



1 nephi 19.²³

I did liken all scriptures unto us, that it might be for our profit and learning.

In this short devotional, we would like to focus on two stories from the Savior's life that are recorded in the Gospels. The first is the story of Jesus feeding five thousand—one of the few stories that are found in all four Gospels. The other is the story of Jesus turning water into wine at the marriage in Cana, recorded only by John. These two stories have much in common. Both testify to Jesus' extraordinary command over basic natural elements.

These stories are of interest in many different ways. In this meditation, we focus on a personal applications that can be drawn from them. Application of scripture to ourselves is consistent with Nephi's approach to scripture. "I did liken all scripture unto us," he writes.¹ I have always appreciated this admonition from Martin Luther.

"When you open the book containing the gospels and read or hear how Christ comes here or there, or how someone is brought to him, *you should therein perceive the sermon or the gospel through which he is coming to you, or you are being brought to him.* For the preaching of the gospel is nothing else than Christ coming to us, or we being brought to him. When you see how he works, however, and how he helps everyone to whom he comes or who is brought to him, then rest assured that faith is accomplishing this in you and that *he is offering your soul exactly the same sort of help and favor through the gospel.*"²

With this in mind, consider Jesus' feeding of five thousand.³

feeding 5,000

What might we learn about ourselves and Jesus' influence in our lives from this story? We might sometimes feel that we are lacking that which is needed to meet life's constant challenges. We might be tempted to quit and give up. We might turn from a challenge due to the difficulty. We might yield to temptation with a shrug, justifying our surrender because, we feel, we are weak. This story reminds us that the Savior is not limited by our limited resources. Our weaknesses mean little to him. The Apostle Paul taught us that that which is weakest in God—as if there were weakness in God—is stronger than man's most impressive strength⁴.

¹ 1 Nephi 19.²³

² Martin Luther, *What to look for and Expect in the Gospels, Luther's Basic Theological Writings*, Ed., Timothy F. Lull, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 1989, p. 108

³ See, for example, John 6.⁵⁻¹⁴

⁴ See 1 Corinthians 1.²⁵

Just as Jesus took an inadequate supply of food and magnified it to fill everyone's need, he can take that which is inadequate in us and magnify it in order to help us meet our needs. Further, his magnification is often extravagant. Remember: there were twelve baskets left over after Jesus had fed the multitude. He not only magnifies us, but does so until there is more than enough to fill our deepest need. We are then equipped to help others with their needs.

turning water to wine

John records that even before his ministry began Jesus turned many gallons of water into wine.⁵ What might we make of the turning of water to wine? Water is a very common thing. There is nothing extraordinary about it. It has no taste, no smell, no color. It is not something we use for "special occasions." Some of us may feel that way about ourselves: "There's nothing special about me." "There's not much God can do with me."

But this story tells us how Jesus turned a huge quantity of plain old water into wine. Now, this would be impressive enough in itself. But there is more than this to the story. Even more impressive was the fact that the wine made from plain water was the reddest, the best smelling, and the best tasting wine served during the entire wedding festival!—a festival that often lasted for a week. So too, Jesus can make something extraordinary of us. If we will let him, Jesus can work in our lives and make something extraordinary of us. Indeed, as the angel of the Lord taught Abraham so long ago, "With God, nothing is impossible."

May we all trust not only in God's power, but in his willingness, eagerness, and pleasure in exercising his power in our individual lives to make us far more than we even imagine.

Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

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⁵ John 2.¹⁻¹¹