

**Sunday 05-June-22**

**The Compassion of Jesus**

**Exodus 16:1-12**

### **Manna and Quail**

**16** The whole Israelite community set out from Elim and came to the Desert of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they had come out of Egypt. <sup>2</sup> In the desert the whole community grumbled against Moses and Aaron. <sup>3</sup> The Israelites said to them, "If only we had died by the LORD's hand in Egypt! There we sat around pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted, but you have brought us out into this desert to starve this entire assembly to death."

<sup>4</sup> Then the LORD said to Moses, "I will rain down bread from heaven for you. The people are to go out each day and gather enough for that day. In this way I will test them and see whether they will follow my instructions. <sup>5</sup> On the sixth day they are to prepare what they bring in, and that is to be twice as much as they gather on the other days."

<sup>6</sup> So Moses and Aaron said to all the Israelites, "In the evening you will know that it was the LORD who brought you out of Egypt, <sup>7</sup> and in the morning, you will see the glory of the LORD, because he has heard your grumbling against him. Who are we, that you should grumble against us?" <sup>8</sup> Moses also said, "You will know that it was the LORD when he gives you meat to eat in the evening and all the bread you want in the morning, because he has heard your grumbling against him. Who are we? You are not grumbling against us, but against the LORD."

<sup>9</sup> Then Moses told Aaron, "Say to the entire Israelite community, 'Come before the LORD, for he has heard your grumbling.'"

<sup>10</sup> While Aaron was speaking to the whole Israelite community, they looked toward the desert, and there was the glory of the LORD appearing in the cloud.

<sup>11</sup> The LORD said to Moses, <sup>12</sup> "I have heard the grumbling of the Israelites. Tell them, 'At twilight you will eat meat, and in the morning, you will be filled with bread. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God.'"

## Matthew 14:13-21

### Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand

<sup>13</sup> 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. <sup>14</sup> When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick.

<sup>15</sup> 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."

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

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

<sup>18</sup> "Bring them here to me," he said. <sup>19</sup> 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. <sup>20</sup> They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. <sup>21</sup> The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children.

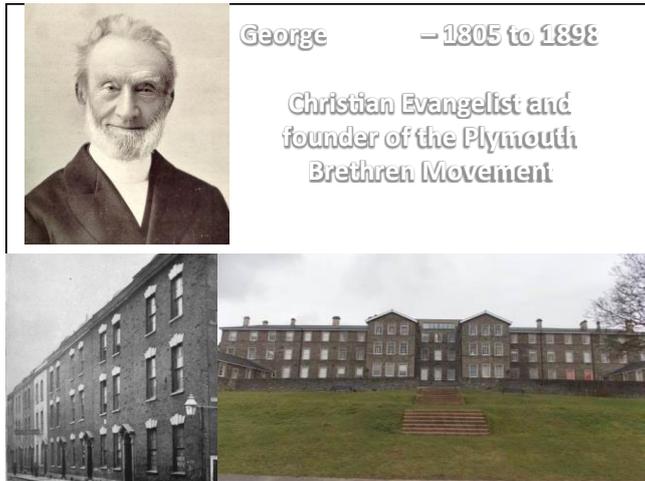
### Sermon: The Compassion of Jesus

Before we begin - let me **ask God to give us His understanding and speak to us through this passage**

Let's pray...

## Intro

[Slide 1-George]



To begin with then **a true story** of man called **George Müller** – born in 1805 in **Saxony** (now Germany) (died in 1898) – **trained** with the **London Missionary Society** – a **Christian Evangelist** and the **founder of the Plymouth Brethren Movement**.

Whilst preaching in Bristol in England – he couldn't help but **notice how many orphans** there were on the streets. He **felt compelled** to do something and came up with the idea of **starting an orphanage**. Many in his **congregation mocked him**, telling him 'That's not what we do in England.'

But **Muller** was **convinced** with God's help he would **prove them wrong**.

He never once asked for any funding – he simply prayed for - **funding** – **workers** - and **children** – and they arrived.

In 1836 he bought **a house in Wilson Street in Bristol** [\[picture on left\]](#) – for boys initially – then another house for girls – and the children came pouring in.

When the **neighbours** started to **complain** – Muller knew it was **time to find a new place**. As usual he prayed and **the Lord provided** - and the orphanages moved to a place called **Ashley Down** which housed **300 children** [\[picture on right\]](#)

One of the **best-loved Müller stories** comes to us from Abigail Townsend Luffe. When she was a child, **her father assisted Müller**, and she spent time at Ashley Down. Early one morning Müller led her and the other children into the long dining room set for breakfast **but without any food**, Müller prayed: **“Dear Father, we thank Thee for what Thou art going to give us to eat.”** There was a **knock at the door**; it was the **baker, unable to sleep** because he was sure the Lord wanted him to bake bread for Müller. **“Children,” Müller said, “we not only have bread, but fresh bread.”** Almost immediately they heard a **second knock at the door**. It was the **milkman**; the **milk cart had broken down** outside the orphanage, and he **offered the milk to the children**, completing their meal.

**George was an amazing man of prayer and faith** and learned to persevere in prayer knowing God will answer in His own perfect timing.

As we look at our two Bible readings this morning – it seems - that is what **God is teaching us to do** – like George – **persevere in prayer and faith** – trusting God in all things – even in the impossible!

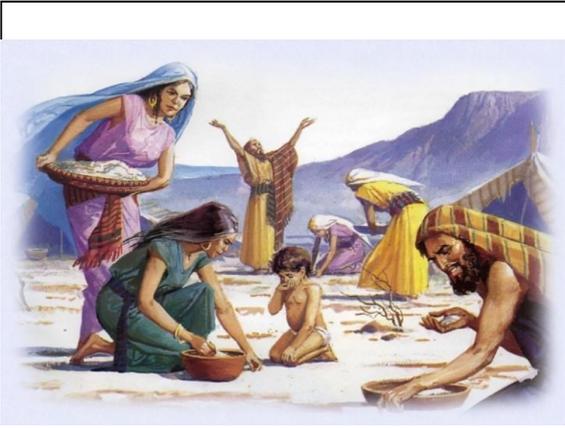
Let's see...

### **God's has Compassion on the Israelites (Exodus 16:1-12)**

Just like George had compassion on the orphans of Bristol

If we **turn to our Old Testament (OT) reading from Exodus 16:1-12** – we see God has compassion on the Israelites.

[Slide 2-Manna]



- V1 – The **Israelites** are in the desert **wilderness** – having been **rescued from slavery** in **Egypt**
  - V2 – But they **grumbled against Moses and Aaron**
  - V3 – They said they **had pots of meat** and **all** the food they **could eat** in **Egypt** – and they **accused Moses and Aaron** of **bringing them** out into the **desert to starve to death**
  - **God could have been pretty cheesed** with the **Israelites**
  - He has **rescued them** from **slavery and oppression** in Egypt and led them **out of captivity**
  - And **instead of the Israelites being grateful** – they are complaining
  - But **God shows them compassion**
  - V4 – **God tells Moses** that **He will rain down bread from heaven** – He will rain down enough **just for one day at a time** – to **teach them to rely on God one day at a time**
- Application** – **isn't that something we also need to learn** – to **rely on God's provision one day at a time** – to **walk with God daily**
- (pause)
- V5 – **Not only is God's provision of bread each day miraculous** – but there's **another miracle on the 6th day** – **God will provide **twice as much bread**** so they **have bread for the Sabbath day** – and **don't have to gather bread on the Sabbath** – but **instead they can rest**

- V6/7 – God tells Moses – He will perform this miracle so the **people know God brought them out of Egypt and so they can see God’s glory** – and to **question themselves for grumbling**

Application – Imagine how Moses and Aaron felt as leaders being grumbled against? I wonder if we are sometimes guilty of grumbling against our church leaders and ministry leaders here – forgetting how much they love and serve us faithfully?

(pause)

Application – And are we guilty of grumbling against God? He’s helped us time and time again – and **we doubt He will help this time** – and we complain that He’s not listening or that He doesn’t care – and then in His own way and in His own perfect timing - He acts – and we feel like a goose – because we grumbled and complained

- Later on, in this chapter – we **learn that God provided this bread** – called *manna* – every morning – and **quail meat** every night
- The **Hebrew** word for *manna* literally means “*what is it?*” because no one really knew what the food was?
- **V35** tells us of God’s faithfulness - the **Israelites ate manna forty years, until** they came to the **Promised Land**;

### Jesus has Compassion on a Large Crowd (Matthew 14:13-21)

- Just like God had **compassion on the Israelites**
- In our NT passage from Matthew 14:13-21 – **Jesus has compassion on a large crowd of people** – [[Please turn to Matthew 14:13-21 in your Bibles](#)]

[Slide 3-Five Thousand]



- We pick up the story in v13 where **Jesus withdrew to a solitary place** – because He's heard of John the Baptist's death – which we looked at last week – and **He wants to get away to be alone** – to perhaps **grieve His cousin's death** – to perhaps have a **break from His mission work** – and perhaps to keep away from any **threat from Herod**
- But Jesus' attempt to get away alone by sailing to the other side of the lake is short lived – the **crowd** worked out where Jesus was headed and **followed Him** around the lake on foot and **met him when he landed** (v13)
- The **crowd just couldn't get enough of Jesus** – because of His **powers and miraculous healings** and His **incredible teaching with such authority**
- Now **Jesus could have been cheated** – He **couldn't** get away and **have a rest** – but look at v14
- When Jesus landed and saw the crowd, He had compassion on them and healed their sick
- The **Greek word for compassion** here literally means *to be moved in one's bowels*, (in Biblical times the bowels were thought to be the seat of love and compassion)
- Basically - **Jesus had a gut-wrenching desire to help them**

Application – I wonder if we can learn from Jesus here what true compassion is – it means **having a love and desire to help those who are less fortunate than us** – as Jesus

taught in the Sermon on the Mount – **to go the extra mile** (Matt 5:41) – isn't that what our friend George Müller did?

True compassion means - **we must never seem too busy to help people or even seem to find them a trouble and a nuisance** [as long as it is a genuine need].

- V15 - Because it was getting late; the disciples wanted Jesus to send the crowd away so that they could buy food in the villages. The disciples knew they couldn't feed all these people.

**This was a compassionate act** by the disciples - knowing that it was late and the people would be hungry. Yet, the **disciples didn't fully comprehend what Jesus could do.**

Application - The **disciples** when they saw it was late and the people were hungry; understandably **thought in human terms and decided to quit.** Even when Jesus told them to feed the people, they again looked at their own human resources and did not look to the Lord to provide. **I wonder if we do that? We put limitations on what God can do because of our humanness!**

Sometimes we can be guilty of making our problems REALLY REALLY BIG and GOD really really small – instead of realizing that God is bigger than all our problems and situations. For example – we might be facing a health crisis – or waiting for test results – and we're dreading the worse – but God is bigger than all of that. Even if the results come back that we've got a terminal illness – God has sent Jesus to save us for Heaven – our sixty, seventy or eighty years on this Earth are smaller than a dot – compared to everlasting life and eternity in Heaven.

(pause)

- The **disciples are faced with the problem of not being able to feed the people - but look what Jesus says in v16 - “*They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat.*”**

- That's a **remarkable statement by Jesus** – the disciples must have been wondering – **WHAT? How are we going to do that Jesus?**
- What Jesus means though is that the crowd do not need to leave - because - **He will provide all that is needed!**

*Charles Spurgeon used the words, “they do not need to go away” as the basis of a sermon. The theme of his sermon was that if there was no need for these mostly casual hearers of Jesus to depart, there is even less reason for the follower of Jesus to go away from continual communion and fellowship with Jesus!*

#### Application

There is no situation in our lives when we need to “go way from Jesus”. We don't have things so hard or so easy - that **we don't ever need Jesus!**

As Jesus says in John 15:5: *“Apart from me, you can do nothing”*

Also, there should never be a reason why we would turn anyone away whose come looking for Jesus – we're not in an exclusive club – **Jesus is available for all** – no one is “too bad” - that they can't come and give their life to Jesus.

- What Jesus is trying to teach the disciples by saying “you give them something to eat” is **to teach them to have faith** - To have the attitude that Jesus' mother had at the miracle at the wedding feast of Cana when Jesus turned water into wine – Mary came to Jesus with a problem – *“there's no wine left”* – even when Jesus said “what's it got to do with me” – Mary said to the servants “do whatever Jesus tells you” – Mary knew and believed in what Jesus could do.

#### Application

Jesus wants the disciples and us to have the attitude that when we face what seems an impossible problem to say to ourselves “leave it to Jesus, He can do ANYTHING” – isn't that the faith that our friend George Muller had – in his orphanage work?

- But the disciples - like us - have a lot to learn – see v17 – they say “*we only have 5 loaves and two fish*” - **That’s not a problem to Jesus**
- V18 – **Jesus gets the crowd to sit down** like they are going to have a huge banquet
- And notice He gives thanks to His Heavenly Father
- **Jesus gave thanks BEFORE He did anything.** He is not necessarily “saying grace” or “blessing the food”; **but acknowledging the complete sufficiency of His Father to meet the people’s need in an impossible situation.** Jesus had complete confidence in the Father’s provision. Jesus did not work independently from the Father, He worked in complete dependence on His Father!

### Application

Like Jesus can we thank God before He acts – having confidence that He will meet all our needs?

- And from those five loaves and two fish - **everyone was well fed and satisfied. The disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces of leftovers!** [Presumably each disciple had a basket]
- **Notice Jesus always gives in ADBUNDANCE** (Ephesians 3:20 – Immeasurably more than we ask!). As Jesus Himself says in John 10:10 – *I have come that they may have life and have it to the full!*

### Application

Jesus shows us that God can provide out of resources that we cannot see or perceive in any way. **God often provides in ways that are unexpected.**

In this miracle Jesus teaches us:

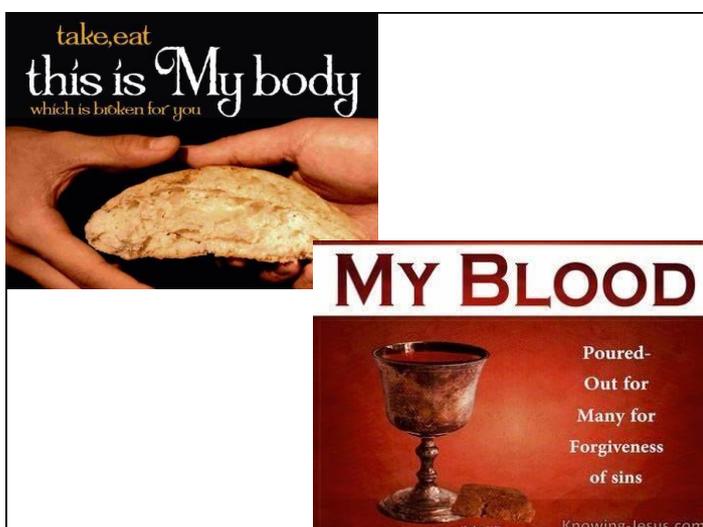
- We start with what we have
- We give what we have to Jesus – **He will do the rest** and work with and through us
- We - obey what Jesus commands
- And we observe and **rejoice in the results**
- The lesson is – *a little is much, in the hands of Jesus!*

(pause)

### Jesus has Compassion on us

- So, we've seen God have compassion on the Israelites
- We've seen Jesus have compassion on the large crowd – and healed the sick and fed them
- **Jesus has compassion on us too** – **He heals us of our sickness** [a sickness called sin] and **He feeds us with His bread** [His spiritual bread]
- You see the feeding of the Israelites with manna in the wilderness and the feeding of the five thousand – **both point to another greater feeding**
- It's a **very special meal** – **Jesus had with His disciples** just before His death

[Slide 4-Body and Blood]



- It's the **Last Supper** with His disciples
- But it's **more than a physical feeding** – it's a **spiritual feeding**
- Jesus says that the **bread** that He and His disciples share together **represents His body that will be broken and crucified on the cross** – and the **wine** they share **represents His blood poured out on the cross**
- The **bread and wine** point to the once and for all sacrifice of Jesus' body and blood on the cross – that He made - to offer all who believe in Him - forgiveness of their sins and eternal life in Heaven
- Jesus told His disciples to repeat this Last Supper after He was gone – to remember His sacrifice – which is why we celebrate the Lord's Supper at church – in fact we'll be doing that today!
- When we eat the bread and wine juice later – we're celebrating Jesus' love and compassion for us – and celebrating that because of Him – we have forgiveness and eternal life
- There's **one more thing...**
- In John's Gospel, after Jesus feeds the five thousand – Jesus says – “*He is the Bread of Life*” – He NOT saying He's a loaf of bread – **He's talking spiritually**
- He's saying - just like we need to have food to sustain our physical bodies
- **We need spiritual food** – to grow spiritually
- That spiritual food is – Jesus – He is like spiritual bread – we can eat
- How do eat Jesus spiritually? By feeding off His Word – because Jesus is the Word of God in flesh
- Jesus says in John 6:51 - “*I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.*”

### Application

So, applying that to us – this morning

- a. We can say - Jesus supplies not only our physical needs but also our spiritual needs
- b. And just like we have a feed over breakfast, lunch and dinner – and we're pretty good with our morning teas here just by the way – we need to feed off Jesus' word – DAILY – that helps grow our faith and perseverance – like our friend George Muller – and that helps us trust God in all things!

Let's pray...

*Father God,*

*Thank you that you have great compassion and mercy for us – so much so – you sent your precious Son, Jesus, the Bread of Life, to feed us with your Word – and you allowed Him to lay down His life for the forgiveness of sins – and raised Him up again – so we can have eternal life and be saved for Heaven.*

*Help us to show compassion to others.*

*Through your Spirit - help us to feed off your Word – Jesus – the Bread of Life – so we can grow more like Him.*

*Help us to grow in our faith and perseverance so we can trust you in ALL things.*

*In Jesus name, Amen.*