

# More Miracles and Teaching in Galilee

## The Feeding of the Five Thousand



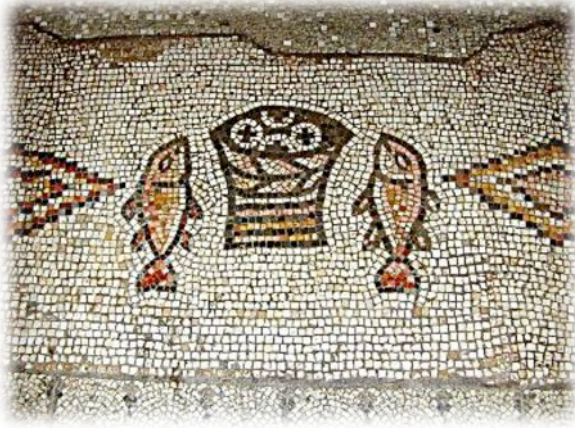
After this Jesus went to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tibe'ri-as.<sup>2</sup> And a multitude followed him, because they saw the signs which he did on those who were diseased.<sup>3</sup> Jesus went up into the hills, and there sat down with his disciples.<sup>4</sup> Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand.<sup>5</sup> Lifting up his eyes, then, and seeing that a multitude was coming to him, Jesus said to Philip, "How are we to buy bread, so that these people may eat?"<sup>6</sup> This he said to test him, for he himself knew what he would do.<sup>7</sup> Philip answered him, "Two hundred denari would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little."<sup>8</sup> One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him,<sup>9</sup> "There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two fish; but what are they among so many?"<sup>10</sup> Jesus said, "Make the people sit down." Now there was much grass in the place; so the men sat down, in number about five thousand.<sup>11</sup> Jesus then took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated; so also the fish, as much as they wanted.<sup>12</sup> And when they had eaten their fill, he told his disciples, "Gather up the fragments left over, that nothing may be lost."<sup>13</sup> So they gathered them up and filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves, left by those who had eaten.<sup>14</sup> When the people saw the sign which he had done, they said, "This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world!"

<sup>15</sup> Perceiving then that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, Jesus withdrew again to the hills by himself. (John 6:1-15)

### The Church of the Multiplication

Tabgha is not an actual town, but a small region-9 on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee. It is not far from Caper'na-um. Three sacred sites are located here: the Church of the Multiplication, the Church of the Primacy of Peter, and Mensa Christi Church, the site where it is believe Jesus appeared to some of His disciples after the Resurrection. The early Jewish converts to Christianity recognized this region that became known as Tabgha as the site of Jesus' feeding of the five thousand, but during the Byzantine period the region was named *Heptapegon*—The Place of the Seven Springs.

The first chapel that was built at this site was constructed around 350 AD. Joseph of Tiberius was a rabbinical scholar, and a member of the Sanhedrin. When he converted to Christianity, the Byzantine Emperor Constantine, gave him permission to build a number of churches especially in areas where the populace was predominantly Jewish. In the 5<sup>th</sup> century, this chapel was dismantled and a new, larger and more elaborate church was constructed on the same site under the direction of the Patriarch of Jerusalem, Martyrius of Jerusalem. In 7<sup>th</sup> century the Persians destroyed the Byzantine Church. For 1300 years the ruins of the Church and the site of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes was unknown until two German archeologists uncovered the beautiful mosaic floors of the Church in 1892.



Mosaic Loaves and Fishes from 4<sup>th</sup> century Byzantine Church



Altar of the present day Church of the Multiplication



The discovery of the 4<sup>th</sup> century mosaic of the loaves and fishes served as archeological proof that this was the site that Joseph of Tiberius and Martyrius of Jerusalem both believed the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes occurred. Tradition holds that the large limestone rock underneath the altar and protruding from the mosaic floor is the very location where miracle occurred. In addition to the mosaic floors other artifacts have been discovered and identified as having been part of the 4<sup>th</sup> century Byzantine church including the baptismal fountain above right.

The Church of the Multiplication, the present church at the site, completed construction in 1982. The church was constructed in a neo-Byzantine style and includes prominent Byzantine icons of Jesus and Mary.





In June of 2015 a Jewish extremists group burned a building next to the Church. They spray painted walls in Hebrew with the words which when translated into English said, "false idols will be smashed." The following month four Israeli youth, ages 18-24, were arrested and convicted of arson.

Thousands of Christians held a rally for peace shortly after the arson. One of the participants of the rally was quoted saying,

“This despicable act is trying to damage the fabric of society in the Galilee,” said Daria Arbel, one of the demonstrators and a member of the interfaith organization Marching Together to a Shared Future. “We live here together, people of all religions, and we won’t let anyone damage this shared life we have here.”

Article from the Times of Israel (June 21, 2015)

Thousands rally for peace at torched Galilee church | The Times ... <http://www.timesofisrael.com/thousands-rally-for-peace-at-torched-galilee-church/>

**Thousands rally for peace at torched Galilee church**

Residents and Christian leaders call for coexistence in massive demonstration at Church of the Multiplication

By ...



Thousands of demonstrators gathered at the Church of the Multiplication in Tiberias in northern Israel on Sunday to protest an arson attack on the holy site last week.

The church was set on fire early Thursday morning, and anti-Christian graffiti in Hebrew was discovered on its walls. The suspected hate crime drew fierce condemnation from Israeli leaders from both sides of the aisle, with ...

... demonstrators gathered around 4 p.m., with many waving the yellow and white Tiberias flag and loudly holding up ...

... 300 mostly young demonstrators blocked a road near the church.

“This despicable act is trying to damage the fabric of society in the Galilee,” said Daria Arbel, one of the demonstrators and a member of the interfaith organization Marching Together to a Shared Future. “We live here together, people of all religions, and we won’t let anyone damage this shared life we have here.”

Shaul Hildat, the chairman of the Aramean Christian Association in Israel, also condemned the “abominable act, just like any damage to a church both sides would be.”

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**I am the Bread of Life**

*<sup>5</sup> When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, “Rabbi, when did you come here?” <sup>26</sup> Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, you seek me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. <sup>27</sup> Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of man will give to you; for on him has God the Father set his seal.” <sup>28</sup> Then they said to him, “What must we do, to be doing the works of God?” <sup>29</sup> Jesus answered them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.” <sup>30</sup> So they said to him, “Then what sign do you do, that we may see, and believe you? What work do you perform? <sup>31</sup> Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’” <sup>32</sup> Jesus then said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven; my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. <sup>33</sup> For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven, and gives life to the world.” <sup>34</sup> They said to him, “Lord, give us this bread always.”*

<sup>35</sup> Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to me shall not hunger, and he who believes in me shall never thirst. <sup>36</sup> But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. <sup>37</sup> All that the Father gives me will come to me; and him who comes to me I will not cast out. <sup>38</sup> For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me; <sup>39</sup> and this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up at the last day. <sup>40</sup> For this is the will of my Father, that every one who sees the Son and believes in him should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day."



<sup>41</sup> The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, "I am the bread which came down from heaven." <sup>42</sup> They said, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does he now say, 'I have come down from heaven'?" <sup>43</sup> Jesus answered them, "Do not murmur among yourselves. <sup>44</sup> No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. <sup>45</sup> It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Every one who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me. <sup>46</sup> Not that any one has seen the Father except him who is from God; he has seen the Father. <sup>47</sup> Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life. <sup>48</sup> I am the bread of life. <sup>49</sup> Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. <sup>50</sup> This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that a man may eat of it and not die. <sup>51</sup> I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any one eats of this bread, he will live for ever; and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh."

<sup>52</sup> The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" <sup>53</sup> So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you; <sup>54</sup> he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. <sup>55</sup> For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. <sup>56</sup> He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. <sup>57</sup> As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats me will live because of me. <sup>58</sup> This is the bread which came down from heaven, not such as the fathers ate and died; he who eats this bread will live for ever." <sup>59</sup> This he said in the synagogue, as he taught at Caper'na-um.

<sup>60</sup> Many of his disciples, when they heard it, said, "This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?" <sup>61</sup> But Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples murmured at it, said to them, "Do you take offense at this? <sup>62</sup> Then what if you were to see the Son of man ascending where he was before? <sup>63</sup> It is the spirit that gives life, the flesh is of no avail; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. <sup>64</sup> But there are some of you that do not believe." For Jesus knew from the first who those were that did not believe, and who it was that should betray him. <sup>65</sup> And he said, "This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father."

<sup>66</sup> After this many of his disciples drew back and no longer went about with him. <sup>67</sup> Jesus said to the twelve, "Will you also go away?" <sup>68</sup> Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life; <sup>69</sup> and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God." (John 6:5-69)

**Even the dogs eat the scraps that fall from the table of their masters.**

<sup>1</sup> Then Jesus went from that place and withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon. <sup>22</sup> And behold, a Canaanite woman of that district came and called out, "Have pity on me, Lord, Son of David! My daughter is tormented by a demon." <sup>23</sup> But he did not say a word in answer to her. His disciples came and asked him, "Send her away, for she keeps calling out after us." <sup>24</sup> He said in reply, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." <sup>25</sup> But the woman came and did him homage, saying, "Lord, help me." <sup>26</sup> He said in reply, "It is not right to take the food of the children and throw it to the dogs." <sup>27</sup> She said, "Please, Lord, for even the dogs eat the scraps that fall from the table of their masters." <sup>28</sup> Then Jesus said to her in reply, "O woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish." And her daughter was healed from that hour. (Matt 15:21-28)



## Reflections

### Kevin's Reflections:

*"... but what are they among so many?"*

When God, the *Logos*, created the universe He did not create it from some pre-existing primordial substance, He created it *ex nihilo*, that is "from nothing." When Jesus looked up and saw the multitudes He recognized that they needed to be fed. Jesus, Who is the *Logos*, could have created from nothing a feast for the 5000 men (and a untold numbers of women and children), but He chose not too. Instead, Jesus took five loaves and two fish from a boy and from this very small amount of food He multiplied it and fed thousands. I think this is marvelous that the omnipotent God chooses to allow us to participate in His creativity. All we have to do is offer what little we have, like the boy with the fives loaves and two fish, and give them to Jesus who can then take our little and multiply it so that it is more than enough. What's stopping us from giving Jesus our little so that He can multiply it into an abundant blessing for others and for His Kingdom? Whatever I have with God's grace will be more than enough, and if I am faithful in giving Him my little then Jesus will give me more:

*"... give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap."* (Luke 6:38)

*"For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed."*

What is food and why do we need it? That's a question which would appear to have a rather obvious answer, and on one level that's true, yet if we take the time to delve into it a bit deeper, then I believe we can arrive at some very interesting insights. So lets begin by describing the nature of food. As we all know food provides contains proteins, carbohydrates, fats, vitamins, minerals, and energy. We get our foods from plants and animals. The proteins, carbohydrates, and fats from these plants and animals were, in fact, the molecules that these plants and animals needed for their life and many of them have to be modified in our bodies before they can become the molecules we need to sustain our life. To try to keep it simple lets consider the protein that a person would get from eating a hamburger. A typical hamburger would include a ground beef patty, a bun, and may be lettuce, tomato, and cheese. Most of the protein would come from the beef patty, but there will be protein from the cheese, and also from the plant sources as well albeit less.

Proteins are made up of twenty naturally occurring amino acids. The sequence of these amino acids that make up the protein determines the protein type and the job that it does. Again, to keep it simple lets just focus on the beef patty. When the beef patty is eaten it must be broken down into its constituent amino acids. Why? Well, remember this is cow protein, and the human body needs human protein, and not just any human protein in some instances proteins very specific to you. How does it do this? It's a complicated process but the blueprint to assemble these amino acids to make the proteins we need is contained in the DNA in our cells. To put all of this simply, we consume food, break it down and then reassemble the molecules to make us. We need this process to grow, repair our tissues, to create new life, and to carry out all of the process of our lives. But what does this have to do with the flesh and blood of Jesus?

When believing Catholics and Orthodox consume the bread and wine consecrated in remembrance of Christ's Pascal Mystery, which is re-presented to us during Mass and Divine Liturgy, we are consuming the flesh and blood of Jesus. This is a Mystery of the highest order and the analogy I am about to present is nothing more than a briefest glance of a depth that is beyond our rational comprehension. Nevertheless, I offer it as an aid for those who might benefit from it as I have found it in my own devotion and reception of the Eucharistic elements.

The consecrated Bread *is food indeed*, and the Wine *is drink indeed*. The Church has always recognized that this is a spiritual reality, and that the Bread and Wine are food and drink for our spirits. But unlike food and drink for our physical bodies, it is not broken down and reconstructed into our *image*, rather we are broken down and reconstructed into His *image*.

<sup>29</sup> *For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the first-born among many brethren.* (Rom 8:29)

Exactly, how are we broken down in order that we may be reconstructed into the image of Christ?

In reflecting about this question I believe that there are a number of ways that the Holy Spirit brings this about in our lives. There is one in which I am particularly familiar with, and perhaps others can relate to this as well. I am referring to the passage from Matthew from chapter 21:

<sup>42</sup> *Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the scriptures:*

*‘The very stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner; this was the Lord’s doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes’?*

<sup>43</sup> *Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a nation producing the fruits of it. <sup>44</sup> And he who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; but when it falls on any one, it will crush him.” (Matt 21:42-44)*

There are several passages where Jesus is referred to as a “stone of stumbling” including Isaiah 8:14-15, 1Cor 1:22-24, and 1Peter 2:7-8. What they share in common is that Jesus and His teaching is a stumbling block not only for Jews who seek a sign, but also for Gentiles who seek wisdom (1Cor 1:22-24) and often this leads people (not just Jews and Greeks) to reject Christ altogether. But, in the verses above from Matthew, Jesus makes an important distinction between falling on the stone (Jesus Christ) and being broken into pieces and having the stone fall on him and being crushed. Most bible scholars see the distinction as the difference between an opportunity for repentance and transformation that being broken presents versus being crushed in judgment when the rock falls on those who are recalcitrant. And I think it is here that we can see just how Holy Spirit can break us down so that He can re-form us into the image of the Son.

Falling on the stone and being broken into pieces is not just for unbelievers; it’s for believing Christians as well. In fact, I have stumbled over Jesus many times in my life, still do, and expect that I will continue to do so until my dying day. Why? Because the real Jesus, the authentic Jesus of the Scripture, is not the Jesus that is often portrayed in our “politically correct” culture and churches. Consider the evidence:

<sup>13</sup> *The Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. <sup>14</sup> In the temple he found those who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the money-changers at their business. <sup>15</sup> And making a whip of cords, he drove them all, with the sheep and oxen, out of the temple; and he poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. (John 2:13-15)*

<sup>34</sup> *“Do not think that I have come to bring peace on earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. <sup>35</sup> For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; <sup>36</sup> and a man’s foes will be those of his own household. (Matt 10:34-36)*

<sup>13</sup> *“Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is easy, that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. <sup>14</sup> For the gate is narrow and the way is hard, that leads to life, and those who find it are few. (Matt 7:13-14)*

*“I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me. (John 14:6)*

<sup>12</sup> *For to him who has will more be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who has not, even what he has will be taken away. (Matt 13:12)*

Jesus knew He was challenging not only to the religious authority, and the common folk of His day, but to all people in all times. In the passage regarding His flesh and blood being food and drink that we just read earlier this would have been heresy to the Jews and certainly a bazaar and cannibalistic rite to any of the Gentiles who might have been listening. Even Jesus’ disciples struggled with this teaching:

<sup>60</sup> *Many of his disciples, when they heard it, said, “This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?” (John 6:60)*

Of all the stumbling blocks for believers, this one may be the biggest. The hard truth of Christ’s body and blood continues to be a challenge for many people to accept as they see the Eucharistic bread and wine as only a symbol. There will always be scriptures that will become stumbling blocks for us to fall upon and break into pieces; that’s good, it means we are growing. But, we have to respond as Peter did,

*“Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life; <sup>69</sup> and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God.”*

When Jesus becomes a stumbling block we need not to walk around it, not suggest that He really did mean what He said, but we must fall on it and break the false images we have of Jesus and any illusions that we can become like Him (conformed to His image) by any other means than His grace. Our response must be, “Lord, to whom shall we go? We will stay and abide in you.”

<sup>56</sup> *He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him.* (John 6:56)

What does it mean to abide in Jesus? According to Meyer’s commentary on the Greek:

“...an expression distinctively Johannean of abiding, inner, and mutual fellowship (John 15:4, John 17:23; 1 John 3:24; 1 John 4:16), by virtue of which we live and move continually in Christ, and Christ works and rules in our minds, so that thus Christ’s life is the centre and circumference, i.e. the all-determining power of our life.”

It is in this type of inner abiding whereby the “words of eternal life,” even those we stumble and break into pieces over, become the template of *theosis*, that is, our conformation into the image of Christ. And the flesh and blood of Christ is essential to this inner abiding between the believer and Jesus:

*“By the mystery of this water in wine, may we come to share in the divinity of Christ, who humbled himself to share in our humanity.”* (prayer recited by the priest quietly as if it were the secret mystery of the ages)

If we abide in Him, through His flesh and blood given to us in the Eucharistic elements of bread and wine, then all our broken pieces can be reconstructed (conformed) into His image, according to His “DNA” and not our own. But this can only happen when we are presented with the authentic Jesus in the Scripture. Unfortunately, the Church (and I mean not just my Church, but the entire Body of Christ) has smoothed and polished the stumbling block of Christ so that believers are less likely to trip over Him; or they put warning cones and tape around the authentic Jesus so that believers need not experience the angst of stumbling. Instead too many of our Churches have become “Churches of Accompaniment” whereby the clergy and ministries simply accompany members in their sins and do not preach or teach the authentic Jesus whereby He can become a stumbling block to them so that they may fall, be broken, repent, and re-formed into the image of Christ.

But in order for repentance and re-formation to occur we must have Christ abiding in us. *Theosis* is not achieved through an act of disciplined effort, but by Him who dwells in us, Christ, our hope of glory is our template by which the broken pieces of our shattered images are reassembled into a new nature. This is the pedagogy by which the Bride is made holy and without blemish. (Eph 5:27) This is the pedagogy that is properly presented to us at Mass and Divine Liturgy, which begins with the Liturgy of the Word with the divine expectation that we will become perfect “as the heavenly Father is perfect.” And presented with this impossibility Christ gives Himself as food so that, through the miracle of His *flesh* and His *blood*, we may become as He is in this world. (1John 4:17)

#### **Jan’s Reflection:**

*“Even the dogs eat the scraps that fall from the table of their masters.”*

Jesus has an interesting encounter with the Canaanite woman when He enters pagan Gentile territory for the first time. History has it that the Jews and Canaanites were sworn enemies; but here comes this Canaanite calling after Him to heal her daughter from demon possession. She calls Him the Son of David, King of the Jews. A woman and a Canaanite, has such a real revelation of our Lord. This is amazing! But Jesus just ignores her. The woman will not be deterred; she kneels before Jesus and asks for His help. This time Jesus speaks and says, “It is not right to take the food of the children and throw it to the dogs.” Ouch! Her response is one of remarkable faith and humility. When she replies, “Even the dogs eat the scraps from the Master’s table,” she embraces all of the humiliations and does not care what He thinks. She knows who Jesus is and she placed her daughters need before her own. At this point Jesus addresses her faith and her daughter is instantly healed.

I must say if I was given the silent treatment and later called a dog I know I would have been angry and offended. This Canaanite woman is our perfect example of persistence and humility. Lord, help me to acquire this humility. Grant me the grace to acquire this persistent, unwavering, and tenacious faith.