

THE CHRIST-CENTERED LIFE

In Time of Need

Matthew 14:14-21

INTRODUCTION: It is hard to believe that the battle against COVID-19 began more than 18 months ago.

Who of us would have thought we would still be battling it now as schools are about to re-open for the fall classes of 2021!

One thing COVID has done that is good is to remind each of us of the fragility of life.

- While those of us who are older have been declared the most vulnerable,
- We all have known strong, healthy, younger men and women catch the disease.
- Some of them became quite ill.
- We all know people of all ages who have died.

COVID has reminded us that life is fragile and fleeting.

It reveals our vulnerability and exposes our needs.

Jesus came to minister to needy people.

Matthew 11:28 NKJV “Come to Me, all *you* who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”

In fact, the times that we are the closest to trouble is when we are feeling very self-sufficient and not particularly needy.

One of my favorite stories in Scripture comes from a time that Jesus encountered a massive group of people, probably 25,000 people or more.

- Some were sick.
- Some were demon possessed.
- All of them were lost and on their way to hell.
- And all of them were hungry.

Matthew 14:14-21 NKJV 14 And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick. 15 When it was

evening, His disciples came to Him, saying, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is already late. Send the multitudes away, that they may go into the villages and buy themselves food."

16 But Jesus said to them, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat."

17 And they said to Him, "We have here only five loaves and two fish." 18 He said, "Bring them here to Me."

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.

20 So they all ate and were filled, and they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments that remained. 21 Now those who had eaten were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

In a previous church, Bro. Nelson's grandson asked, "Did that really happen or are you just preaching?"

Real event. Not just an allegory, a myth, a lesson. It really happened or it means nothing. But because it happened just like the Bible says, it means a lot.

Now, if you will allow, I want to show you several things out of this passage, every one of which applies to each of us today.

Although Jesus Himself was burdened at the time, He still took time to meet the needs of those who had come to Him.

- John the Baptist had just been beheaded by King Herod.
- John was His cousin.
- John had been chosen of God to prepare the way for Messiah.
- John had announced Jesus, "Behold the Lamb of God ..."
- John had baptized Jesus, and he testified of the Spirit coming upon Jesus and remaining.
- John and Jesus were close, and he had just been brutally murdered.
- Jesus actually went to this deserted place to be alone because of the pain in His own heart over John's death.
- Jesus was interrupted by the needy people that followed Him.

Jesus laid aside His own griefs, and He ministered to the hurting multitude.

- 5,000 households – men, women, children probably upwards of 25,000 people.
- Jesus healed the sick
- Cast out demons
- Preached about the Kingdom of God and the gospel
- And then He fed them all! Reading this account from all the gospels, we pick up additional detail.
 - Little boy – 5 barley loaves and 2 fish
 - Each disciple had a basket
 - Groups of 50
 - Disciples went group to group and never ran out
 - People ate until satisfied
 - 12 baskets left over

JESUS ALWAYS HAS TIME TO CARE ABOUT YOU!

1 Peter 5:7 NKJV casting all your care upon Him, for **He cares for you.**

- Jesus cares for our physical needs,
- Our emotional needs,
- AND our spiritual needs.
- Jesus loves us, even more than our spouse, our parents, our children.
- That does not mean He will always do what we want. It means He will do what is right and best for us. Remember that prayer is the two signature check. God will grant what we pray for that is in line with His will – what is right and best.
- This is not a promise of health and wealth to everyone all the time.
- This is a promise that God's children can count on God to do
 - the right thing
 - at the right time

- in the right way

This our Lord will do because He cares for us!

Story of Somali Christians – “God has sent you. You have come. You are the one.”

Somalia – 87% were malnutrition

Relief workers sent to 50k people, 10 countries, 27 villages

Each morning the workers removed the bodies of those who died in the night and fed the survivors.

The Ogaden – desert

Spirit said, “Go.” One worker went. Took 3 days to get there. A card with 6 names was given to the worker. Was asked to pray for them, had not heard from them in more than 2 years.

Worker was at lunch in a hut when 3 times the workers came and said to him, “God has sent you. You have come. You are the one.”

Somali Christians asked, “Is Jesus real? Does He care? Does anyone care? Does anyone remember?”

The worker then presented the card to the Somalis and said, “Yes, Jesus is real! He does care! They all care! They remember you and pray for you!”

1 Peter 5:7 NKJV casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.