

The Thread

Discovering The Thread of the Gospel Through The Big-Picture Story of the Bible

Part 3: The Gospel Come To Life Lesson 32: Jesus Feeds The 5,000



Session Snapshot

Narrative Passage: John 6:1-15

Gospel Focus: Colossians 1:15-17

Student Takeaways:

- That students will understand that Jesus acted powerfully to both bring glory to Himself, and meet the needs of the people.
- That students will grasp that Jesus' power over the natural world is tied to His identity as God.
- That students will consider what it means to turn over areas of their life to God, trusting in His ability and willingness to meet their needs.



Overview

As you continue your journey of tracing the Gospel through the big-picture story of the Bible, you're going to focus on Jesus' miracles. While there are around 40 unique miracles described in the New Testament, you're going to lead teenagers in a general discussion of Jesus' miracles by focusing on one particular miracle: the feeding over 5,000. Why do we need miracles? What do miracles accomplish? These are some of the questions that you'll seek to answer through this powerful story.



Teacher Prep Video

Each *Thread* lesson comes with a Teacher Prep Video. These are short videos designed to help you grasp the main point of the lesson as you prepare to teach.

To access your *Thread* lesson 32 Teacher Prep Video, login to your Lesson Manager, navigate to lesson 32, and click on the "Background" tab. You'll notice the Teacher Prep Video near the top of the Lesson Manager window.



Bible Background

The Bible Background is designed to help you provide the basic context for the passages you'll be studying.

- **What do we mean by "context"?** In every ym360 Bible study lesson we encourage teachers to help students know who wrote a particular book, when it was written, and why it was written.
- **Why teach context?** Grasping the big-picture view of God's story of redemption is difficult for teenagers without understanding the context of the books and passages they're studying.

John

Author: The Gospel of John was written by John the Apostle, son of Zebedee. A fisherman who left his trade to follow Jesus, John also penned the Book of Revelation, as well as the three letters in the New Testament that bear his name.

Time frame: The Gospel of John was probably written between 85 and 95 AD. John most likely wrote his gos-

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pel in Ephesus before he was exiled to Patmos.

Purpose: John's stated purpose for writing this book can be found in John 20:30-31, the last two verses in his gospel: "Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name." John's goal seems to have been to clearly communicate a full theology of Jesus as the Messiah, the promised Son of God.

Colossians

Author: The Apostle Paul identified himself as the author of Colossians.

Time frame: Most people believe Colossians was written sometime between A.D. 61 and 63, during Paul's first imprisonment in Rome (Acts 28:17-31).

Purpose: Ultimately, this letter's purpose is to emphasize the supremacy of Christ over everything. Paul was writing to combat the spread of false teachings among the church at Colossae. The exact heresy being refuted is not certain and may have been a blend of multiple influences. The legalism, mysticism, and asceticism corrupting the pure faith in Colossae were moving attention away from Christ, placing it instead on self-discipline and the awe of other spiritual things.



Lesson Plan

The Lesson Plan contains four elements:

- An introductory activity called Getting Started designed to prepare teenagers to engage with God and the truth of His Word.
- A section entitled The Story featuring a narrative from Scripture that helps teenagers know God better through learning the story of the Bible.
- A special emphasis entitled The Thread where teenagers discover the Gospel thread coursing throughout the story of the Bible.
- An application-focused segment called Wrapping Up helping teenagers ask the question, "How am I impacted by what I learned today"?

Getting Started

- **Goal:** To get students thinking about the concept of the miracles Jesus performed in the New Testament.
- **Set-Up:** You'll want to split your group into smaller groups, such as groups of three or four, or even individuals . . . whichever works best for your group. Each group will need a piece of paper and a pen. You may also want to arrange for some kind of prize, like candy, a Starbucks card, etc. Also, you may want to Google a list of Jesus' miracles to use as a reference.

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FIRST, explain to students that as you continue your big-picture look at the Bible, you're going to spend your time talking about Jesus' miracles. Ask:

- **Someone define what a miracle is.**
 - o Answer: Dictionary.com defines a miracle as "an effect or extraordinary event in the physical world that surpasses all known human or natural powers and is ascribed to a supernatural cause."

Explain that miracles were a big part of Jesus' ministry in the Gospels. Explain that you're going to look at one miracle today as a kind of representative sample of all of Jesus' miracles. Say something like:

- **But first, we're going to have a little contest to get us in the mood for learning about Jesus' miracles.**

THEN, divide students into teams as you see fit and distribute pen and paper. Explain that you're going to see who can name the most miracles of Jesus in 30 seconds. (Obviously, it goes without saying that these have to be miracles actually listed in Scripture.) If there are no questions, give students 30 seconds to make their lists.

NEXT, when you've finished, have the students call out the miracles they've listed, and maybe make a list on a whiteboard or on a large sheet of paper. Engage in any discussion as to whether or not the miracles they listed are actually ones that are listed in the New Testament (you may want to Google a list of Jesus' miracles ahead of time as a reference). Award the winning team with their prize. Affirm all of the students for working together to accomplish the task.

FINALLY, say something like:

- **Most people agree that there are nearly 40 of Jesus' miracles recorded in the New Testament. Although we didn't record all of them today, we will focus on one that really captures what a miracle is and why it is important.**

If there are no questions, transition to The Story.

The Story

- **Goal:** To see that Jesus acted powerfully to both bring glory to Himself, and meet the needs of the people.
- **Set-Up:** Students will need a Bible or a Bible app. You may find a dry-erase board is helpful to jot down some notes, but it's not essential.

FIRST explain that in this lesson you'll be looking at the miracle of Jesus feeding the 5,000. If you'd like, use the "Connecting The Dots" section below to do a little review and/or fill in the gaps from your last lesson and this one.

Connecting The Dots

As you teach The Thread, there will naturally be some gaps in the story. This is an optional way for you to fill in some of the gaps between the last lesson you taught and this one. Use it as a way to review and/or to connect the dots to the events surrounding the passage.

- **The Feeding of the 5,000 is one of Jesus' most well known miracles. But in Mark's account, Jesus has already performed quite a few miracles before He miraculously feeds the 5,000.**
- **At this point in Jesus' ministry, He has already sent the disciples out to minister and perform miracles on their own.**

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- **By the time we get to this account in the Book of John, Jesus has already had His conversation with Nicodemus, and with the Samaritan women at the well.**
- **John the Baptist has recently been arrested and murdered by Herod.**

THEN, have students turn to the Gospel of John. While they're finding it in their Bibles or on their Bible apps, provide a little background info for the book by referencing the Bible Background. Then read or have a student read John 6:1-3. When he or she is finished, lead students in a discussion. Ask:

- **Verse 2 says the crowds were following Jesus because of the "signs" He had performed. What is this verse talking about?**
 - o Answer: Specifically, Jesus' healing of those who were sick with diseases. But, in general, "signs" refers to the miracles Jesus performed.
- **Can you relate to the crowds? How would you react today if someone were to do the things Jesus did?**
 - o Answers will vary. Really try to get students to think about this for a moment or two.
- **If you saw someone doing what Jesus did—healing people of incurable diseases, enabling the blind to see and the lame to walk, and so on—what would these types of miraculous actions say about the identity of the person doing them?**
 - o Answers will vary.

Transition to the next few verses in this passage by reminding students of a very important truth. Say something like this:

- **All throughout the Gospels, we see Jesus performing amazing miracles. His miracles changed people's lives, whether it was bringing a dead person back to life or curing a disease. But, the primary reason Jesus did such things wasn't to meet people's needs. That was the secondary purpose. The primary reason was to prove His identity. Jesus' miracles proved that He was the Son of God, sent to save people from their sins. While virtually all of Jesus' miracles met very personal human needs, the main reason Jesus performed them was to bring glory to Himself as the Messiah.**

NEXT, read or have a student read John 6:4-9. Then, lead a short discussion. Ask:

- **Summarize the problem Jesus and His disciples faced.**
 - o Answer: Other Gospel accounts tell us that it was late in the day and they were in a somewhat remote area. The people were hungry and there was no real place for them to go get food.
- **Based on what we just said, what opportunity did this problem present Jesus?**
 - o Answer: A chance to once again demonstrate He was the Son of God through miraculously providing for the people.
- **Jesus asked Philip where they would get bread. Andrew most likely overheard the question. What is the difference in Philip and Andrew's responses?**
 - o Answer: Philip focused on the very literal problem at hand: they did not have enough money to purchase bread for this many people. Andrew's response seemed to possibly imply a level of faith in Jesus' ability to provide miraculously.
- **How did Andrew's response possibly point to his faith in Jesus' identity?**
 - o Answer: We have no way to know for sure what Andrew was thinking. But, his response seems to open the door for Jesus to work a miracle. Think about it: there is no way his response was a logical solution to Jesus' question. Why even mention it if he didn't entertain at least an outside hope that

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Jesus would work in a miraculous way. The cool thing is that Jesus' response seemed to back up Andrew's hopes.

THEN, explain that you're about to get into the actual miracle. Read or have a student read John 6:10-15. Then, ask:

- **First, let's look at who was fed. What does the text say exactly?**
 - o Answer: The text refers to 5,000 men. Many scholars believe the number fed was actually much greater than 5,000. It was customary in that time period and culture to only count the men. If there were women and children, which there almost certainly were, there would have been more than 5,000.
- **Verses 11 and 12 give some context to the scale of the miracle. What clues do we have about how big an event this was?**
 - o Answer: Verse 11 says, "as much as they wanted." Verse 12 says, "when they had eaten their fill." This wasn't a flimsy feeding. This was a feast, all from a few loaves and fish.
- **How much was left over at the end? What does this say about the nature of God's provision?**
 - o Answer: 12 baskets. God provides in abundance!
- **Can you imagine what it must have been like to be one of the people who were fed that day? What do you think some possible reactions might have been.**
 - o Answers will vary.
- **In verse 14, we get a glimpse of how many of the people responded to what this miracle said about Jesus' identity. What did they say exactly?**
 - o Answer: They said that Jesus must be "the Prophet" that was to come.
- **Hmmm . . . Does this sound like they accurately acknowledged Jesus as the Son of God?**
 - o Answer: No. The people were seemingly acknowledging Jesus as someone sent by God, but not as the promised Messiah. They did not accurately see Jesus for who He was.
- **Can you think of why they might have not been willing to see Jesus' miracle as a testimony to His real identity?**
 - o Answer: Allow students to consider reasons why, but point out that people's failure to identify Jesus as the Son of God didn't change His identity. It didn't make Him any less God.

FINALLY, begin to transition into the Thread by saying something like:

- **At the end of the day, Jesus performed an amazing, mind-blowing miracle. A miracle that only God could perform. The miracle both testified to Jesus' identity and met the needs of the people. And yet, there are still people who didn't believe. The same is true today. People see evidence of God. They hear about Jesus. And yet they don't believe. But it doesn't change who Jesus is, or the fact that He is powerfully at work in the world. Let's look at a passage that backs up this truth.**

Transition to the Thread to see where you can trace the Gospel through the big-picture story of the Bible.

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FIRST instruct students to turn to Colossians. If you want, provide some of the context for the book using the Bible Background section of your Lesson Plan. Then, read Colossians 1:15-17 as a group. Lead students in a short discussion. Ask:

- **Someone summarize what this passage is saying about Jesus' identity.**
 - o Answer: That in Jesus, we see God. He is the "firstborn," meaning that Jesus has the rights as the Lord over all creation. He made all things (this would support what John says in John 1:3), and all things exist for His pleasure and His glory. Jesus is primary. And He is the force that holds all things, including the natural world, together.
- **How does it connect to Jesus performing miracles?**
 - o Answer: Jesus' power over the natural world is tied to His identity as God.

NEXT, connect the two together. Say something like:

- **Paul is saying that because Jesus was present at creation with God, Jesus has authority over all of creation just as God does. Jesus has the ability to do amazing things like these miracles because He is literally God.**

FINALLY, remind students that there is nothing outside of the reach of God, nothing too big for Him. This includes our problems and our issues. Transition into the Wrapping Up section to begin to show students how Jesus' identity as Christ impacts their daily lives.

Wrapping Up

- **Goal:** To consider what it means to turn over areas of their life to God, trusting in His ability and willingness to meet their needs.
- **Set-Up:** You may find a dry-erase board is helpful to jot down some of your students' responses.

FIRST, say something like:

- **If there is one thing that we can take away from Jesus's ability to do miracles, it is that there is nothing in your lives too big for Jesus to handle. Jesus performed all kinds of miracles for all kinds of reasons, and proved that He's capable to handle small things and big things alike.**

THEN, emphasize that Jesus cares deeply about our needs. Remind students, once again, that the primary reason Jesus performed miracles was to bring glory to Himself as the Son of God. But, the nature of Jesus' miracles shows us that He desires to meet our needs. Say something like:

- **Jesus saw that the disciples needed rest, and so He took over the crowd. This wasn't a miracle, but an example of Jesus taking care of even our smallest of needs. Jesus saw that the crowd needed food, so He transformed loaves and fishes into a feast for the crowd. This miracle showed that Jesus sees not just our tiny needs, but our big ones as well.**

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NEXT, ask students to consider the following questions. Depending on your group's comfort level, lead students to discuss their answers out loud. Ask something like:

- **What is a way that Jesus can take care of your own needs for rest?**
- **What are some of the huge needs that you can trust Jesus to perform miracles for?**

FINALLY, challenge students to bring their needs before Christ, trusting that He can solve them. Ask something like:

- **If you were honest, what are some of your needs that are hard to picture Jesus meeting?**
- **How can you trust that Jesus can meet those needs?**
- **Why is it hard to imagine Jesus meeting your needs? What can you say to remind yourself that Jesus is capable?**

o Emphasize again that Jesus is God, and therefore can handle anything.

If applicable, share a personal story about how God has met a need you had, maybe one that you thought He couldn't or wouldn't handle. Take some time to pray with students reflectively.

Encourage them to place their needs before God and trust that He can take care of those needs, even dramatic ones.

- **If you've purchased the *Tracing The Thread* devotional journal, remind students that they'll be working through Week 32 this week. Encourage them to keep up with the daily devotions, and to give memo-rizing this week's verse their best shot.**
- **If you'll be utilizing the digital devotions included in the *Thread* curriculum, remind students how you'll be making them available, i.e., Instagram, Facebook, etc.**
- **Use the Social Media guide to stay in touch with students via text or Twitter, and to encourage them to follow through with reading their devotions.**

We Want To Hear From You . . .

- Do you have questions about a lesson?
- Something that worked particularly well you want to share?
- Something that didn't work you want to bring up?

We value your feedback! Please do not hesitate to email us with your questions, comments, or concerns, at feedback@youthministry360.com.