

REDISCOVERING JESUS IN THE JEWISH GOSPELS
Matthew 14 Lesson 29

THE BEGINNING OF THE END

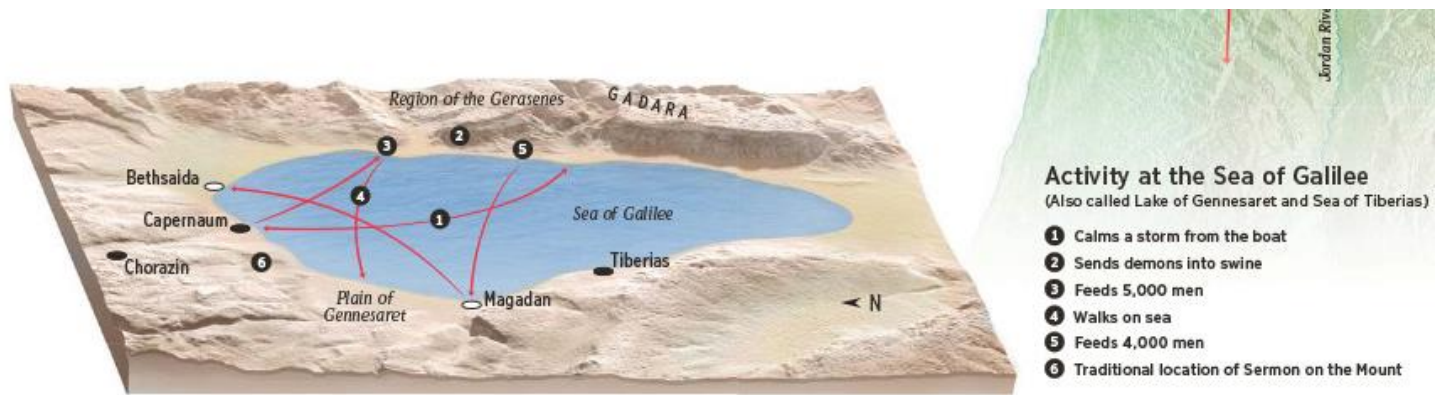
Ministry of Jesus Timeline

According to *Wilmington's Guide to the Bible* - "His Seventy-Two Steps from Glory to Glory"
the timeline of chapter 14 covers steps:

#33 – From Nazareth to His third Galilean preaching tour (Matthew 9:35- 14:13; Mark 6:6-29; Lule 9:1-9)

#34 – From His third preaching tour to a wilderness near Bethsaida (Matthew 14:13-23; Mark 6:30-47;
Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-18)

#35 – From Bethsaida wilderness to the plain of Gennesaret (Matthew 14:24-36; Mark 6:48-56; John 6:1-18)



Key Events of Matthew 14

- Death of John the Baptist (vs 14 :1-12)
- Feeding the 5000 (vs 13-21)
- Walking on water (vs 22-33)
- Healings in Gennesaret (vs 34-36)

John the Baptist - Yochanan the Baptizer

Spirit-filled before birth – "he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb." (Luke 1:15)

This filling as today is temporary and not the same as the permanent indwelling. We see the moment in which the babe before birth experienced the filling of the Spirit of His mother and physically reacted. "when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost" (Luke 1:41)

- Great Prophet (11:9-13) The last of the Old Testament Jewish Prophets
- Forerunner of the Messiah in the spirit of Elijah (11:10,14; Malachi 4:5,6)

Political Context

Tiberius was Caesar. **Pilate** was Prefect (Governor) of Judea.

Herod Antipas was the **Tetrarch of Galilee** 4BC – 39 AD

Herod Antipas beheaded John "Herod the tetrarch, being reproved by him for Herodias his brother Philip's wife, and for all the evils which Herod had done, Added yet this above all, that he shut up John in prison." (Luke 3:19,20) "And he sent, and beheaded John in the prison. And his head was brought in a charger, and given to the damsel: and she brought it to her mother" (Matthew 14:10,11).

Herod Antipas would be deposed and exiled to Gaul by Emperor Caligula in 39 AD.

Jesus receives news of the death of His cousin John the Baptist. (14:1-12)

This was a harbinger of His coming arrest, cruel torture, and crucifixion. This prompted Jesus to depart to the other side of the lake to Bethsaida one mile east of the Jordan River. Jesus said on more than one occasion “my time has not yet come” regarding the Jerusalem leaders plotting to kill him. His death wasn’t going to be wasted in a power struggle between these gentile demagogues.

Malice in the Palace

A window into this political and family struggle between Antipas of Galilee and Phillip of Peraea can be seen later when Jesus was arrested in Jerusalem. According to Luke 23:6-12, **Pilate, the Roman procurator of Judaea**, learning that Jesus was outside of his jurisdiction sent Him to Herod Antipas who was spending Passover in the Jerusalem. Antipas was eager to see Jesus, expecting more miracles, but Jesus “opened not His mouth,” to the despot who had beheaded John. Herod sent Him back. “Pilate and Herod were made friends together: for before they were at enmity between themselves” (Luke 23:12). Jesus was used as a mere olive branch to mend political differences.

He must die as the Passover Lamb at Jerusalem. In his human form, even Jesus, the Son of God, acted wisely to avoid risks. Jesus said, “And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him” (John 8:29). The proof that He was not running away in fear is evidenced when Jesus replied to the report of the threat from Herod Antipas; “Herod will kill thee,” they said. “And he said unto them, Go ye, and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures today and tomorrow, and the third *day* I shall be perfected. Nevertheless, I must walk today, and tomorrow, and the *day* following: for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem” (Luke 13:31-33).

Alfred Edersheim, in his classic work *Jesus the Messiah*, pointed out the significance of relocating to Phillip’s safer political domain of Peraea, “To realise events we must bear in mind that, crossing the Lake eastwards, we should pass from the possessions of Herod (Antipas) to those of the Tetrarch Phillip.”ⁱⁱ Phillip’s wife had left him in adultery for his brother Antipas. Edersheim proposed an interesting possibility; “Supposing Antipas to have been at his palace in the Peraean Julias, he would have been in close proximity to the scene of the Baptist’s last recorded labors at Aenon. We can now understand, not only how John was imprisoned by Antipas, but also the ... motives which influenced it, according to Josephus, the Tetrarch was afraid that his absolute influence over the people, who seemed deposed to carry out whatever he (John) advised, might lead to a rebellion.”ⁱⁱⁱ Jesus was fully aware of this Roman minefield.

The Apostles returned from their campaign to “their cities.” The apostles gathered around Him and reported to Him all that they had done and taught” (Mark 6:30,31). They had experienced demons being cast out and people being healed. They were falling over themselves to tell their stories. Remember when the 70 returned how Jesus refocused them on the main thing: “saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name. And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven” (Luke 10:17-20).

The scripture says they had not so much time to eat. Jesus says, “Come apart with me into a desert place and rest.” They headed toward a boat on the shore with the crowd pulling at them and shove off and cross the Galilee toward Bethsaida on the north shore. The steep cliff of Mt. Arbel shrank in the distance. Imagine how they gracefully rowed occasionally pausing to tell the amazing stories of the power of God on their three month crusade. Soon enough, the bow of the boat gently crunched against the gravelly but crowd free shore. “withdrew by a boat privately to a desert place apart.” Every boater relishes being like Jesus in this account. Jesus lands on the shore with His exhausted disciples. They need solitude to recharge. He needs to grieve, to think, to pray. They had barely sat down before the clamor of the crowd was being heard.

The disciple's response – Send them away! (14:15)

Jesus put His needs and their needs aside for the needs of others. "I am among you as he that serveth" (Luke 22:27).

1. He knew the value of people. People were the reason He came. (14:14,15)

Jesus saw them with compassion. They were scattered and weary like sheep without a shepherd.

2. He saw interruptions as an opportunity to meet their needs despite their heart's motive.

He welcomed them and "healed their sick."

His service to them came from His goodness, not their worthiness. Many would never say thank you. Some who asked for bread would later cry for His blood. He not only healed them in spite of their past but in spite of their future. When it is said that He healed the sick, it didn't just mean physically sick, but spiritually sick. He released tongues that would someday curse. He healed hands that would hurt others. He healed eyes that would lust.

Aren't we thankful that He saved us from the penalty of sin despite knowing we would fail Him again?

3. He let them experience the overwhelming needs of others to teach them the size of their little issues and to teach them the size of their God. When they saw the problems, He saw the possibilities,

I would love to see the expression on their faces when He said, "They need not depart, give ye them to eat." Rather than look to God they looked at their limited resources. "eight months wages are not enough." Mark 6:37

God wants us to quit looking at the impossible and to our inability and look to His ability.

It's laughable when you think that they had just told the Bread of Life that there is not enough bread!

When God sends you into a storm. (14:22-33)

Finally, the appetites of the crowd were satiated. The disciples collected twelve baskets full and finally ate. Jesus went "up into a mountain apart to pray" (14:23). "He was there alone." Was he savoring the satisfaction of feeding over 5000 people miraculously? Was He physically drained after so much "virtue" had gone out of Him?" He had told the disciples that they needed to rest. He was fully human and needed rest too. "He went up into a mountain apart to pray" Certainly, John's murder prompted Him to pray for strength to face His coming death.

The exhausted disciples were now alone in a storm on the lake. It was the fourth watch of the night or 6 a.m. (14:25). The wind was blowing in the opposite direction of their intended destination. They had been rowing with sails jibbing and tacking in a zigzagged pattern and now were further away and in "midst of the sea." Galilee is only 8 miles wide from east to west. From Bethsaida to the plain of Gennesaret was no more than 3 miles. Luke called the Galilee the Lake of Gennesaret (Luke 5:1). "Contrary" means it was blowing in the opposite direction they needed to go. They were heading southwest so the winds would have been against their starboard side. It was necessary to head into the wind and row against it so as not to be capsized from starboard waves. A northwest wind was likely funneling through the ravines between the high peaks of the Horns of Hattin and Mt. Safed then cascading down the steep steps into a five-mile-long valley that broadens to a beautiful agricultural plain of Gennesaret two miles wide by Migdal. The topography around this lake, 700 feet below sea level, produce legendary violent vortexes that suddenly whip a placid lake into a boiling cauldron.

When God Joins you in that storm and says something laughably ridiculous. (14:26-27)

"Be of Good cheer..." Nothing prepared them for what was about to happen. Their lead man jumped out of the boat. Peter has said and done a lot of wild things, but now he had just lost his mind. Peter did not do it without permission. The rest of the disciples had a death grip on the gunnels of a sinking fishing boat. Peter was the only one with the good judgment abandon ship. He may have been captain but this going down with the ship business wasn't a thing yet. Mark's gospel adds the detail that Jesus came "walking on the sea, and would have passed by them" (Mark 6:48). The rest of the disciples in fear of drowning believed they were seeing a Ghost. Seeing is not believing. How is it that they saw what

Peter saw but did not hear what Peter heard. Fear is the Devil's faith. Faith is Faith. Peter was the only one who had faith in the words of Christ. "It is I, Be not afraid." Don't you love Peter's question which had to have been yelled above the noisy sea? "Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water!" Jesus said, 'Come.'" He walked on the water, to Jesus. "But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Hebrews 11:6). Peter unjustly gets all the criticism for looking down at the waves, instead of keeping his eyes on Jesus. But, He quickly looked up to Jesus and cried "Lord save me." Peter just blew the curve for the rest of the class. "If you want to walk on water you first have to get out of the boat. Jesus immediately caught him by the hand, and I can't help but imagine that Jesus with a chuckle or at least a big grin exclaimed, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" He did not rebuke him like many sermonizers have done - "Have you lost your mind?" "There's a fine line between faith and foolishness." The storm calmed, they arrived at the shore, and "Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him," It's amazing that after a campaign of miracles, and after feeding the 5000, none of them had fallen at His feet in worship. Finally, after a night in the deep, at the break of dawn, they had seen the Light, "Of a truth thou art the Son of God." Is their failure to worship the reason He sent them into a storm? All that's left of Gennesaret is a high "tel" or archaeological mound which sits right on the edge of the shore between halfway between Capernaum and Magdala. A "Tel" is created by the repeated construction and destruction of ancient cities. "Older Bible translations spell the name alternatively **Kinnereth** or **Chinnereth**. It was a town allotted to the tribe of Naphtali (Joshua 19:35). The name appears in the singular form as "Kinneret" (Numbers 34:11, Deuteronomy 3:17)."^{iv} Israelis today call The Sea of Galilee, Lake Kinneret.

The word of His arrival spread quickly and all the diseased in that area were brought to Jesus. (14:35)

Other than the instance of the woman with the issue of blood (9:20), this is the only other record of healing by contact with the hem of His garment. The Greek word *kraspedou* translated "hem" in *Matthew 14:36* is found in the Greek Septuagint translation (LXX) of the Hebrew Old Testament in Numbers 15:39. "fringes in the borders of their garments" is a translation from the Hebrew word *Lasitsit* – pronounced today as Tzitzit. God had commanded the Israelites that they put upon the fringe of the borders and a "ribband" of blue. "that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the LORD, and do them." (Numbers 15:38,39). This is the Rabbinic origin of the prayer shawl or *Tallit* with its fringed border and blue ribbon. The fringes and the number of knots on the Tallit are supposed to equal 613 for each of the commandments. Jesus would have no doubt worn fringes on the bottom of His garment or He would have been in violation of God's law. In *Matthew 23:5* Jesus referenced what some say was a prayer shawl. But note the wording "enlarge the borders of their garments," which does not mention a separate prayer shawl. The Tallit or prayer shawl was of later origin. But, His garment definitely had a "hem" translated as "fringes" in the (LXX). There was, and is no power in the Tallit fringes. The Jews that desired healing also had fringes on their garments. The miraculous power was of Jesus the Son of God who "Made" them "perfectly whole." (14:36) The request of the people to touch His fringes indicates their common superstition that touching a holy man's clothes healed one. They may well have heard of the healing of the "woman with the issue of Blood," when she "touched the border of his garment" (Luke 8:44). James makes it clear that "the prayer of faith shall save the sick and the Lord shall raise him up" (James 5:13-15). Ultimately they were coming to Jesus with faith in His power to heal them. Jesus responds to faith and rejects unbelief. "And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief" (Matthew 13:58).

ⁱ Map - [2015923_univ_cnt_5_xl.jpg \(900x652\) \(assetsnffrgf-a.akamaihd.net\)](#)

ⁱⁱ Jesus The Messiah, Alfred Edersheim, Wm. B. Erdman's Publishing, Grand Rapids, MI, 1974, P 204

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid. P 204

^{iv} Kinneret (archaeological site) - Wikipedia

Cuts

Let Jesus turn your stress into rest.

The same type of upheaval that happened to Jesus and His disciples in this passage. The difference in how the disciples and Jesus responded when everything was working against them reveals the areas where we need to grow the most.

What is it that Jesus assuredly knew that kept Him calm and confident on the second most stressful day in His life?

Instead of losing His cool, He made cool headed decisions and calmly served the people, glorified His Father and grew the disciples' faith.

Today's scripture will show us a day when the calm could have turned into chaos in the life of Jesus. Has that ever happened to you? There have been days when I awoke, had a great cup of fresh ground coffee in my favorite mug. I walked out back with my Bible and sat in the Adirondac chair under the canopy of trees. A slight warm breeze, not enough to turn the page brushed my cheek. The Sun had just arisen. The birds were singing. I opened the scripture and my heart was warmed by His love until it squeezed a tear out the corner of my eye. I opened my journal and wrote a love prayer to God, and asked for His strength and guidance for the day. By the time I arrived at my office door, all that serenity was a distant memory. The toast burned, the coffee spilled, the tire was flat, the kids were cranky, the dog was sick in the floor, a phone call came that someone had just been rushed to the hospital. I open the door to find an envelope that someone was mad and leaving the church. My calm had just turned to chaos. Don't you wish you could fast rewind the movie and rewrite it? What happened to that serene time with the Lord? In my visits to the Doctor recently. I've become reacquainted with the phrase "waiting room." I know now why they call us a Patients. It's a room full of hurting people or their families. Most sit and suffer in silence, punctuated by the occasional loud one that doesn't wait to see the Dr. to describe their symptoms as if the rest of us are just fine and didn't have anything better to do than come and spend our life in a DOCTOR'S office!. They didn't get the text that TMI stands for too much information. I doubt they would of understood it anyway. You know how you sit and try to mind your own business, trying not to sit by a sneezing cougher, and opposite the kid toy toxic dumpster. So there I was. I'd read & responded to all my emails, texts, friends facebook comments, and you know how it is after half of eternity has passed you get so bored you despair of life. You'll do anything to distract yourself from the disease around you and your own pain that you just don't even care anymore. Then you snap! You take your life in your hands and pick up one of those magazines that carries everything from the common cold to the bubonic plague. I'm going in! If I die I die! Before you know it your grabbing more of them doing backstrokes in a cesspool of germs. When ¾ of eternity had passed as I was sitting there on purpose right by the door to the offices hoping they would stumble over me and notice how much I had aged since I came in as a wee lad. A female patient came out and stopped just beside me and said "Humm, somebody smells good." And then as I was starting to shrink into my seat she spoke directly to me and asked, "Is that your cologne?" Then to my horror Ursula, leaned slightly toward me and assured me "I am not going to invade your space...honey" as she took an audible whiff. Invade my space? I'm thinkin,"Too late Lady. About now I felt like the beach at Normandy on D-Day. As her shadow came over me, the thwapp thwapp of army helicopters had nothing on the sound of my heart beat. Then ile hovering over me she asked, "What kind of cologne is that? I was like a deer in the headlights. The answer I gave her was totally unacceptable to her. "I don't know." "You don't know? Cause I really like that." Feeling all the eyes peering over the magazines I honestly said, " I just picked one out of the basket. I didn't pay attention to which one it was." She was beside herself and repeated my answer. Fortunately she could not fit in the single chair beside me but had to go and sit in the double chair straight across from me. She continued, unsolicited to tell me everything that came to mind about her life. I looked up at the eternity clock and noticed it had stopped and was now going counter clockwise. I looked at my smart phone desperately trying to find the beam me up app. The next day I was in a shop and on the counter they had little miniature bumper stickers. I saw one that said "There is one in every crowd and they always find me." I bought it so next time I go into the Dr.'s office I can wear it on my forehead. I'm looking for one of them full size bumper stickers that says, "If you can read this, You're too close." I don't think she would get it though. What happened next was the closest I'll ever come to the sensation of the Rapture. The nurse came out and called

Mr. Overby. I jumped up like I had just heard Gabriel's trumpet. Oh death where is thy sting! O grave where is thy victory! But thanks be to God which giveth us the Victory. But unlike me Jesus would have had compassion on her. If I was Jesus I would have healed her just to clear the waiting room. It's harder to have compassion on some people than others. Because she never asked about me. It was all about her. Before we condemn her, I mean, How many people does a Doctor see and do you think anyone ever asks, How are you feeling, I just had you on my mind and wanted to come by and let you know you are appreciated.

February 15, 1921. New York City. The operating room of the Kane Summit Hospital. A doctor is performing an appendectomy. In many ways the events leading to the surgery are uneventful. The patient has complained of severe abdominal pain. The diagnosis is clear: an inflamed appendix. Dr. Evan O'Neill Kane is performing the surgery. In his distinguished thirty-seven-year medical career, he has performed nearly four thousand appendectomies, so this surgery will be uneventful in all ways except two.

The first novelty of this operation? The first use of local anesthesia in major surgery. Dr. Kane is a crusader against the hazards of general anesthesia. He contends that a local application is far safer. Many of his colleagues agree in practice, but they will have to see the theory applied first. Dr. Kane searches for a volunteer, a patient who is willing to undergo surgery while under local anesthesia. A volunteer is not easily found. Many are squeamish at the thought of being awake during their own surgery. Others are fearful that the anesthesia might wear off too soon. Eventually, however, Dr. Kane finds a candidate. On Tuesday morning, February 15, the historic operation occurs. The patient is prepped and wheeled into the operating room. A local anesthetic is applied. As he has done thousands of times, Dr. Kane dissects the superficial tissues and locates the appendix. He skillfully excises it and concludes the surgery. During the procedure, the patient complains of only minor discomfort. The volunteer is taken into post-op, then placed in a hospital ward. He recovers quickly and is dismissed two days later. Dr. Kane had proven his theory. Thanks to the willingness of a brave volunteer, Kane demonstrated that local anesthesia was a viable, and even preferable, alternative.

But I said there were two facts that made the surgery unique. I've told you the first: the use of local anesthesia. The second is the patient. The courageous candidate for surgery by Dr. Kane was Dr. Kane. To prove his point, Dr. Kane operated on himself! A wise move. **The doctor became a patient in order to convince the patients to trust the doctor. Isn't that what Jesus did, become a man live and die experiencing everything we did?** (Max Lucado – Eye of the Storm)

You're under the gun at work. Your family rejects you or even worse, they don't. Your health is worsening. Your bills are piling up. Your kids are like piranha's on your patience. Your teenager won't listen. Your employees give you blank looks.

"We have not a High Priest that cannot be touched with the feelings of our Infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." He came down here. I walked where He grew up and it is understandable how Nathaniel asked, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?"

A man was trying to teach his young son how to make a point with a basketball. He would shoot it and give the son the ball. After many misses he responded to His Father's encouragement, "Yeah its easy for you up there. You don't' now how hard it is from down here." We can never say that about God because he came down here on our level. Heb. 4:15 says He was tempted and tested just like we are.

If you have created a Jesus who never had to have a bath, who never stubbed his toe as a kid, who never got hungry or burped I feel sorry for you because you have a statue with a Halo for a God. Jesus was a real breathing, hurting, crying, living human in a cruel world. Some how the only time we allow Him to be totally human is for 6 hours on the cross. Is it any wonder that many can only connect with Him when they are dying.

This passage is one of only a few events chronicled in all four gospels. so we could never say, He doesn't know what it's like down here.

I believe for this very reason –

People want us to give them a quick fix. They were willing to walk 3 hours to get a free lunch but are not willing to spend a half an hour in prayer. We cannot meet people's "God Need" but we can lend an ear and give a reply that leads them to Him, invite them to pray to Him and to open His love letter to them. We can invite them to be included in the flock of other formerly lost sheep. If they won't personally seek Him then like Jesus we have to move on and let their "god hunger" get intense enough or their situational need to get bad enough. I've noticed over the years that people have to go through enough situational needs, run to God, then forget Him when the crisis is over until something clicks inside them usually in the middle of a really big crisis and they realize they need God in their heart and daily life. **What ever their motive, God Fix or God First we need to see them through His eyes until they see Him through our eyes.**

But we excuse this miracle with a cynical, "Well of course He did and so could I if I had His miracle ability!" Here's where we disconnect from scripture and God and go our way with the world on our shoulders. We look for escape, or external alterations or geographical distance, or mood altering substance, or pleasure seeking. What needs to happen is internal transformation, modeled by our Master.

Soul rest doesn't come in recreation but in a redemptive relationship.

Soul rest doesn't come in a substance but in a Savior.

Soul rest doesn't come in Retirement but in rewarding service.

Soul rest doesn't come in riches but in rejoicing that God used you to shepherd lost sheep back to Him.

Have you ever planned a time away only to have a family emergency and the plans get canceled? Not only did you not get a break you got an even more stressful week with less energy than before. Have you ever been on a time schedule to finish your work then leave town for a relaxing weekend. Then guess who...shows up. Yep, That figures. This is going to delay you an hour.

Imagine How Jesus felt with this culmination of events? (Max Lucado – Eye of the Storm)

- Intense sorrow – the death of a friend or relative
- Immediate threat – his name is on Herod's wanted poster
- Immeasurable joy – a homecoming of His followers
- Immense crowds – a Niagara of people
- Insensitive interruptions – he sought rest and got demands
- Incredible demands – crowds pleaded for His touch. But Jesus didn't explode in demands, He didn't rebuff the crowds. "Beam me up Father." would have been our first thought.
- Incapable disciples – He told them to feed them.
- **1. Needs get met miraculously met through the ordinary resources of ordinary hands.**
- **2. God gets glorified by multiplying what we give and do.**
- **3. They grew in faith and in unity by participating in a cause that is greater than themselves.**
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- **Disheartened** - Mat 11:28 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.
- **Disciples** - 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.
- **Duty weary** - 30 For my yoke *is* easy, and my burden is light.
