

February 8, 2026



**WEEK 23 – JESUS FEEDS FIVE THOUSAND (Matthew 14:12-21, pp. 179-185)**

This week's passage follows after the events from last week's reading. John the Baptist has just been beheaded by Herod Antipas. Jesus hears about it and seeks out a time and place of solitude and prayer.

**Why does Jesus desire solitude?** \_\_\_\_\_

**What role does solitude play in your life?** \_\_\_\_\_

**What are the enemies of solitude and how do they affect us?** \_\_\_\_\_

At this time, Jesus is unable to find the solitude He desires. The crowds follow Him. He has compassion on them and meets their needs.

**What is compassion?** (see CFM, p184) \_\_\_\_\_

**What role does compassion play in service to our neighbor?** \_\_\_\_\_

**What sacrifices does compassion require?** \_\_\_\_\_

**How can we rightly balance meeting the needs of others and meeting our own needs?** \_\_\_\_\_

In compassion, Jesus has met the spiritual needs of the people. Now the disciples worry about the physical need for food.

**What do the disciples suggest Jesus should do and why?** \_\_\_\_\_

**What does Jesus tell the disciples to do instead?** \_\_\_\_\_

In the Explanation of the Third Article of the Creed, Luther's Small Catechism says, **"I cannot by my own reason or strength..."** The catechism is speaking about the Spirit as the source of faith. But we can use the same phrase to speak of many things in our life that God commands, but we cannot do, by our own reason or strength.

In his "Confessions," Augustine adds to this praying, **"Give what you command, and command what you will."** In other words, we need God to enable us to do what He commands.

This is the situation the disciples find themselves in. Jesus commands them to feed the people, but they cannot do so by their own reason or strength. They need Him to empower them to do what He has commanded them to do.

**How does Jesus empower the disciples to feed the people?** \_\_\_\_\_

**What is the final result?** \_\_\_\_\_

**What things has God called you to do that you cannot accomplish by your own reason or strength?** \_\_\_\_\_

**What can you expect from God in these callings?** \_\_\_\_\_

**How does this text apply to stewardship?** (see also Malachi 3:10) \_\_\_\_\_

**For Next Time:**

**WEEK 24 – JESUS IS THE GOOD SHEPHERD (John 10:10-18, pp. 187-193)**