

## Remnant Life Church

September 3, 2017

### John

## The Fifth Sign: The Feeding of the 5000 (pt 1)

John 6:1-15

- First sign – turning water into wine at the wedding in Cana (John 2:1-12)
- The second sign – clearing the temple (John 2:13-25)
- The third sign – the healing of the official's son (John 4:43-54)
- The fourth - the healing of the lame man by the pool of Bethesda (John 5:1-15)

When built in Belfast, Ireland at the Harland and Wolff shipyards for the White Star Line in 1912, the Titanic was the marvel of her age. At nearly 883 feet in length, Titanic was longer than the tallest structures on Earth at the time and the largest moveable object ever built. However of the 2224 people who sailed from England on the “unsinkable ship” on maiden voyage, only 710 arrived at their destination in NY City aboard the RMS Carpathia 4 days later. After hitting the iceberg at 11:40 pm on April 14, 1912 it took the Titanic just 2 hours and 40 minutes to sink. While the Titanic was sinking in the North Atlantic another ship was being built in Newport News, VA. The SS Medina was not nearly as large or grand as the Titanic. It made no claim to being unsinkable. For years it carried onions from New York and Texas. During World War II it was converted to a troop ship and carried soldiers across the ocean. It was bombed and torpedoed but the ship refused to sink. On one crossing, it was the only vessel in its convoy to reach its destination. After the war, it was sold as scrap but rescued and converted into an Italian cruise liner called the Roma. Years later it again was sold for scrap but rescued again to become the Doulos for a German Christian organization. For many years it held the record as the oldest active passenger ship in the world. Since 1978 she had welcomed over 20 million visitors in 450 ports in 90 nations. Many lives have been changed and countless have come to Christ through it. In the fall of 2009 she was finally decommissioned, more than 95 years after being built. Today, the ship is still in use having been dry docked, refitted and turned into a permanent luxury hotel on the island of Bintan off the coast of Indonesia and has been renamed Doulos Phos which means Servant of Light. God is in the business of taking little ordinary things and using them for His glory. While it may be the great “Titanics” which make the headlines – it is the faithful Doulos that are making the difference. The same is true of people. God often chooses the smallest and weakest to demonstrate His power.

- Here again is a story so familiar that I feel I need to caution you not to tune out because you know this so well.
  - God's word teaches us something new every time we read it
  - Even if it's something we have read/heard a thousand time
- **READ** – John 6:1-15

## Setting

- Jesus is back in Cana of Galilee the site of the first sign – water to wine; and the 3<sup>rd</sup> sign – the healing of the official’s son
  - The clearing of the temple (2<sup>nd</sup> sign) and the healing of the lame man (4<sup>th</sup> sign) both took place in Jerusalem
- This account fits the pattern of a miracle followed by a discourse by Jesus meaning a teaching
  - The miracle of the feeding and the teaching on Jesus as the Bread of Life
- There are only a few events that are told in all 4 Gospels
  - This is the only miracle of Jesus that they all tell
  - But with different details found in John
    - Crossing the Sea of Galilee (v 1)
    - The involvement of Phillip and Andrew (vv. 7-8)
    - The loaves of bread were made of barley (v 9)
    - The command to gather all the leftovers (v 12)
  - We get these details because John was an eyewitness
- What we continue to see here in the ministry of Jesus...
  - He was not only revealing who He truly was to the crowds through His miracles and teaching
  - But He was training and continuing to prepare His disciples for the work they would continue after He left
    - What is most amazing about this – they did not even know that was what He was doing
    - Many times God is preparing us through the circumstances of our lives and most of the time we do not even know it

John tells us once again that it is the time of the Passover

- This is done not for chronological purposes but theological
  - The Passover is the remembrance and celebration of the freedom of the Israelites from Egypt
  - It is in the context of the Passover meal that Jesus then identifies Himself as the Bread of Life in His teaching after everyone eats – eat my flesh and drink my blood (6:51-58)
  - Jesus then takes the analogy one step further in His discourse
    - (6:28-33) *Then they asked him, “What must we do to do the works God requires?” Jesus answered, “The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.” So they asked him, “What sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written: ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’” Jesus said to them, “Very truly I tell you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”*
  - In this teaching Jesus is telling that, once again, they are focused on the wrong things

- Last week we talked about a man healed from being lame for 38 years and all the Jewish leaders could see was that Jesus broke a Sabbath law that THEY had created!
      - Don't miss what is most important by always grabbing the lowest hanging fruit – look for greater things
    - As in all things that Jesus did there was great depth and importance in His teaching
- We read in Matthews account that Jesus has just been told about his cousin John the Baptist's death and he has gone off by Himself
  - He is on the northern part of the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee near the town of Bethsaida
- Jesus disciples end up with Him on a mountainside (6:3) translates to high ground
  - East of the lake; today known as the Golan Heights
  - He sees the great crowd coming towards Him (5000 men - between 10-15000; some have said as many as 25,000)
  - Once again Jesus is filled with compassion
    - What moves you this morning?
    - We are seeing tremendous devastation in TX yet the media only wants to focus on bashing the President or reporting the stories of the negative elements
    - Many more good things that people are doing
- The town of Bethsaida is where Phillip is from which is why Jesus asks him where to get food (but remember Jesus never asked because He did not know)
  - Jesus was testing/preparing/teaching Phillip along with the others (6:6)
  - Definition of testing is to determine what a person thinks or how they will act
  - Not to tempt or set Phillip up to fail as some have suggested
- Jesus provides an opportunity for the disciples to not only bless the people but do it in a way that will take them beyond themselves
  - The disciples wanted to send the people away but Jesus said you feed them (Luke 9:13)
  - Taking the path most often used (conventional wisdom?) is often not the best way to go especially when it comes to following Jesus
    - Jesus did not follow the standard way of doing things
    - He only did what His Father told Him to do
- Phillip's answer and Andrew's solution represent the way many Christians respond to God
  - Like Phillip many look only with their natural eyes and see things as possible or impossible by what we can accomplish (6:7)
    - He had witnessed the lame walk, the blind see, water turned to wine; a boy healed from miles away but somehow still doubted that Jesus could feed all these people with nothing more than a happy meal
    - Many times we are restricted first and foremost by the economics of a situation

- References 8 months salary (6:7)
    - One day's wage for the common laborer was equated to 1 denarius
    - 8 months then would be about 200 denarii
  - Andrew brought what was available but poured, what I call, a barrel of doubt on it before even seeing what Jesus had in mind (6:8-9)
    - Our great barrel of doubt today is the word "but"
    - I know that God will provide, but...
    - I know that God can heal me, but...
    - I know that I am forgiven, but...
  - Consider this boy for a moment
    - Leaving the house to go out and play or run around the area for the day
    - Mom asks if he packed a lunch
      - The bread was not what we would visualize it to be
      - They were small round cakes
      - The fish was not a big piece of breaded Haddock
      - They would have been small pickled fish to go with the bread
      - This boy is carrying a few sardine sandwiches
- When God provides it is never enough, it is too much!
  - John specifies the collection of the leftover (a Jewish custom at the end of a meal)
  - 12 baskets
    - The 12 disciples?
    - The 12 tribes and God's ability to provide for His people?
    - My favorite option of the 12 baskets has absolutely no basis for truth
      - The boy arrives back at home and mom asks how his day was
      - He calls her outside where there are 12 large baskets of food for them
        - It would have been out of character for them to have taken the boy's food – offered it to help perhaps overhearing their conversation
        - This scenario enforces the biblical principle of sowing and reaping
        - Today we call it tithing
  - The math of the world –  $5 + 2 =$  food for one boy
  - The math of God:  $5 + 2 \times \text{God} =$  food for 5000 with a remainder of 12 (not enough but TOO MUCH)