopeless
 - Matthew's Gospel adds that the disciples went a step further at this point and recommended that Jesus send the people away since they had no solution
- This is exactly the way the Israelites were thinking when they sized up their own situation in the desert
 - They told Moses that they expected to starve in the desert
 - And in their case, they blamed their predicament on God's incompetence

[EX. 16:2](#) The whole congregation of the sons of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness.

[EX. 16:3](#) The sons of Israel said to them, "Would that we had died by the LORD'S hand in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat, when we ate bread to the full; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger."

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- The people knew the Lord had lead them into the desert in miraculous ways
 - Yet they hadn't considered the possibility that this same God could feed them supernaturally in the desert

- God had a plan to free 2 million slaves from Egypt, but somehow He hadn't foreseen the need to feed them in the wilderness
- So they assumed they would die of starvation
- Here we see the same scenario developing with Jesus' disciples playing the part of the Israelites
 - Philip can't see a solution because he's discounting Jesus' potential to perform a miracle
 - He's assuming the only way food will appear for this crowd is if someone orders takeout
 - So he failed the test, a test of whether he understood Jesus' identity
 - Philip didn't recognize Jesus to be the same Lord who fed Israel in the desert
 - So Jesus moves ahead with a supernatural solution as God intended

[JOHN 6:8](#) One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to Him,

[JOHN 6:9](#) "There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are these for so many people?"

[JOHN 6:10](#) Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand.

[JOHN 6:11](#) Jesus then took the loaves, and having given thanks, He distributed to those who were seated; likewise also of the fish as much as they wanted.

[JOHN 6:12](#) When they were filled, He said to His disciples, "Gather up the leftover fragments so that nothing will be lost."

[JOHN 6:13](#) So they gathered them up, and filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves which were left over by those who had eaten.

- The enterprising disciple Andrew offers a potential solution
 - He spies an a young boy moving around the crowd with some small fish and barley loaves
 - The word "lad" in Greek literally means "little male child", so we're probably talking about a boy of perhaps 6 or 7 years old
 - And the Greek word for fish is the word for a very small fish, probably something like anchovies intended to be eaten as a relish with the bread
 - He may have been the child of a family in the crowd, and he sees an opportunity to peddle his goods
 - Why did Andrew even think to propose this child's basket of goods as a solution to the problem?
 - Philip had just said that \$40,000 worth of food wouldn't be enough to feed these people
 - But then Andrew proposes this idea?
 - What was he thinking?
- At this point in the story, most of us probably run past this detail so we can focus on what comes next

- We remember Jesus turned this meager meal in a miraculous provision, but why did the apostles even think to suggest this source to Jesus?
 - Andrew's suggestion is so pathetic, it seems almost nonsensical that he even raised the option in the conversation
 - Did he think Jesus could do something miraculous with these items?
 - Given the way Andrew finishes his sentence, I don't think so
 - In fact, it sounds like he realized a little too late that his idea was no help at all
- Still, Andrew's contribution to the story becomes a significant detail in the story and marks a significant departure in this story from the parallels to the Exodus
 - In the desert situation, the Lord delivered food to Israel literally from Heaven
 - The manna fell from above
 - The Lord didn't start with something on Earth, no matter how meager
 - In the Exodus account, the Lord brought a provision down from Heaven supernaturally
 - Obviously, Jesus will perform an equally impressive miracle this time, but it's significant that He chooses to multiply something on Earth
 - In this situation, nothing new is going to come down from Heaven
 - This time He begins with something very meager, barely noticeable, and hardly suitable
 - A solution proposed by a disciple
 - Something that was insignificant in the eyes of men,
 - Hardly sufficient to solve such a pressing problem
 - Clearly, we should understand why the Lord has changed the program this time around
 - This departure from the story of Exodus is an important detail in the retelling of manna
 - The purpose of this departure will become clear in the second half of the chapter, as Jesus discusses the meaning of these things with the crowd
 - So we'll wait until then to discover it for ourselves
 - Though perhaps some of you see it already too
 - We should also note in passing that there are a total of seven food items in the boy's basket, which is a number that catches our attention obviously
 - Seven is a number meaning the total or complete or fulfilled number of something
 - Today, we would say "100%" to mean the total of something
 - The Bible uses the number "7" to mean the same thing
 - So, something is being completed or fulfilled in this moment
 - That's something we also want to understand as we go forward
- Then Jesus gives instructions to the disciples
 - The details are probably familiar
 - First, Jesus instructs the people to sit in the grass

- In Mark's Gospel we're told they sit in groups of hundreds and fifties, which simply means into small, manageable groups
- We can easily imagine practical purposes in why Jesus asked them to sit down
- If hungry people see food coming their way, they tend to rush toward it to make sure they get a share
- Making them sit ensures orderliness and also imparts confidence that there is a plan to ensure everyone is fed
- But those practical reasons are not the main reason Jesus seats them down in grass
 - The main purpose relates back to Psalm 23
 - The Shepherd is the One Who causes His sheep to lie down in green pastures
 - The Shepherd cares for His sheep and makes sure they receive their rations
- Sheep don't have the ability to find their own green pastures
 - They are famously stupid animals
 - They move about in the field with their eyes down following what's in front of their faces, even to the point of stumbling into danger
 - So they depend on a Shepherd to lead them
- So Jesus' instructions were part of testifying that He is the Shepherd of Psalm 23, the One who cares for us because we can't do it for ourselves
 - This is true for every member of Jesus' flock
 - Even when we think we're providing for ourselves in our daily occupation or through our savings, we're only fooling ourselves
 - By that thinking, we're at risk of overlooking the Lord's provision and presence in our life
 - Because everything we have comes from the Lord
 - The fact that our daily provision arrives by way of a weekly paycheck...
 - Or in a 1099...
 - Or through our stored up savings...
 - Doesn't mean our security is any less the result of God's ongoing provision of grace
 - At any moment, those things could (and often do) disappear
 - And when they do, we'll finally recognize that we never had security because of those things
 - Our security comes from the Shepherds willingness to care for His sheep
 - By causing us to lie down in green pastures when we need them
- At this point, John gives us the head count of men, numbering them at about 5,000
 - The overall number is not significant (apart from the occurrence of the number "5," which is the number of grace), but it reinforces the size of the problem facing the disciples
 - 5,000 men means 5,000 families
 - 5,000 families means a lot of people

- Which would explain why \$40,000 wasn't enough to give everyone even a little food
- There could have been as many as 15K-30K people at the base of that mountain!
 - Considering that this scene takes place near the end of Jesus' years working in the Galilee, it's entirely likely He has amassed a very large following by this point
 - It would also explain why the Pharisees viewed Jesus as a serious threat to their power and authority
 - Anyone who is followed by a loyal crowd of 20K people has real power
- Next, Jesus gives thanks for the food and the miracle that's about to follow, then He begins to break the bread and divide the fish out
 - John says Jesus distributed the food to the people seated, but Mark's Gospel clarifies that Jesus distributed the food through the hands of the disciples
 - Jesus handed the food to each disciple who then carried it down to the people in a basket
 - Therefore, each disciple returned to Jesus many times to refill their baskets
 - And as this process continued, the groups of people ate their fill, no one was left wanting
 - You have to wonder what was going through the minds of the disciples as they moved up and down the mountain filling their baskets
 - They knew Jesus started with only a little food
 - But now they find their baskets filled time and time again
 - There is no conversation among the disciples recorded by any of the Gospels
 - So I assume the disciples were speechless, unable to muster words
 - Though I assume they probably exchanged a few glances with each other as they passed back and forth on the mountain
- After the crowd had been fed (which must have taken several hours), Jesus ordered the disciples to collect the excess food from the people
 - Don't overlook that the disciples were required to collect the food from the people
 - The Lord could have simply multiplied more food for each disciple
 - Instead, the disciples' food had already been handed out to the people below
 - The Lord had literally given away the disciples' food, so that now the disciples had to go back and retrieve it from the people
 - So how do we imagine the disciples went about collecting that food?
 - Obviously, they had to petition the people for it
 - The people would have likely wanted to keep it for themselves
 - So the disciples walked among the groups of people calling for all excess food to be collected and placed in the disciples' baskets
 - The excess materialized as Jesus said, because the Lord had ensured that there was more provided to the people than they needed
 - That excess was a reflection of the Lord's abundant goodness

- But it was also a provision intended to meet the needs of those disciples who had just worked to serve the people
- Notice that the amount collected was exactly twelve baskets, reflecting the 12 apostles who had served the people
- What was Jesus trying to teach us by the way He constructed this process of feeding the people and providing for the disciples?
 - First, Jesus often begins His greatest works among His people with meager beginnings
 - When Jesus turned to Philip, it was Philip's opportunity to suggest something great
 - Instead, Philip gave up on the situation because no solution was readily visible
 - Faith isn't faith if relies only on what can be seen, as Paul taught
 - Sincere, active faith requires a willingness to act in hopeful expectation
 - Andrew was a step closer to faith because at least he suggested a solution that depended on faith in God's ability to multiply
 - But just as quickly, he retreated from faith by abandoning the possibility
 - What would have happened if someone had suggested to Jesus that they hand out the boy's food expecting the Lord to make it sufficient to meet the need?
 - I believe the situation would have turned out exactly the same
 - And that's the point
- Jesus' opening question was an opportunity for these men to participate in a miraculous work of God that He was already planning to accomplish
 - It was a work the Lord was prepared to perform with or without their participation
 - But by offering them the chance to believe in it before they saw it, they could be blessed in having their faith strengthened
 - There is a real spiritual blessing for the believer when they act in faith, as Jesus told Thomas

[JOHN 20:27](#) Then He said to Thomas, "Reach here with your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand and put it into My side; and do not be unbelieving, but believing."

[JOHN 20:28](#) Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!"

[JOHN 20:29](#) Jesus said to him, "Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed."

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- So the first lesson is those who serve the Lord must step out with faith expecting the Lord is prepared to work through meager beginnings
 - Don't let meager beginnings hold you back from meeting needs and expecting miracles
- Secondly, the Lord's servant can't stray far from the Master in our service
 - As many Bible commentaries have observed, Jesus caused the disciples to return to Him repeatedly as they went about the business of serving the people

- Each disciple's success depended on continually returning to the Lord to fill a basket
 - If they returned, they had something to offer the people
 - If they didn't come back, they soon would have nothing
 - And they would be useless
- The picture couldn't be clearer: we must abide in Christ if we are to serve in His power
- The disciples couldn't make the food multiply on their own
 - They didn't possess magic baskets
 - They were simply waiters
- On the other hand, their role wasn't irrelevant
 - Jesus designed the miracle so that it depended on the disciples delivering the food to the people
 - At first, the people were largely unaware of what was happening up on the mountain
 - They just knew that the disciples were bringing them a meal
- No one ministers to God's people by virtue of brilliance or training or experience or sheer force of our personality...
 - Successful servants of God only deliver what Jesus provides for His flock
 - What He gives us tends to run out pretty quick
 - So we have to return time and time again
 - Return to His word
 - Return to Him in prayer
 - Return to Him in repentance and humility
 - If we do that, we can be useful to Him and become part of making amazing things happen
- Thirdly, from our limited perspective, the works we're called to join rarely appear miraculous or even very important, but God can accomplish much through us
 - Consider that these disciples probably never witnessed the moment when Jesus multiplied the bread or fish
 - More likely, it seems they simply came back to Jesus to find more food ready to load into their baskets
 - Obviously, they knew something special was happening, but in the moment, their job was nothing more than picking up food and delivering it
 - Often, that's what it's like to serve God from our perspective
 - We're just delivering fish
 - We volunteer for a duty in the church
 - We participate in a service project
 - We host someone in our home
 - We offer a prayer request

- We write a check to a missionary
- But as we do what the Lord asks us to do, we become part of a larger work that leads to miraculous outcomes by God's power and orchestration
 - Sometimes, the Lord is willing to grant us peek into the supernatural outcomes that result from our work
 - Most times, we never see it
 - But eventually, when we enter into our glory, we will learn all the works of God and how we participated in those things by faith
- Finally, those who serve the Lord should expect that their hard work will be met by an adequate provision from the Lord
 - But that provision doesn't materialize out of thin air
 - It comes as a consequence of serving God's people diligently
 - I imagine the disciples were exhausted after going up and down the mountain so many times over several hours
 - Perhaps they wondered when it would be their turn to eat or even if there would be enough left for them
 - But in the end, the Lord took care of them
 - A servant of God should expect to receive God's provision as a consequence of working hard to serve God's people
 - And that provision will be supplied from the hands of those whom he serves
 - The Lord supplies His people with an excess intended to meet the needs of the Lord's servants
 - And then the Lord calls upon His servants to seek for that provision from among the people so that they may be blessed by giving back
 - And God's people must be willing to relinquish the excess to those who deserve it
 - But the servant's provision is to be no more luxurious than that given to God's people
 - In this case, the disciples received the same provision that the people received from the Lord
 - Some fish and bread
 - If Jesus had been handing out steak and lobster, then the disciples might have expected to receive the same
 - And if the Lord had chosen to provide rice and beans, then the Lord's servant couldn't expect something better
 - In all cases, the servant should be allowed to share in that provision
 - But always remembering that if we have food and covering, we should be content Paul says
 - Sooner or later, the crowd realizes the magnitude of the miracle that has taken place, and perhaps they also recognize the connection to the Exodus story

[JOHN 6:14](#) Therefore when the people saw the sign which He had

performed, they said, “This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world.”

[JOHN 6:15](#) So Jesus, perceiving that they were intending to come and take Him by force to make Him king, withdrew again to the mountain by Himself alone.

- - Notice that people declare this miracle was a sign to them
 - Calling something a sign means they believed God was revealing something to them through these events
 - They were correct, but they misunderstood the meaning of the sign
 - They said that Jesus was the Prophet who has come into the world
 - They were referring to the prophet Moses said would come to Israel one day in the future
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[DEUT. 18:15](#) “The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him.

[DEUT. 18:16](#) “This is according to all that you asked of the LORD your God in Horeb on the day of the assembly, saying, ‘Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, let me not see this great fire anymore, or I will die.’

[DEUT. 18:17](#) “The LORD said to me, ‘They have spoken well.

[DEUT. 18:18](#) ‘I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him.’

- The prophet Moses was describing was the Messiah, Jesus
 - So the people were correct when they recognize Jesus as the fulfillment of Moses’ promise
 - But then they go in the wrong direction
 - They conclude that the Prophet would conquer Israel’s political enemy, Rome, and lead Israel into political freedom just as Moses did against Egypt
 - So they call for Jesus to be taken to Jerusalem and install Him as their new political leader
 - Notice John says they want to take Jesus by force
 - It’s unclear if John means they are preparing to force Jesus to go to Jerusalem
 - Or perhaps John means they are calling for people to join Jesus in forcing the Romans out of Israel
 - Either way, they have exactly the wrong idea of why Jesus came to Israel
 - Yes, Jesus is the prophet Moses promised
 - But Jesus came for heavenly, eternal purposes, not earthly, temporal purposes
- To properly understand the connection between Jesus’ ministry and Moses’ ministry, we first have to

understand that pictures in scripture always form a lessor to greater relationship

- Moses' life and work was constructed by God to form a lessor version of Jesus' ministry
 - From his birth to His exile in the desert to His return for Israel to His role as a mediator and so on (see our Exodus study), Moses pictured Christ
 - Moses set Israel free from slavery to Egypt, but Jesus sets men free from slavery to sin
 - Moses led Israel to the Old Covenant in stone while Jesus leads men to the New Covenant in His body
 - Moses' conquered the army of Egypt, while Christ conquers the forces of Satan
- So Jesus' ministry was a greater ministry than Moses, thus making Moses a picture of Christ in lessor form
 - But the people didn't see that relationship
 - They perceived Moses and the Prophet as working on the same level and for the same purposes
 - This was a consistent point of confusion among the people of Israel in Jesus' day
 - They couldn't understand how Jesus could be greater than Moses or Abraham or even Jacob, as the woman at the well remarked
- Even today people continue to repeat this mistake of reducing Jesus' ministry and teaching to only earthly outcomes
 - Today people will say Jesus was merely a good teacher or "spiritual leader" or moral example or even prophet
 - They deny Jesus as God
 - So they can ignore questions of death and judgment and hell that Jesus' ministry raised
 - By reducing Jesus' goals to nothing more than an earthly agenda, an unbeliever can feel comfortable in their sin
 - These Jews rushed to assuming an earthly purpose in Jesus' miracles because they never considered they were in need of a spiritual solution
 - They heard Jesus teaching and saw His miracles
 - Yet they respond by declaring Jesus will conquer Rome
 - When Jesus saw what was developing, He retreats back up the mountain to remain inaccessible to them
 - Jesus wasn't going to allow the crowd to redirect His mission toward an earthly kingdom
 - We could ask why didn't Jesus give the people both?
 - Why didn't He defeat Rome and bring them salvation?
 - Because the Kingdom couldn't be installed until the citizens of the Kingdom have been prepared to enter into it
 - And those citizens are to be found by faith
- I think Christians occasionally make this same mistake today
 - We reduce the spiritual purpose of the Church and the Gospel to achieving earthly goals and

establishing earthly kingdoms

- We say Jesus fed the people, so our Christian goal should be feeding the poor
- Jesus healed the people, so our Christian ministry should be healing the sick
- And so on...seeking to better the lives of people by addressing their physical needs
- Without a doubt, the Church has a mission to show compassion for the needs of people, but the New Testament sets boundaries for that mission
 - First, benevolence is to be directed to the Church, first and foremost
 - The NT letters command the church to care for the physical needs of the saints
 - There is no general command in scripture for the Church to make a priority of feeding, clothing or caring for the physical needs of all humanity
- Secondly, when the Church does endeavor to meet physical needs in the world, our charity must be purposeful
 - We are seeking opportunities to preach the Gospel
 - We want to show them love and gain their attention, so we can turn that moment to a discussion of heavenly things
 - We have sought to address an earthly need so that we can discuss their heavenly need
- When the church becomes preoccupied with solving earthly needs only, without turning those contacts into Heavenly discussions, we've followed the mistake of these Jews following Jesus
 - We are trying to take Jesus by force in a direction He will not go
 - The ministry of the Church cannot be co-opted into a mission of charity or public works
 - It's this thinking that eventually leads to "Christian" hospitals, universities, retirement homes, and other businesses
 - Ironically, many of these institutions eventually outlaw the preaching of the Gospel in the spirit of tolerance
 - The Church mission is to preach the Gospel so that souls may be saved
 - The body is not our focus; the soul is