

Bread in the Wilderness

Scripture:

Matthew 15:32-38 "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."* ³³Then His disciples said to Him, *"Where could we get enough bread in the wilderness to fill such a great multitude?"* ³⁴Jesus said to them, *"How many loaves do you have?"* And they said, *"Seven, and a few little fish."* ³⁵So He commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground. ³⁶And 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. ³⁷So they all ate and were filled, and they took up seven large baskets full of the fragments that were left. ³⁸Now those who ate were four thousand men, besides women and children."

Introduction:

Sometimes we find ourselves in a wilderness, surrounded by others who are in the wilderness as well. Spiritual wildernesses are places of discouragement, disappointment unrealized expectations. These are times when we feel inadequate and poorly prepared for the journey we are on. We look at our meager supplies and make judgments that they just are not enough. In times like these we need spiritual food to sustain us and give us strength. I believe these scriptures give us an answer to getting food even in the wilderness.

I. The first step is to realize that God cares. (vs.32)

A. God sees every need and has made promises for our provision.

B. Jacob has a vision of the ladder and God makes promises to him.

Genesis 28:15 "Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you."

C. Our heavenly Father knows about our every need.

Matthew 6:31-32 "Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' ³²For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things."

D. If we know God cares we will have bread in our wilderness.

II. The second step is to do an inventory. Recognize what you do have, not what you don't have. (vs.34)

A. Elisha feeds 100 sons of the prophets with a little bread and a little corn.

II Kings 4:42-44 "Then a man came from Baal Shalisha, and brought the man of God bread of the firstfruits, twenty loaves of barley bread, and newly ripened grain in his knapsack. And he said, "Give it to the people, that they may eat." ⁴³But his servant said, "What? Shall I set this before one hundred men?" He said again, "Give it to the people, that they may eat; for thus says the LORD: 'They shall eat and have some left over.'" ⁴⁴So he set it before them; and they ate and had some left over, according to the word of the LORD."

B. The widow woman ministered to Elijah with a handful of meal and a little oil. (I Kings 17:9-16)

C. Let faith arise for that which seems impossible.

Hebrews 11:1 "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

D. If we will just recognize what we have we will have bread in our wilderness.

III. The third step is to prepare for the blessing. (vs. 35)

- A. There was no water for Jehoshaphat's army until ditches were dug.
II Kings 3:16-18a "And he (Elisha) said, "Thus says the LORD: 'Make this valley full of ditches.'"¹⁷For thus says the LORD: 'You shall not see wind, nor shall you see rain; yet that valley shall be filled with water, so that you, your cattle, and your animals may drink.'¹⁸And this is a simple matter in the sight of the LORD;"
- B. There was no oil until the vessels were gathered.
II Kings 4:3-4 "Then he said, "Go, borrow vessels from everywhere, from all your neighbors—empty vessels; do not gather just a few. ⁴And when you have come in, you shall shut the door behind you and your sons; then pour it into all those vessels, and set aside the full ones."
- C. There was no healing until the leper had dipped seven times.
II Kings 5:10 "And Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, "Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored to you, and you shall be clean."
- D. There is no harvest until the ground is broken up.
Hosea 10:12 "Sow for yourselves righteousness; Reap in mercy; Break up your fallow ground, For it is time to seek the LORD, Till He comes and rains righteousness on you."
- E. If we will just prepare we will have bread in our wilderness.

IV. The fourth step is to do what He says even when it appears to be foolish. (vs. 36)

I Corinthians 1:27-29 "But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty;²⁸ and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are,²⁹ that no flesh should glory in His presence."

- A. Moses used a rod to bring deliverance to God's people. (Exodus 4)
- B. Samson killed a thousand Philistines with the jawbone of a donkey. (Judges 15:15)
- C. David killed Goliath with a smooth stone from the river bed. (I Samuel 17:40)
- D. If we will just be obedient we will have bread in our wilderness.

V. God provides abundantly, not sparingly. (vs. 37)

- A. His blessings overflow even in the face of the enemy.
Psalm 23:5 "You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over."
- B. Give what you have in the wilderness and see God provide.
Luke 6:38 "Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you."