

Gospel of Matthew

14:14-21

Feeding the 15,000



It is a fact that the books of the Bible were written within the framework of a strictly patriarchal society. Men ruled! Men came first. Women and children were property! God does not try to correct the men of that time and place to be more inclusive but works to bring us scripture from within that cultural context. Was it wrong of God to not fix that flawed perspective and thus make the Bible more gender-equal, more fair?!

Of course, we are assessing this question from the context of our own culture in this time and place where we have been relentlessly fed the moral imperative that the “equality of all” – gender, race, or sexual identity, is at the top of the list of moral obligations in human society. I am not disagreeing, necessarily, that this is a good shift. I get it of course. It is *the manner* in which this cultural shift has come about and continues today that I hate! It is a bunch of bitter, angry and intellectually dishonest people who want to be at the top of the heap themselves! *The “climate change” argument is much the same. I absolutely agree that we need to take better care of our planet’s atmosphere, as well as do much better with *all* forms of pollution. But I totally disagree with how this argument is being thrust upon our society - as if it can be proven that the recent climate shifts are manmade and the end of the world is just around the corner! Scientists, businesses, public education, all on the bandwagon - fear-mongering, the use of morality shaming, righteousness-posturing (which I despise), manipulation of scientific data, group-think, funding (follow the money), and peer recognition/condemnation - virtually EVERYONE has jumped on the the band wagon! Its understandable, but yuk! And that is the way this “consensus” has happened – and *that* is all wrong! And yet, I agree completely with pollution controls – even severe ones!



That is the way this “equality” issue has grown, and then exploded in our culture! It is like a religious zealotry on steroids! Again, I think equality is a good idea but not at the expense of common sense. *I just watched a You Tube video of a girl who was complaining bitterly because she cannot compete with the transgender students in track and field competition. She said that they are being forced to compete against boys that identify as girls, and so the boys always come out in 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place! It’s not a fair contest! So, with good intentions of being fair to EVERYONE, they are actually being unfair to the majority of the female athletes. In guaranteeing the opportunities of transgender students to compete against the gender they identify with emotionally and mentally, they are destroying the opportunities of young women to compete on an equal footing with their competition. Athletic boys will always be physically superior to athletic girls because they are inevitably bigger and more muscular! Anyway, the equality debacle is further evidence that we are losing our minds over this issue! But, at the same time, I agree that it is a good idea that we try to be kind to everyone and not discriminate - to the extent that it doesn’t infringe on the rights of others or subvert common sense! *The abortion issue is another case in point. In lifting up the rights of women, we subvert the rights of unwanted children – half of them women-to-be – to the point of making it legal to murder them – to rip them from their mothers womb, literally limb from limb, and cast their tiny dismembered bodies away like mere garbage! It is just macabre, gross and monstrous, based on an incredibly flawed, upside-down, morality!



My whole point (rant) is that the gender equality issue is off the rails when it gets to the point of *denying* our gender differences and subverting our common sense about those differences! *The whole issue reminds me of the fairy tale of the emperor with no clothes, and only a child is able to blurt out the obvious, because everyone else is afraid to say anything because of what everyone else is saying – so they are *all* saying how nice the new clothes look on him! But he was naked. It was group madness!



God created us male and female, and the differences were on purpose and were made quite obvious. Different strengths and weaknesses; different mental and emotional qualities fed by different hormones; of course, *strikingly different* physical traits – all of which, combined, made for different roles in both society and in the home! They were not roles that indicated inferiority or superiority. Men made those value distinctions and got it all wrong! God did not make those value judgments! But for some reason, He did not find it necessary to correct men! He even worked with men and women within the cultural context of that error! Even within the Law of Moses you will find many instances where women are represented as lesser creatures, getting less justice than men. Mosaic law was the most just in the world at the time toward women, immigrants, slaves, but it was not up to the standards of our understanding today of the value of *all* human life (except for the unwanted unborn)!

God just does not seem nearly as concerned about equality issues as we are these days. Again, equality is a good concept, but not necessarily a good thing. *FI - Socialism is a nice concept – everyone shares everything. But in practical terms, socialism has proven to be unsustainable when paired with human nature. It *demotivates* individuals from working hard because it takes from them what they have worked so hard to earn. It creates poverty across the board rather than wealth because it has destroyed the rich – those that own factories were the poor could previously find jobs! So socialism has killed, cooked, and eaten the goose that lays the golden eggs! Everywhere it has been tried it promotes corruption, and destabilizes societies. *Michael Dawson and his wife Keila, who we heard from last week, live in socialist Venezuela. They were adamant that socialism has killed that formerly prosperous country in just 20 short years – since the charismatic leader, Chavez, took power! He died of cancer recently so his cult of personality is not there to hold things together. So now it is a place of political chaos, where the government are just crooks and thieves and thugs looking to terrorize and loot the poor. What should by rights be a land of wealth and opportunity is now a land of abject poverty with no prospects for improvement. It has been devastated by this “good idea” called democratic socialism!



So that has to leave us wondering about gender equality. Is it a good idea that goes bad for most everyone when combined with human nature? Are we trying to hammer a square peg in a round hole? Or can we overcome our inherent depravity/contrariness and make totally equality work? Now, when I say “total” equality, I mean no recognized differences. A man can do what a woman can do and a woman can do what a man can do. Men and women are virtually interchangeable. So women can fight in combat, play in the NFL, fight men in the ring, work in steel mills smelting iron. On the other hand, men can be with children 15 hrs a day, changing diapers, feeding, consoling, playing, cooing, giving time outs, settling childish squabbles, preparing meals, cleaning toilets, dusting, vacuuming, scrubbing floors. Of course it can be done by some women and by some men, but generally it is a bad fit – in fact disastrous. Men and women are built for different roles. It is quite apparent. The total equality crowd denies this and keeps pounding the total equality drum aided by every part of society that find that they must conform or lose money or status.



But I cannot see anywhere that this is an issue that God cares about! Discrimination, cruelty/meanness, injustice – that’s one thing. Having a patriarchal society or matriarchal society. Not too sure that is a big deal with God. When I see someone that is really focused on this issue, I usually think that it is safe to assume that they are obsessed with power. They *want* power themselves! I don’t trust anyone who needs power and will manipulate, pout, grandstand, divide, or shame to get it! When they finally get it they will prove that they can abuse it just like the worst of us! Power works best in the hands of those that don’t really want it – who do not feel entitled, men *or* women.

So here is what triggered my rant this morning. At the end of our text for this morning, the crowd is counted only by the numbers of men that were present on that day. The women and children are mentioned but not included in the number. So there were likely over 10 thousand or more people! Without birth control methods and pharmaceuticals, people had **big** families in that place and time! But not all the men had their families with them, so it is hard to place a real number on this crowd. Certainly it was a lot more than 5,000! Of course, that greatly inflates the actual numbers of people that were fed that day with five loaves and two fish, ***which makes this miracle that much more impressive!***



“YOU give them something to eat” He told his disciples.

Jesus always had a “teaching” reason for doing what He did. The people were growing very hungry, and they were all out in the middle of nowhere miles away from the nearest town. So, as the disciples strongly suggested, Jesus could have sent the crowd away,.. but He refused. This crowd had not even given Him time to grieve the murder of his cousin, John, but had chased His boat from one part of the shore of the big lake to another. So He had another good excuse to send them away, but He wouldn’t.



Instead He told his disciples to feed the huge crowd. I'm sure His instructions caused some concerned and incredulous looks from the 12. But they actually made an attempt to comply by going about and assessing how many people had brought food along. They came up with virtually nothing! It added up to a total of 5 loaves and 2 fish, which they brought to Jesus. So they brought these “crumbs” to

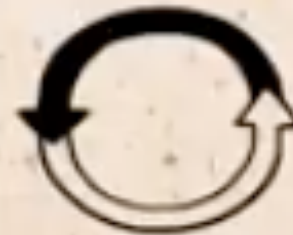
Jesus, as if to prove that His orders were impossible. And they *were* impossible,.. except for the fact that they *weren't* – *not when the Creator was in their midst!* Jesus blessed the food and began breaking it into pieces. Don't know where they came up with the baskets, but then, people carried things in woven baskets in those days the way that people carry their stuff in backpacks today. So baskets were collected first, and then filled with food and passed out to the hungry people. So Jesus just keeps filling and filling basket after basket, and then refilling them as they come back empty. Finally everyone was satisfied, and there were an impressive 12 basket left over with pieces of this food in them! It was an act of creation that argues for the literal interpretation of the creation account of Genesis 1. Jesus could create matter of His choosing *instantaneously* - in this case, already cooked and seasoned fish and previously baked bread! Only the Creator possessed that power! It also speaks to the the possibility of a 7-day creation. He made matter by multiplying it – literally making it out of thin air! The writer of Matthew includes this incident to help his readers conclude that Jesus was either from God and utilizing God's power with permission, or He WAS God!

14-20

DIFFERENT EXPECTATIONS ABOUT THE MESSIAH

THE UPSIDE DOWN KINGDOM

• HONOR BY SERVING



(CH 18 & 19-20)



JEWISH



NON-JEWISH

HE'S THE MESSIAH!



JESUS

WHO DO YOU SAY THAT I AM?

YOU'RE THE MESSIAH!



SUFFERING SERVANT

ISAIAH 53

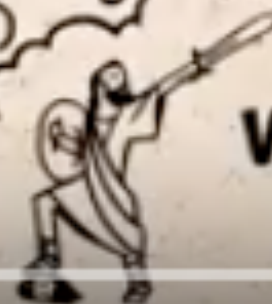
VS



PHARISEES



PETER & DISCIPLES



PSALM 2 & DANIEL 2
**VICTORIOUS!
DEFEATS
PAGANS!**

There is one key message that the writer intends for his readers. Jesus was who He said He was.



He proved it again and again and again... and again, and again! He was not a prophet or He would have proclaimed that it was so.



He was the Messiah, but not the Messiah that Israel expected. He was almighty God, Creator! The Creator visited the earth He had made! He knew He would not be welcome here, but He came anyway. He came to seek and to save those that were lost to God. There would be some who would listen and believe Him!

[John 1:1-14]