

The Gospel of John (6:1-15)

A House Church Outline



1. Praise *(Purpose: To worship God)*

- What are you thankful for this week? *(let the group's secretary write these down in an A4 hardcover or some notebook)*
- Song Service
 - Sing a few songs of praise to God

2. Pray *(Purpose: To carry each others' burdens and to seek the Lord)*

- What challenges did you have this week? *(write these down in an A4 hardcover or some notebook)*
- Go into a season of prayer

3. Review *(Purpose: To learn accountability)*

- Tell us how it went with what you promised to do in last week's meeting? *(e.g. Who did you share your faith with this past week? Who did you minister to? How did actioning your I WILL STATEMENT go?)*
- Where people have failed to fulfil what they said they would, do not be harsh with them but gently encourage them to try again in the coming week. Give them more support by phoning or joining them in the week.

4. Give *(Purpose: To be good stewards of our monies)*

- This is the time to return tithes and offerings. If done electronically, kindly ensure that you get the bank account details of your local church from your treasurer. Don't forget to complete an envelope and to send the breakdown to him/her.

5. Discover *(Purpose: To learn to listen to God, and be obedient to His Word)*

- **Notes for the facilitator**

- Read *Desire of Ages (DA)*, p. 364-371
- **"The Passover was at hand, and, from far and near, bands of pilgrims on their way to Jerusalem gathered to see Jesus.** Additions were made to their number, until there were assembled five thousand men besides women and children. Before Christ reached the shore, a multitude were waiting for Him. But He landed unobserved by them, and spent a little time apart with the disciples" (DA 364).
- **"From the hillside He looked upon the moving multitude, and His heart was stirred with sympathy. Interrupted as He was, and robbed of His rest, He was not impatient.** He saw a greater necessity demanding His attention as He watched the people coming and still coming. He 'was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd.' Leaving His retreat, He found a convenient place where He could minister to them" (DA 364).
- **"The people listened to the words of mercy flowing so freely from the lips of the Son of God. They heard the gracious words, so simple and so plain that they were as the balm of Gilead to their souls. The healing of His divine hand brought gladness and life to the dying, and ease and health to those suffering with disease. The day seemed to them like heaven upon earth, and they were utterly unconscious of how long it had been since they had eaten anything"** (DA 365).
- **"At length the day was far spent. The sun was sinking in the west, and yet the people lingered. Jesus had labored all day without food or rest. He was pale from weariness and hunger, and the disciples besought Him to cease from His toil. But He could not withdraw Himself from the multitude that pressed upon Him"** (DA 365).
- "He who taught the people the way to secure peace and happiness was just as thoughtful of their temporal necessities as of their spiritual need. The people were

weary and faint. **There were mothers with babes in their arms, and little children clinging to their skirts. Many had been standing for hours. They had been so intensely interested in Christ's words that they had not once thought of sitting down, and the crowd was so great that there was danger of their trampling on one another. Jesus would give them a chance to rest, and He bade them sit down.** There was much grass in the place, and all could rest in comfort" (DA 365).

- **"Christ never worked a miracle except to supply a genuine necessity, and every miracle was of a character to lead the people to the tree of life,** whose leaves are for the healing of the nations. **The simple food passed round by the hands of the disciples contained a whole treasure of lessons. It was humble fare that had been provided;** the fishes and barley loaves were the daily food of the fisher folk about the Sea of Galilee. **Christ could have spread before the people a rich repast, but food prepared merely for the gratification of appetite would have conveyed no lesson for their good.** Christ taught them in this lesson that the natural provisions of God for man had been perverted. **And never did people enjoy the luxurious feasts prepared for the gratification of perverted taste as this people enjoyed the rest and the simple food which Christ provided so far from human habitations"** (DA 366).
- "Jesus did not seek to attract the people to Him by gratifying the desire for luxury. To that great throng, weary and hungry after the long, exciting day, **the simple fare was an assurance not only of His power, but of His tender care for them in the common needs of life. The Saviour has not promised His followers the luxuries of the world; their fare may be plain, and even scanty; their lot may be shut in by poverty; but His word is pledged that their need shall be supplied,** and He has promised that which is far better than worldly good,—the abiding comfort of His own presence" (DA 367).
- "After the multitude had been fed, there was an abundance of food left. But He who had all the resources of infinite power at His command said, '**Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.**' These words meant more than putting the bread into the baskets. The lesson was twofold. **Nothing is to be wasted.** We are to let slip no temporal advantage. We should neglect nothing that will tend to benefit a human being. **Let everything be gathered up that will relieve the necessity of earth's hungry ones.** And there should be the same carefulness in spiritual things. When the baskets of fragments were collected, the people thought of their friends at home. They wanted them to share in the bread that Christ had blessed. **The contents of the baskets were distributed among the eager throng, and were carried away into all the region round about. So those who were at the feast were to give to others the bread that comes down from heaven, to satisfy the hunger of the soul. They were to repeat what they had learned of the wonderful things of God. Nothing was to be lost.** Not one word that concerned their eternal salvation was to fall useless to the ground" (DA 368).
- **"The miracle of the loaves teaches a lesson of dependence upon God. When Christ fed the five thousand, the food was not nigh at hand.** Apparently He had no means at His command. Here He was, with five thousand men, besides women and children, in the wilderness... They were far from home, and the night was close at hand. Many of them were without means to purchase food. He who for their sake had fasted forty days in the wilderness would not suffer them to return fasting to their homes. The providence of God had placed Jesus where He was; and **He depended on His heavenly Father for the means to relieve the necessity"** (DA 368).
- **"And when we are brought into strait places, we are to depend on God.** We are to exercise wisdom and judgment in every action of life, that we may not, by reckless movements, place ourselves in trial. We are not to plunge into difficulties, neglecting the means God has provided, and misusing the faculties He has given us. Christ's workers are to obey His instructions implicitly. The work is God's, and if we would bless others His plans must be followed. Self cannot be made a center; self can receive no

honor. **If we plan according to our own ideas, the Lord will leave us to our own mistakes. But when, after following His directions, we are brought into strait places, He will deliver us. We are not to give up in discouragement, but in every emergency we are to seek help from Him who has infinite resources at His command.** Often we shall be surrounded with trying circumstances, and then, in the fullest confidence, we must depend upon God. He will keep every soul that is brought into perplexity through trying to keep the way of the Lord” (DA 369).

- “Christ has bidden us, through the prophet, ‘Deal thy bread to the hungry,’ and ‘satisfy the afflicted soul;’ ‘when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him,’ and ‘bring the poor that are cast out to thy house.’ Isaiah 58:7-10. He has bidden us, ‘Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.’ Mark 16:15. But **how often our hearts sink, and faith fails us, as we see how great is the need, and how small the means in our hands....** Often we hesitate, unwilling to give all that we have, fearing to spend and to be spent for others. But Jesus has bidden us, ‘Give ye them to eat.’ **His command is a promise; and behind it is the same power that fed the multitude beside the sea”** (DA 369).
- “In Christ's act of supplying the temporal necessities of a hungry multitude is wrapped up a deep spiritual lesson for all His workers. **Christ received from the Father; He imparted to the disciples; they imparted to the multitude; and the people to one another. So all who are united to Christ will receive from Him the bread of life, the heavenly food, and impart it to others”** (DA 369).
- In full reliance upon God, Jesus took the small store of loaves; and **although there was but a small portion for His own family of disciples, He did not invite them to eat, but began to distribute to them, bidding them serve the people. The food multiplied in His hands; and the hands of the disciples, reaching out to Christ Himself the Bread of Life, were never empty.** The little store was sufficient for all. *After the wants of the people had been supplied, the fragments were gathered up, and Christ and His disciples ate together of the precious, Heaven-supplied food”* (DA 369).
- “The disciples were the channel of communication between Christ and the people. This should be a great encouragement to His disciples today. Christ is the great center, the source of all strength. **His disciples are to receive their supplies from Him. The most intelligent, the most spiritually minded, can bestow only as they receive. Of themselves they can supply nothing for the needs of the soul. We can impart only that which we receive from Christ; and we can receive only as we impart to others. As we continue imparting, we continue to receive; and the more we impart, the more we shall receive.** Thus we may be constantly believing, trusting, receiving, and imparting” (DA 370).
- “**In our work for God there is danger of relying too largely upon what man with his talents and ability can do. Thus we lose sight of the one Master Worker.** Too often the worker for Christ fails to realize his personal responsibility. He is in danger of shifting his burden upon organizations, instead of relying upon Him who is the source of all strength. **It is a great mistake to trust in human wisdom or numbers in the work of God. Successful work for Christ depends not so much on numbers or talent as upon pureness of purpose, the true simplicity of earnest, dependent faith.** Personal responsibilities must be borne, personal duties must be taken up, personal efforts must be made for those who do not know Christ. **In the place of shifting your responsibility upon someone whom you think more richly endowed than you are, work according to your ability”** (DA 370)
- “When the question comes home to your heart, ‘Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?’ let not your answer be the response of unbelief. When the disciples heard the Saviour's direction, ‘Give ye them to eat,’ all the difficulties arose in their minds. They questioned, Shall we go away into the villages to buy food? So now, **when**

the people are destitute of the bread of life, the Lord's children question, Shall we send for someone from afar, to come and feed them? But what said Christ? 'Make the men sit down,' and He fed them there. So when you are surrounded by souls in need, know that Christ is there. Commune with Him. Bring your barley loaves to Jesus" (DA 370).

- **"The means in our possession may not seem to be sufficient for the work; but if we will move forward in faith, believing in the all-sufficient power of God, abundant resources will open before us. If the work be of God, He Himself will provide the means for its accomplishment.** He will reward honest, simple reliance upon Him. The little that is wisely and economically used in the service of the Lord of heaven will increase in the very act of imparting. **In the hand of Christ the small supply of food remained undiminished until the famished multitude were satisfied. If we go to the Source of all strength, with our hands of faith outstretched to receive, we shall be sustained in our work, even under the most forbidding circumstances,** and shall be enabled to give to others the bread of life" (DA 371).
- **Vs 14-15** – As the people heard Jesus' teachings that day, saw His miracles, and was even fed by Him, conviction strengthened that He was the One that Moses foretold in Deut. 18:15-18. **Imagine if He could be set up as earthly king. "He can satisfy every desire. He can break the power of the hated Romans. He can deliver Judah and Jerusalem. He can heal the soldiers who are wounded in battle. He can supply whole armies with food. He can conquer the nations, and give to Israel the long-sought dominion"** (DA 377). This was the earthly Messiah they wanted, and they were ready to force Him as king. "They see that He [made] no effort to attract attention or secure honor to Himself.... Consulting together, they agree to take Him by force, and proclaim Him the king of Israel. The disciples unite with the multitude in declaring the throne of David the rightful inheritance of their Master. **It is the modesty of Christ, they say, that causes Him to refuse such honor.... They eagerly arrange to carry out their purpose; but Jesus sees what is on foot, and understands, as they cannot, what would be the result of such a movement....** Violence and insurrection would follow an effort to place Him on the throne, and the work of the spiritual kingdom would be hindered. Without delay the movement must be checked. Calling His disciples, Jesus bids them take the boat and return at once to Capernaum, leaving Him to dismiss the people" (DA 378)
- *Read John 6:1-15. Preferably let one person read it. Let everyone then put down their Bibles and get the group to reconstruct the passage in their own words. This teaches the group to be careful in quotation Scripture correctly and to use it as the basis of their discussions.*
- **Discussion Questions (use only a few).** *The notes in italics after some of the questions below are for the facilitator, and not to be read out to the group.*
 - Why do you think so many people were eager to see Jesus (*note one reason in vs 2*)? What are some of the reasons people follow Jesus today? (*ask one question at a time*)
 - In the parallel account of this story in Mark 6:34 it says that Jesus was moved with compassion as He saw the crowd because they were like sheep without a shepherd? What do you think Jesus meant by this? Did they not have shepherds over the flock of Israel? What is the difference between a true and false shepherd? (cf. John 10:1-15)
 - Why do you think Jesus wanted to test the disciples by asking where they might buy bread, when He already knew what He was going to do?
 - What can we learn about the different responses of Philip and Andrew to Jesus' question?
 - Why do you think Christ provided the people with a simple meal of bread and fish, when, as Creator, He could have supplied them with the most exquisite and luxurious food?
 - Why do you think the food did not just appear before the people when they sat down; it had to be taken by the disciples and distributed to the people? Why do you think

Jesus uses people to share Him as 'Bread of Life' with other people? (*ask one question at a time*)

- Are there lessons that we can draw from this miracle that guide us on how to do ministry in the world (i.e. bring people the Bread of Life)? If so, what are they?
- Why do you think Jesus wanted His disciples to gather up the pieces that were left over?
- Why do you think the people wanted to force Jesus to be king, after experiencing the miracle of the loaves and fish? Why did He not allow them to? (*ask one question at a time*)
- What aspect of the lesson particularly stood out for you?
- **Application Questions** (*select a few depending on your time. One has to be the I WILL STATEMENT*)
 - With what situations in life do you have difficulty trusting God?
 - Share a story where God has stretched your limited abilities or resources, or miraculously supplied your needs?
 - Where do you see Jesus testing and stretching you now?
 - Can you think of a category of today's food that best describes your spiritual diet right now – fast food? junk food? high fibre diet? dessert? leftovers? What changes do you think you need to make in your spiritual diet?
 - I WILL STATEMENT: Formulate an I will statement in response to what you have discovered in the Word. Let the group's secretary also record these in an A4 notebook. Ensure that everyone gets a chance to give their I WILL STATEMENT. You have to be specific. E.g. "I will take some of the blessings Christ has given me to share with others. I will make a parcel of clothes and food this week, and drop it off at our closest orphanage."

6. Share (*Purpose: To be witnesses of our faith*)

- Do you have anyone you could share today's lesson with this week? *Be specific.*

7. Closing prayer

Prepared by Shandrell Penniken / Northern Conference