

Week Four

Vision through the lens

Wide angle – All inclusive – Close but wide.

How wide is wide enough?

How do we include community?

How do we invite community?

This passage is again a template on how to do ministry. In this case, how to do a number of ministries all at once. Service, hospitality. Generosity – Hang on – those are our primary church personality and giftings!!!

Ok we need to take notice, actually, I know some of you take notes, good thinking.

Matthew 14:13-21

Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand

¹³ When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns. ¹⁴ When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick.

¹⁵ As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, “This is a remote place, and it’s already getting late. Send the crowds away, so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food.”

¹⁶ Jesus replied, “They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat.”

¹⁷ “We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish,” they answered.

¹⁸ “Bring them here to me,” he said. ¹⁹ And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. ²⁰ They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. ²¹ The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children.

Remember where this passage fits in. The context is straight after John the Baptist gets beheaded! MMM I had better be careful here. Any Baptist Pastor with the name John is going to get a bit nervous around that passage!!

So Jesus is grieving for his cousin yet look how He minister's and teaches.

Let's follow the passage thru.

a. **Attraction** v13

¹³ When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns.

MM Jesus just wants some quiet time but he is followed, not by the paparazzi but by the people. They want a piece of this Jesus person. It appears that sometimes in ministry you get no peace and quiet. Yep it happens.

Just what is so attractive about Jesus? Think about that for a minute. What is it you were originally attracted to Jesus about? What about now? What keeps you being in connection with Jesus.

Tonight in Night Church we are looking at just that. Amy Parker has interviewed and videoed a bunch of people about how they stay connected with God. (Come and have a look)

What is it that keeps you attracted to Jesus?

b. **Compassion** v14 (Whose compassion??)

¹⁴ When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick.

Now, here is a question for us: who had compassion? The church, the disciple -, no Jesus had compassion.

Sometimes we won't have compassion but we are attracted to Jesus and His compassion rubs off. Do we need to up our compassion quota. Probably but in reality life seems to push our compassion in the opposite direction. We can be too busy, or even get calloused to it all. I don't think I even react anymore to adds on TV showing starving kids. Between TV and all the agency advertising sent through the mail - - yep, I've become calloused
YET

Jesus compassion sinks in. When I hear of His compassion – It affects me.

c. **The need** v15

¹⁵ As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a remote place, and it's already getting late. Send the crowds away, so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food."

Ok it is easy enough to get caught up and not be prepared for the days outing. The difference here is – there was no Macdonalds with its fast food, or not so fast food as the case may be, not clean toilets etc. Not even Hungry Jacks or KFC. You were out there and

if you didn't take a packed lunch you had nothing. The logical answer is to send them home. Ok the disciples are being logical. WE would probably be the same because we don't expect a miracle.

d. The Response and the resources v16-17

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

The response is great – Na you feed 'em. You could imagine the disciples reactions – dropped jaws, eye bogging out – Wha..... MM, does God's instructions to us get that reaction too. Let me put it this way: Does God surprise you?

¹⁷ "We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish," they answered.

OK the resources are minimal 5 loaves of =bread and two fish. But hey Jesus could have done it with one prawn and spring roll. When the resource is God – the equation changes. Now lets again apply that to us. I said recently that we have every resource that we need to do what God has called us to. Already have that. If we need anything else – God will provide it and as we see from this story in Jesus life. Even if it isn't logical that it is provided – if we need it – it will be there.

e. Bring them!! V18

¹⁸ "Bring them here to me," he said.

Here I think is a huge part of the template. Bring the resources to Jesus. Not to church, not to the pastor or leadership, bring them to God. Bring them into His domain, let Him have them. They are not technically our resources – they are His. We need to be acknowledging that.

f. Use the resources at hand and let God work v19

¹⁹ And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people.

From bringing the resources to God, then we have to do what the resources are provided for. In this case – its food – let 'em eat. Think about the resources you have – How are they to be utilised by God?

g. Be satisfied v20

²⁰ They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over.

Now here is a huge thing for us. Be satisfied. Note the resources hit the spot. People were satisfied. When Jesus provides for us we need to be satisfied. Too often we see people not happy with this or that in a church context. This is a wide issue across most congregations. God is working, God is working at His pace, God is working in you. Be satisfied with it. And

notice here that there are left overs. God 's providence is more encompassing that we get. Let's look out for some spiritual left overs, what are the over and above blessing we as a church have been receiving? Think about that one.

h. Be amazed at the results. V21

²¹ The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children.

Now, this is one of those AWE moments. Notice that word awe is just like it sounds – awe. You could use the word wow but this is such a big thing you could say it backwards – wow. Or you could go yeh right or even so what. What do you think – amazed or blasé?

That's the thing isn't about vision and following God. We have to react, or respond. You can react with awe or you can be cynical. But it is your response. The question is: How does God want you to respond? I think this passage has given us a response format or template.