

New Testament # 13
March 25-31
Be Not Afraid
Matthew 14-15; Mark 6-7; John 5-6
By Lenet Hadley Read

(Christ's Bread Miracles teach us why we should not Fear.)

I. Trapped in a wilderness without food, those following Jesus **feared hunger**.

Their fears were needless.

A. It was no accident that this happened twice, with thousands of people hungry. Here was another deliberate element of Jesus' life showing His parallels to Moses.

B. He was deliberately connecting Himself to Moses and the miracle of manna, yet showing He was **greater** than Moses, for **His bread would give Life after death**.

1. "Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. I am the true bread that came down from Heaven" (John 6:49-65).

C. He had come not only to conquer hunger, but even Death. So when disciples later still **feared upon the Seas**, (which signify Death), He rebuked their disbelief. "Wherefore did ye doubt. Be Not Afraid!"

D. He had come to conquer Death and bring the Bread of Eternal Life.

II. Not only did He bring the Bread of Eternal Life, He came to **offer us His Daily Bread**.

A. Each and every day the Lord makes available daily spiritual bread. **Like manna, all we need do is gather it.**

B. We may gather His bread through daily prayer. "Ask and it shall be given you."

C. We may gather His daily bread from the scriptures. (John 5:39-40).

D. We may gather His daily bread from the words of His prophets.

E. We may gather His daily bread from love and friendship of family and friends.

F. We may gather His bread from frequent temple attendance.

G. We may gather His daily bread from soul-strengthening service.

H. We may gather His daily bread from the beauties and wonders of nature.

I. We may gather His Daily bread from inspiring literature and music.

III. **Here is someone who discovered the source of "daily bread," changing her life.**

"After a year of extreme financial burdens, I was feeling hopeful that things were beginning to look up for my family. Then came fresh setbacks. For an entire year I had trusted the Lord that everything would work out and we would one day see our trials as growing experiences. But with the new setbacks, I stumbled in my spiritual footing. I felt abandoned and lost and soon stopped feeding my spirit. Though I never stopped attending church, I stopped praying, fasting, and reading the scriptures. I no longer went to the temple. I did the bare minimum for my calling as a Primary teacher. I felt hopeless and wondered why I should try to live righteously if it wouldn't protect me from getting hurt.

"One night as I was watching television in my bedroom, my 10-year-old daughter walked in carrying her Book of Mormon. She had been trying to read it, but she said she couldn't pronounce a word. I helped her and then sent her out of the room. In a few minutes she

was back, saying she was having a hard time understanding what she read. Feeling sorry for myself, I was in no mood to spend time in the scriptures. In an irritated tone, I said, ‘Samantha, go pray to Heavenly Father and ask Him to help you understand what you are reading.’

“My daughter didn’t move. She looked at me steadily and said quietly, ‘I did pray. I have a really strong feeling that I need to read scriptures with you.’ I stared at her in surprise and then clicked the television off. I patted the bed beside me, she climbed up, and we read a chapter from the Book of Mormon together. I didn’t pay much attention to what we were reading because I was marveling at Heavenly Father’s reminder to me that I needed to seek Him as I dealt with my trials.

“After that night I started saying my personal prayers again and spending time in the scriptures daily. I set a goal to attend the temple at least once a month. Amazingly, everything I read in the scriptures and Church magazines seemed to apply to me and the problems I was facing. Once again my soul was being fed, and I found I was able to bear my burdens. I often got down on my knees and asked forgiveness for not trusting the Lord as I should have. I will always be grateful for the spiritual sensitivity of a 10-year-old and a gentle reminder from a loving Heavenly Father.” (Emphasis added) (Kari Ann Rasmussen is a member of the Murray 10th Ward, Murray Utah West Stake.)

IV. Jesus’ Bread Miracles relate to His Sacrament.

- A. When we partake of the sacrament, which is our partaking of His bread, we covenant **“we will always remember Him.”** His covenant in return is that **“We will always have His spirit to be with us.”** If we keep this covenant to always remember Him, that very remembrance will bring us then, the **Daily Bread of His Spirit.**

V. Jesus’ works in the wilderness were preparing for institution of the sacrament.

- A. Jesus stressed that **He had “Come Down” from His Father in the Heavens** (like manna had come down from Heaven).
 1. Thus His gift of Life to the people was **due to His lowering Himself in station.**
- B. **He had “come down”** so He could **“Lift” others up** --- to Heaven (John 6:51).

VI. Furthermore, **Jesus would “come down” even further --- to the lowest of all stations, by becoming “broken in the flesh”** [scourged and crucified]. Again, so salvation might come to all of us --- who have sinned (John 6:51)

- A. He made reference to the sacrament, [**which would deliberately consist of “broken” bread**], showing us disciples how we should follow that pattern.
- B. It is far more than partaking of the sacramental broken bread, but **following** His example --- **i.e., covenanting to be willing to give ourselves for others.**
- C. This includes a willingness to **lower ourselves, like He did, in order to lift others.**
 1. It is an important symbol that the bread is **broken**. For in partaking of it, we are committing **to offer a broken heart and contrite spirit.**
- D. When we partake of the sacrament bread, we also covenant that we are willing to **“take upon ourselves His name.”**

- E. His name has an element which means, “Suffering Servant.” [His Hebrew name was actually Joshua ben Joseph]. It is the name “Joseph” which carries the connotation of “Suffering Servant.”
- F. While Jesus’ referral to eating of His flesh” (John 6:51-58), was a hard saying for some of His disciples then, and may even may make us feel uncomfortable, from the above statements, we should realize, **“We become what we eat or ingest!”**

VII. Here is an amazing modern miracle of Christ multiplying bread to feed His disciples.

It occurred on the first Sunday of September 1989 in the Cadiz Ward of the Cadiz Philippines Stake. A storm came. They started sacrament meeting at 9:00 A.M. Only five people were in attendance, though some came later. By the time of the sacrament hymn, there were about 100 people. Someone noticed that something was bothering those administering the sacrament.

“To my surprise, after the prayer the men at the sacrament table did not proceed immediately. Their heads remained bowed for a moment. Then they started handing the trays to the Aaronic Priesthood holders. The young men also had sober looks on their faces as they accepted the trays. I didn’t know what was wrong, but I closed my eyes and said a silent prayer too.

After the sacrament had been passed, the bishop gave the members time to bear their testimonies. The first person to come to the pulpit was one of the men who had blessed the sacrament. He spoke of the great love God has for all His children. I felt my bosom burn within me as I listened. I was filled with joy and gratitude for my testimony that God lives and that He does love us.

This speaker was followed by his companion at the sacrament table. In an emotional voice, he told us that we had witnessed a miracle that day. He explained that the bishop had brought only two small rolls of bread for the sacrament. Since the rains were heavy, he probably expected the congregation to be smaller than normal. Then the members began to flood in. The two men knew that no matter how they broke the bread, there wasn’t going to be enough. So after the sacrament prayer, they said another prayer and told the Lord there were only about 40 pieces of bread to serve 100 people or more. They asked for divine intervention.

Then the bread was passed to the people. The two brethren watched carefully as every person desiring to do so partook of the sacrament. There was enough for all.

As we learned what had happened, the congregation was silent for a few moments. The Spirit could be felt so strongly that nobody wanted to break that silence. Tears filled our eyes. The silence was finally broken by the voice of our bishop, who stood to tell us how blessed we were to have the priesthood of God. With God, he said, nothing is impossible.” (Evelyn B. Caesar is a member of the Lopez Jaena Branch, Sagay Philippines District. (April Ensign 2004).

Jesus Christ truly is The Bread of Life --- Our Daily Bread and Our Bread of Eternal Life.