

The Outcasts:

(*The Outcasts* is a series of Bible studies based on those people whom most levels of society would consider unimportant, insignificant or even repulsive. These people are often overlooked or cast aside, as if they have nothing to give the body of Christ.

Rebels...backsliders...children...senior citizens...the handicapped...uneducated...homeless.

Thankfully, God looks upon the heart and sees us for what we can become; beautiful witnesses for the Gospel of Christ. It is my prayer that through these Bibles studies you will be blessed and gain a clear vision for how the God of the Universe sees you; incredibly precious and valuable).

A Happy Meal!

By Mary Kane



We had finally moved into our new school building! After years of prayer, planning and fund raising, our new facility was ready; the classrooms were approved for occupancy. How excited we were to move into our sparkling new building! Many sections of our building remained unfinished, however. So our principal commissioned each grade to pray for an unfinished section of our building. My first graders and I were responsible for praying for the completion of the music room. Upon learning of the prayer project, my students began brainstorming on how they could raise money to complete the music room. One of my little students suggested that in addition to praying, we could have a bake sale to raise the needed funds. Another student suggested that we all could do extra chores and donate the money to the building project. As we had just learned a Bible lesson and a song called *Five Loaves and Two Little Fish*, we decided to call our money raising efforts "5 Loaves and 2 Fish." My students believed that God would take their efforts and multiply them so the music room would be finished by the end of the year.

The children worked and prayed, the parents baked and our change jar gradually filled. One person scoffed at our efforts and said that it would take more than a bake sale to finish the building. We chose to ignore the comment, take God at His Word and continue doing what He called us to do. How excited my students were to present the principal with over two hundred dollars and a whole lot of faith! By the end of the school year—we had a brand new music room! How wonderful that God often chooses to work through little people, who have little gifts and a lot of faith!

Please take a moment to confess any sin in your heart to your Holy Father. He is waiting with all the grace that is needed to cover your sin. Ask Him to open the eyes of your heart and fill you afresh with His Holy Spirit. When you have finished praying, please read John 6:1-14.

What lake did Jesus cross (verse 1)?

Who followed Him and why?

A great multitude followed Him because of the signs He performed on the sick. Matthew Henry states "Christ's miracles drew many *after him* that were not effectually drawn *to him*. They had their curiosity gratified by the strangeness of them, who had not their consciences convinced by the power of them."¹ While it is a wonderful blessing to have our sicknesses healed by Jesus, please let that not be the only reason why we follow Him! Let's commit to follow Jesus just because we love Him and want to have a lifelong relationship with Him.

What great Jewish feast was about to happen (verse 4)?

What question does Jesus ask Phillip in verse 5?

Jesus asked His disciple *where* they should buy bread. How did the disciples answer? Notice by their answer that the disciples were not

¹ Henry, Matthew. "Commentary on John 6." . Blue Letter Bible. 1 Mar 1996. 2010. 21 Jun 2010.
< [http:// www.blueletterbible.org/commentaries/comm_view.cfm? AuthorID=4&contentID=1672&commInfo=5&topic=John&ar=Jhn_6_9](http://www.blueletterbible.org/commentaries/comm_view.cfm?AuthorID=4&contentID=1672&commInfo=5&topic=John&ar=Jhn_6_9) >

concerned with the *where* but with the *how*. Their minds immediately turned to the practical issue of money. They did not realize that God wasn't asking them to provide for the multitude from their own resources; which were insufficient. Jesus wanted the Disciples to realize that they needed to serve others through His power; they needed to learn to walk by faith.

If the disciples tried in their own power to supply food for the multitude, how much would each person receive (verse 7)?

But in my opinion, one person in the multitude knew how to walk by faith. One *little* person. One little person that the disciples had tried to shoo away from Jesus on another occasion.

Who was that little person (verse 9)?

What did that little boy have to give to Jesus, the Bread of Life?

Five barley loaves and two little fish.

Barley...the food of the poor.

Five loaves... for five thousand men.

One little boy...twelve disciples.

Can you just imagine Jesus rubbing His hands together, pleased with the small gift given with such great faith by one little boy? Finally, He had something to work with; a little gift and a great faith! For some reason, God in His infinite wisdom has ordained that we have the privilege of bringing Him our small gifts to be used for His kingdom work. No gift is too small, no giver too insignificant to be used by the God of the

Universe. This privilege is our choice. He has equipped and called each one of us to bring Him glory by using our gifts for Him. The question is, "Will we use our gifts for Him?" Will you use your gifts for Him?

What gifts has God given you?

How are you using them for His kingdom?

If the little boy kept his gift to himself, how many people would have benefitted?

If he stepped out in faith, and used his gift for the kingdom, how many people would benefit?

Think of how many people benefitted from the little boy's gift! Do you see a wonderful principle at work here? When we use our gifts for our own pleasure, they stay small and we stay small. When we give our gifts back to God in faith, He multiplies them times 1000 and uses our gifts to bless thousands of people! Because one little boy used his little tiny gift for the kingdom, at least 5000 people ate that day. Not only did they eat, but verse 12 says they ate and were *filled!* The Greek word for *filled* used in this verse means to fill full, to fill up, at the very most, a multitude, a harvest. So the multitude had a multitude of food!

Verse 11 adds a little more information about how much the people ate that day.

How much did everyone eat according to verse 11?

They ate *as much as they wanted*.

It seems then that we have two choices when we have a need:

- 1). We can try to have our needs met by the efforts of the world or men (verse 7) and we will receive very little or
- 2). We can have our needs met by Jesus and receive as much as we want and be filled!

Please read verses 12 and 13 again.

What was left over after the multitude "ate all they wanted"?

Isn't our God incredible?

What can we learn from this little boy?

- **We must trust God with our gift.** The little boy did not have a delicious gourmet feast to feed the crowd; he had 5 small barley loaves and two little sardines! You may feel that your gift is not big enough, rich enough, or talented enough for Jesus to use, but if God has called you to use your gift in a certain situation, trust Him and take the risk!
- **It will take faith.** The little boy knew his gift wasn't big enough, but he had faith that his God was! Probably a few people laughed at the gift that the child brought to Jesus. Thank goodness he gave it anyway; even those who laughed were fed.
- **We must be willing to share.** The lad could have chosen to keep his gift for his own use. Who would have blamed him? His lunch was small and poor, but when he shared his lunch with 5000 others, he ended up with *all he wanted*. We can give away all we have and end up filled and satisfied, with much to share.

- **We have to be prepared.** The child had to at least bring his lunch to Jesus. The bread and fish had to be prepared for consumption. We also need to do what we can to make our gifts are ready and available for God to use. Perhaps that means you will need to study, take a class or attend a lecture to hone your gifts.
- **Take the opportunities to serve when they come.** The choice to serve was up to the boy. Jesus did not suggest they ask the crowd for food or call specifically for the boy to donate his lunch. Take it on faith that God has gifted and called you to serve, and make yourself available!
- **With God, your little bit will be enough to feed a multitude!** Our small gifts + God = a surplus!

The multitude didn't only need bread; what they really needed was the Bread of Life, Jesus. Life does not come from what men can buy with money... Life comes only from Jesus. In their own power, the Disciples were unable to provide even a little bite of bread for each person on the mountainside. By the power of Jesus, they all had as much as they wanted with plenty leftover to share. When we have all that we want of Jesus, we will be greatly satisfied and will have much to share with others who hunger for Him.

What can we learn from this Outcast?

- **The Power of One:** One small gift, from one small child, fed one large multitude. *One* does make a huge difference.
- **The Power of Position:** The power of position usually rests with the wealthy or mighty, but in this case God used a small, lowly child to teach His Disciples and the multitude a wonderful lesson about faith.

- **The Power of Poverty:** One would have expected a rich man to feed a multitude, not a poor little boy. If a rich man fed the 5000, who would have received the glory? No one expected 5000 people to be fed from the gift of one poor child. The smallness of the gift and of the giver allowed the greatness of God to be seen by all.

In closing, please write down what step you will take to use your gifts to serve the body of Christ.

*"Well done, good and faithful servant;
You have been faithful over a few things,
I will make you ruler over many things.
Enter into the joy of your Lord!"*

Matthew 25:23

Mary Kane

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