

Lectionary passages:-

I Samuel 6 v1-5;

Psalm 24 ;

Amos 7 v7-15;

Mark 6 v30-44

Mark's message is the familiar story of the feeding of the 5000, a well-known passage in the New Testament, it is the only miracle story that appears in each of the 4 Gospels, and one of the many events in the New Testament in which we learn its full meaning when we observe its origins in the Old Testament.

At the Exodus, the Jews were heading from Egypt and slavery into the promised land, a journey that took them some 40 years. There came a time in the desert when they ran out of food forcing the people to cry out to God.

Then God gives Moses the solution. He, God, will provide bread and meat for them, miraculously, it is the Manna and the quails which then appeared every day as they travelled across the desert to their destiny. All they had to do was go and collect their daily food.

Often the Jews would consider this event in their synagogue and in their teaching. So to see 5,000 fed from 5 loaves and 2 fish in a lonely place is to see this miracle repeated. It is to encourage faith as well as remind the hearer of the person Jesus really is. Jesus is no mere man, nor mere Rabbi, nor even a good teacher, but he is God amongst them, only God can provide bread in a desert.

Jesus provides bread, satisfying their hunger, nourishing their bodies. Jesus also recognises he is providing nourishment for their souls, as well as for ours with his teaching as we travel the desert that is this world on the way to our destiny in the next world, our promised land, our new Jerusalem!

Deuteronomy tells us "Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that comes from God's mouth". We are encouraged to meditate, to study and consider God's word on a regular basis to enable our souls to grow and our lives to flourish as we hear and obey God's words.

The story of course has a number of points we should note:-

1. The loaves and fish are provided by a mere lad, a youngster, Jesus uses what is to hand, however small, what have we he can use today?
2. The disciples are challenged to sort the problem, but they are sensible and realise they need Jesus, we must also realise our partnership with the Lord

over the needs of others....we cannot do things alone, but only by prayer and a true partnership with him.

3. We must believe he can provide and do the impossible.
4. We will marvel at the quantity of God's provision, enough and some left over.
5. We do well to acknowledge God is a good provider!

It is not enough to know or even pass on these familiar stories from the New Testament.

We must believe them to be true events and EXPECT to see God at work in our lives, communities and world today, do we? What is stopping us?