



## World Christian Fellowship

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### 7<sup>th</sup> Response to Jesus- Wayside Soil- Faith for Physical! Matthew 15:29-39

**Matthew 15:29-39**, *Jesus departed from there, skirted the Sea of Galilee, and went up on the mountain and sat down there. <sup>30</sup>Then great multitudes came to Him, having with them the lame, blind, mute, maimed, and many others; and they laid them down at Jesus' feet, and He healed them. <sup>31</sup>So the multitude marvelled when they saw the mute speaking, the maimed made whole, the lame walking, and the blind seeing; and they glorified the God of Israel.*

#### **Feeding the Four Thousand**

<sup>32</sup>Now Jesus called His disciples to Himself and said, "I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now continued with Me three days and have nothing to eat. And I do not want to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way." <sup>33</sup>Then His disciples said to Him, "Where could we get enough bread in the wilderness to fill such a great multitude?" <sup>34</sup>Jesus said to them, "How many loaves do you have?" And they said, "Seven, and a few little fish." <sup>35</sup>So He commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground. <sup>36</sup>And He took the seven loaves and the fish and gave thanks, broke them and gave them to His disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitude. <sup>37</sup>So they all

*ate and were filled, and they took up seven large baskets full of the fragments that were left.<sup>38</sup> Now those who ate were four thousand men, besides women and children.<sup>39</sup> And He sent away the multitude, got into the boat, and came to the region of Magdala.*

**Chapter 13**, Kingdom Parables were spoken.

**Chapter 13**, Jesus says how the world is going to react to them. What it's going to be like out there as they labour and minister in the harvest.

Matthew gives us from **Matthew 13:53 till Matthew 16:12**, **eight incidents** in the life of our Lord which illustrate the kind of response that there will be to the King.

They are masterfully presented.

**1<sup>st</sup>** response: **Matthew 13:53-58**- Unbelief!

**2<sup>nd</sup>** response: **Matthew 14:1-12** Fear that Forfeit's Christ!

**3<sup>rd</sup>** response: **Matthew 14:12-21** Faith for only materials!

**4<sup>th</sup>** response: **Matthew 14:22-33** Jesus is Lord.

**5<sup>th</sup>** Response: **Matthew 14:36-15:20** Vain Worship.

**6<sup>th</sup>** Response: **Matthew 15:29-39** Mega Faith- Good Soil.

## **Background:**

For almost 2 years Jesus had been ministering in Galilee. He had been serving in that northern area of Palestine among the Jewish people.

Miracles, signs, wonders, teaching of the Kingdom of God.

But there was a mounting resistance.

There was a mounting rejection.

The one who ruled in that area was a man by the name of Herod Antipas. He was the petty king given the assignment of keeping political peace in Galilee.

Herod had already executed John the Baptist, and now he was in fear of Jesus Christ and His tremendous power, and so would no doubt, have done the same to Him if he were enabled.

The scribes and the Pharisees who were the religious leaders, who because they had been unmasked as empty traditionalists with only a ceremonial shell of a religion had begun to consummately hate Jesus Christ and seek His death.

The crowds themselves and their popular frenzy was directed to making Jesus King because they had seen His miracle power and thought that He could lead a revolution to overthrow the hated Herodians, as well as the hated Romans.

No wonder why it says Jesus departed from Galilee into the area of Tyre and Sidon.

Jesus needs to spend time with the twelve because in less than a year from now, they would face the greatest trial of their life in the trial and death of Christ.

All of these things mounted together to cause Him to leave Galilee, and went across the border. He left the land of Israel into the region of Tyre and Sidon.

Soon after Jesus arrived in that gentile land than He ran into a gentile woman, who came to Him desiring a healing and who, it says in verse 28, exercised Mega faith.

What Jesus could not find among His own, He found among strangers.

Only two times so far in Matthew have we heard Him say, "You have great faith," and both times He said that to a gentile.

Jesus is reaching beyond the covenant people, beyond the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

The intention of Christ coming to Israel was never that that was the end but that that was only the means to reaching the world. Always, the intention was to reach the world.

**V 29**, *Jesus departed from there, skirted the Sea of Galilee, and went up on the mountain and sat down there.*

Mark tells us that when He left there, He went through Tyre and Sidon, which meant that He must have gone north.



To cover the Tyre and Sidon area, He went east in order to come south along the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee to a place called Decapolis.



Jesus goes north to Tyre and Sidon. He goes east across the Hermon Range, across the River Jordan, south down the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee to the south-eastern end, to an area known as **Decapolis**.

Now, it is interesting to note that there was a time gap.

**Matthew 14:19**, *Then He commanded the multitudes to sit down on the grass. And He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke and gave the loaves to the disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitudes.*

**Matthew 15:35**, *So He commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground.*

### **What happened to the grass?**

The answer is summer.

The feeding of the 5,000 men and women and children who were Jews, it was spring, and the grass in that land only lasts a little into the summer.

It's late summer now, and so we know that between the feeding in chapter 14 and the feeding in chapter 15, there have been many weeks that have transpired.

We don't know how many of those days He may have spent still in the Galilee area, but surely there were some weeks spent in

gentile land. It would've taken Him some weeks to have gone through Tyre and Sidon. Jesus has been ministering for some length of time among these who are gentiles.

Some think that Matthew sort of muffed the facts at this point and he repeated the same story with the numbers a little different. The details are very different in all cases, but the monumental reality of this story is that Christ was saying that what He gave in provision for Israel is no less than He will also give in provision for those who are outside Israel.

It is a profound lesson.

The book of Acts that when the day of Pentecost came among the Jews and the Spirit of God descended.

**Acts 10** gentiles received the Gospel. Peter went back to the Jews and said, "You are not going to believe this, but the same thing that happened to us happened to the gentiles."

There would be no sense of God treating men with respect of persons.

If our Lord was to feed the Jew, He was also demonstrating that He would feed the gentile.

Our Lord ended each phase of His ministry with a feeding.

- He ended the ministry in Galilee with the feeding of the 5,000.

- He ended the ministry in the gentile area with the feeding of the 4,000.
- He ended the Judean ministry before His death on the cross with the feeding of His own in the upper room, and the Lord always leaves people fed.

We come to Decapolis. Decapolis is on the southeast edge of the Sea of Galilee. It's not far from the area known as Gadara where Jesus delivered two demoniacs and sent the demons into the herd of swine.

It is the southern end of the modern Golan Heights.

Decapolis means ten cities,

- **Deka** is ten,
- **Polis** is city.

There were ten little cities there, small ones.

They were wedged in between two territories under Jewish domination.

- One controlled by Philip the tetrarch
- Other controlled by Herod Antipas.
- In the middle was this wedge called Decapolis.

These ten cities were each free Greek cities.

The Greeks were big into free city states, and each of them were free.

They were under sovereignty by the governor of Syria.  
They were not under the rule of Israel or any of its monarchs.

They were Greeks or gentiles sort of wedged in the middle of that Jewish part of the world.

Archaeologists who have searched the area have found statues and monuments to **Zeus, Athene, Artemis, Hercules, Dionysius, Demeter, and many other Greek gods**. So, they were into Greek paganism full-blown, and Jesus came there.

Matthew's gospel to chapter 4, very early in His ministry, as He began teaching and preaching and healing, it says His fame went throughout all Syria, which was to the east of Israel, and they brought in people who were sick, and it names the various diseases.

**Matthew 4:25**, *Great multitudes followed Him—from Galilee, and from Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan.*

Decapolis had heard.

They have been healed.

Surely the word would have spread very rapidly.

They had known of Jesus, and when He arrived again in that region.

**V 30**, *Then great multitudes came to Him, having with them the lame, blind, mute, maimed, and many others; and they laid them down at Jesus' feet, and He healed them.*

It was a wilderness area.

He came unannounced.

It may have taken some time for all of them to gather, but gather they did.

Because they knew His reputation as One who could heal anything, they brought with them.

He healed them all.

Last of those words, and it's kulllos.

It has unique meaning, to have something severed or removed and would speak of someone who's lost a limb or whose limb is withered to utter uselessness, but He healed those people.

- ✓ If they didn't have an arm, He gave them one.
- ✓ If they didn't have a leg, He gave them one.
- ✓ If they were missing an ear, He gave them one.
- ✓ If they had lost a finger, He gave them one.

We can see there were 4,000 men. How many were there later on plus women. Anywhere from five to ten thousand women and who knows how many thousand children. Twenty thousand would not be a small estimate.

They were all throwing these people at His feet.

They were not in line.

They were just getting there in a frantic knowing He could heal, hoping they would be one that He would heal, and this pile of humanity is being pitched at His feet.

People who had lost their eyes were going away with eyes.

People who had never spoken were speaking.

People who had never been able to walk were walking.

**V 31**, *So the multitude marvelled when they saw the mute speaking, the maimed made whole, the lame walking, and the blind seeing; and they glorified the God of Israel.*

They were struck with absolute awe at this scene.

We can say no human explanation.

There is nothing in our little computers that tells us this can happen. This is not possible. This is beyond imagination. This is incredible.

Their wonder was greater than the wonder of the Jews. Because the wonder of the Jews was always limited by their scepticism.

**Mark 7:37**, *And they were astonished beyond measure, saying, "He has done all things well. He makes both the deaf to hear and the mute to speak."*

To differentiate between the astonishment of the gentiles and the astonishment of the Jews who were astonished but not to this degree because they were so encumbered by the attachment to their false religion and their spiritual pride.

The gentiles who were beyond measure astonished.  
He did it all perfectly.

Everybody was totally whole.  
Nobody was missed, and nobody was less than complete.  
They marvelled.

**V 31**, *"They gave glory to the God of Israel."*

**Matthew 9:8**, *Now when the multitudes saw it, they marvelled and glorified God, who had given such power to men.*

But when the gentiles glorified this God, it had to be the God of Israel because it wasn't their God.

Again, we reinforce the fact that these were gentiles.

They knew God was in their presence. There was no other explanation. There was no human explanation for this.

### **What does it mean to glorify God?**

Two things.

**Luke 5:25-26**, *Immediately he rose up before them, took up what he had been lying on, and departed to his own house, glorifying God.* <sup>26</sup>*And they were all amazed, and they glorified God and were filled with fear, saying, "We have seen strange things today!"*

Glorifying God in this context is a combination of praise and fear. It is the positive element that says this is wondrous, this is inexplicable, this is astonishing, this is miraculous. And it is the other one that says this is fearful.

Because a God who has that power, a God who has that dynamic, is a God who knows the sin of my heart, and there was a sense of fear in His presence, and rightly so.

They glorified the God of Israel with a positive praise, and no doubt a certain trembling at the presence of such a God as they had seen.

This goes on for three days, and the crowd never leaves. All day long, the Lord heals and surely teaches them the things pertaining to the Kingdom, invites them to embrace Him.

At night, they don't go anywhere.

They lay down on the ground and they sleep, and when the Lord awakens in the morning with the disciples, they are all there.

It goes on the second day and the second night they do the same thing.

The third day the same thing happened.

They just don't ever leave.

**V 32**, *Now Jesus called His disciples to Himself and said, "I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now continued with Me three days and have nothing to eat. And I do not want to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way."*

**Why are you getting so upset about the fact they haven't eaten for three days?**

Nobody dies not eating in three days.

Lord have fasted 40 days and 40 nights.

Nobody is going to perish after three days.

Understand the compassion of God.

I can understand Him giving a leg to a man without a leg.

I can understand Him giving eyes to one who doesn't see.

I can understand Him giving a tongue and a voice to one who can't speak.

But I can't see Him getting too uptight about a guy who hasn't eaten for three days.

Because you don't understand the infinite and all-encompassing compassion of God.

- ✓ Jesus has compassion for peoples' spiritual needs that are eternal in their consequence.
- ✓ Jesus has compassion for peoples' physical needs that are lifelong in their impact.

But Jesus also has compassion for a person's daily food.  
A deep insight into the heart of God!

The tender compassion of God extends even to the fact of daily food.

**Psalms 37:25**, *I have been young, and now am old; Yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, Nor his descendants begging bread.*

Jesus said, *"if My Father takes care of the grass and the lilies, don't you think He will take care of you?"*

Lord said, *"When you pray, say this: 'Give us this day our daily bread.'"* Because God cares about that.

**V 32,** *“I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way.”*

The word faint means collapse, but its root is interesting because it has to do with a bowstring, and the word means to unstring a bowstring. If you take a bow, and you anchor it by your foot and pull it down and string it, and then if you pull it to unstring it and let it go, it just collapses. Very vivid.

Lord says, “I’m not going to let them collapse on the way home.”

That is amazing compassion.

God’s got bigger things than that, surely but that’s the extent of the infinite heart of God.

Jesus didn’t have to bring the disciples in on the deal, either, because He didn’t need them. He could have fed the folks. Somebody might say, “He needed the disciples to deliver the goods.” Not really, He had delivered fairly well for the children of Israel wandering in the wilderness, hadn’t He?

God knows how to get them the manna and whatever else.

Jesus saying that look at Me and learn from Me, that I have compassion, not only on lifetime problems like illnesses, not only on eternal promises like redemption, but on daily needs.

For the church to be Christ in the world, we have to demonstrate the compassion at that level because God is as infinite in His compassion as He is in the other attribute; therefore, His compassion will embrace every dimension of need.

**V 33**, *Then His disciples said to Him, "Where could we get enough bread in the wilderness to fill such a great multitude?"*

They have some memory, and they do in fact know that Jesus just fed that massive crowd on the eastern shore of Galilee.

They know that.

They were there.

There is little doubt in their mind about that.

They have not forgotten it.

Where should we have so much bread in the wilderness as to fill?

Before when they said, "What are we going to do? We don't even have enough to give everybody a little tiny morsel."

Now, from that experience, they know that when the Lord feeds, He fills everybody.

So they say, "If you are looking at us again, we are in the same boat we were in last time you asked us that. We don't have anything to fill this crowd."

The point being, in a wilderness area away from these towns there was no resource. This crowd could only have been serviced in proximity to a large city where the food could have been gathered.

There was no such proximity, and the emphasis is not here on their unbelief, but on their recognition of their lack of resources.

They were simply saying, “Here we go again, Lord. We have nothing to offer you.”

They knew Jesus could do it.

They hadn’t forgotten that.

They knew He could fill them up.

They knew the Lord could fill them up, they also knew they couldn’t, and so they said, “We don’t have the resource.”

Lord, if you are dependent on us, we can’t help you. You got to do it yourself.

The results of the feeding of the first crowd were negative.

The first crowd was fed, and all they wanted the next day was more food.

They wanted to force Jesus to be a king and He had to escape and all that. So maybe they thought that that whole kind of approach really wasn’t very effective.

They also may have been a little hung up on the fact that these people were Gentiles.

Lord, if it is going to be done, you got to do it. You have got to do it.

**V 34**, *Jesus said to them, “How many loaves do you have?” And they said, “Seven, and a few little fish.”*

He didn't ask them how many fish they had, but they remembered the last time, and they knew that His favourite lunch to provide was bread and fish.

They threw in the deal about the fish. They hadn't forgotten.

There was no Andrew at this point to come in sceptically and say, “What are these among so many?”

Nobody was dumb enough to say that now.

They knew He could handle it.

**V 35-36**, *So He commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground.<sup>36</sup> And He took the seven loaves and the fish and gave thanks, broke them and gave them to His disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitude.*

Jesus offered the common prayer of blessing before a meal. Took the seven loaves and fish, gave thanks, broke them, and kept on giving to the disciples and the disciples to the multitude.

They come with these baskets, and He keeps filling the baskets, and they keep delivering, and they come back, and He keeps filling them again, and they deliver it.

Jesus was just creating it right out of His own hands. Again and again He continues to fill the baskets, and they continue to pass among the people who are no doubt seated in groups of fifty or a hundred.

**V 37**, *“They did all eat, and they were filled.”*

Again, the Lord never leaves them half full.

Satisfied everybody, and they got seven baskets full.

**The first feeding had how many baskets?**

Twelve, one for each disciple.

Here you have seven.

**Why the difference?**

Very interesting.

**Matthew 14:20**, basket Greek word is kophinos.

That’s a little basket.

By the way, that was a Jewish basket. That was a basket used by the Jews. It normally was a little round thing. It had a little sort of a spout on one end you could stick things in.

The Jew carried this around with him when he travelled for several reasons. It was easy, because there was sometimes no way to get access to a place to provide food, and so you carried it with yourself. Also, the Jew is really fearful of getting any food that had been touched by gentile hands, and so they tended to take their own, which had been treated and done their own way.

The Jews carried the little ***kophinos***, this little basket with one meal in it.

But the word used here is not ***kophinos***.

It's ***spuris*** and that is a gentile basket.

It's a hamper.

It's a big basket, and the interesting thing is that every time the New Testament talks about the feeding of the 5,000, whatever gospel account it's in, it always uses ***kophinos***.

Every time it refers to the 4,000, it always uses ***spuris***.

When He was feeding the Jews, the Jews had Jewish baskets. When He was feeding the gentiles, the gentiles had gentile baskets.

The gentile basket was big.

**How big was it?**

**Acts 9:25**, *Then the disciples took him by night and let him down through the wall in a large basket.*

Acts 9 tells us it was the same basket, **spuris**, with which the apostle Paul was lowered over the wall in Damascus. It was big enough to put a whole person in. So, it's a big basket.

Lord gave the food into these big baskets, and they took them and distributed them, and then in collecting, they took all that they needed back in seven big baskets.

They may have needed more than they did the first time because they hadn't eaten this time for three days, not just one day.

**V 38**, *Now those who ate were four thousand men, besides women and children.*

Our Lord provided for the crowd.

**V 39**, *And He sent away the multitude, got into the boat, and came to the region of Magdala.*

He sent away the multitude, got into a boat, came to the borders of Magadan.

## **Lessons:**

### **1. The divine power of Jesus Christ.**

The Bible is meant to teach us. These things are written for our edification, to instruct us, and the first and overwhelming thing that confronts you in this text is that Jesus is God because only God can create. Abraham worshiped God who raised the dead and brought to life something out of nothing, Romans 4 says.

It is God alone who can create, and here He is creating limbs, creating eyes, creating tongues, re-creating bodies, creating fish and bread.

He is the Creator God.

We cannot read that with any kind of thought and not be overwhelmed with the fact that this is God. Anything less has absolutely no ability to describe the situation. It is God acting, and would you notice, He doesn't do it in the name of anybody.

When the apostles did something in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, they were saying, "It is not our power, but His." He does it in His own name, because it is His power. He is God.

## 2. Goal of all ministries is to worship God.

**V 31**, *So the multitude marvelled when they saw the mute speaking, the maimed made whole, the lame walking, and the blind seeing; and they glorified the God of Israel.*

Wonderfully qualifies the ministry of Christ in Decapolis and in the area of the gentiles was they glorified the God of Israel. Praise is that for which all ministry seeks.

We don't minister to people just to meet their need, but so that they, in having their need met, can Glorify God?

Everything is to redound to the praise and the glory of God. That is the goal of all ministry.

**2 Corinthians 4:15**, *“Carry the message and be thankful that the abundant grace might, through the thanksgiving of many, redound to the glory of God.”*

When you learn what the heart of God is in John 4, you'll understand this.

The Father has sent the Son into the world, to seek true worshipers. We know the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.

**For what reason?**

**John 4:23-24**, *But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. <sup>24</sup> God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”*

The goal and purpose of everything, and these people were in awe. They were filled with wonder. They were filled with praise. The thing they had seen was utterly inexplicable.

There was no human way to describe it, and they gave glory to the God of Israel, and it encompassed praise, a positive affirmation of the majesty and power of God, and fear, a sense of trembling in the presence of One so mighty.

Very important lesson in our utterly self-centred, self-consumptive time.

Our lives should cause people to glorify God.

The apostle Paul went into a city, and the people all fell down and said, “He is a god.” They could see God manifest in him even though they didn’t know what God was manifest.

### **3. Dependence on divine resources.**

We learn that, when we are really right on the edge of being used, is when we have just admitted we don’t have the resource.

The disciples said, “Lord, don’t look at us. Let us not go through that deal we went through before. We can’t help.”

We all feel that a little bit.

Word of God says “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.

You say to yourself, “I can’t do it. I feel so inadequate.”

That is exactly right where you need to be, and all of us feel that way. We really do.

We feel like we don’t have the resource, and that’s the right place.

When you feel you have got it all the resource, God is so fortunate to have you with all your tools, you are utterly useless.

What we need is somebody who knows they don’t have any resources.

But I think we all suffer from that. We have to fall back on His divine supply.

**James 1:17**, *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.*

Jesus was teaching them the uselessness of human items to accomplish divine ends. We don't have the resources so often. But we are willing to give the little that we do have.

#### **4. Divine supply.**

Where we don't have it, He does.

Lord says, "Give me what you got. It isn't enough, but I will multiply it and make it enough."

It's so great. God gives us what we need out of His infinite store of riches. I feel inadequate.

What overwhelms me is when God gives, having given everything He's got and filled up everybody, He has not at all diminished His supply.

He has infinite capacity to create, there's never a diminishing of His supply. So, whatever He gives never diminishes anything that He has, and that's why He can give according to His riches - according to His riches - abundantly and constantly, and never, ever diminish His supply.

## **5. Lord needs waiters.**

He can deliver just as well as He can create, He uses them because it gets us involved in the program.

I am so glad that this whole thing involves us, that we can have the great privilege of service. He could have delivered it, but He chose to use human instruments, and that gives us the perception.

It's God who creates, and we deliver.

That's the basic principle on which we live in this life.

We are going to spend all eternity serving Him just the same in greater dimensions than we can even conceive.