

The Loaves and Fishes
Mark 6

Family Talk
THE MIRACLE OF THE LOAVES

Of all the miracles told us, there is one that is spoken of in all four Gospels — Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. And that miracle is the miracle of feeding 5,000 people — a true story about a time when there did not seem to be nearly enough food. The Lord gave not only *enough*, but far more than enough, so that there were baskets of fragments left over.

Jesus saw a great multitude. Think of His eyes as He viewed all those people. What feeling was in those eyes on this occasion, and why? He was *moved with compassion for them*. There is a strong feeling in this story. Why was He so concerned for them as He looked at them in this place? It was because they were like sheep without a shepherd. They had deep human needs. A human being needs to know what is right and what is true, and so in His love He began to teach them many things (verse 34). His teaching went on to the day's end, and it must have been a great feast for their minds, for here was the Lord Himself who knew everything, speaking directly to them.

A crowd of hundreds and hundreds of people far from the towns would need a lot of food as the day drew to its close. The disciples had some money, but even if they went off to a town and spent all of it, it would hardly begin to feed them all.

“How many loaves do you have? Go and see.” They obeyed the Lord and found that they had five loaves and two fishes. Out there in the green grass the Lord commanded that these crowds be told to sit down in groups of hundreds and groups of fifty. Hungry groups they would be.

Those compassionate eyes were raised to heaven when the Lord blessed and broke the food and began to hand it to the disciples. Did they get enough? **“They all ate and were filled.”** But it was more than enough. To show that there was more than enough, the Lord told the disciples to begin to gather what was left over, and their baskets began to fill with the surplus until they had no less than twelve baskets filled with what yet remained when all had eaten as much as they wanted.

More than enough! The Psalm says, **“My cup runs over.”** What the Lord gives overflows. **“You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies”** (Psalm 23: 5).

What happened that afternoon while the disciples were giving and giving and giving, pictures something that takes place in heaven. Did the disciples wonder as they handed out the food whether any would be left for them? After they had been giving and giving, they ended up not with *less* than they started, but with *more*!

Think of food as more than food. Think of it as your very happiness, or all your good fortune. In heaven they try to share and give, and something amazing happens. Listen to what is said in the Writings, and notice the phrase “**Much more than he gives.**”

“When an angel does good to any one, he also communicates to him his own good, good fortune, and happiness, and this with the desire to give the other everything . . . Then good flows in unto him together with good fortune and happiness, much more than he gives” (*Arcana Coelestia* 6478).

Swedenborg saw that this really does happen. “It has been given to me to know this from much experience; and from this also it may be seen that the Lord is in every single thing, for the Lord is such that He wants to give Himself to all, and hence good fortune and happiness are increased with those who are likenesses of Him” (*Arcana Coelestia* 6478).

If you understood what was just said about the Lord’s wonderful presence, you understand one of the greatest truths. The Lord said, “The bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” He, the giver, also said, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst” (*John* 6:33, 35).

He showed His power to give that day when with the compassion of love in His eyes He gave to the disciples that the people might have food enough, and much left over.