Church of God

The Biblical Grandview

How Is It That You Do Not Understand?

https://coglive.org
10-31-2026

Jesus Christ performed two miracles involving bread at different times and in unique settings.

In the first miracle, Jesus fed five thousand men from five loaves of bread and two fish, and the disciples gathered twelve baskets of fragments afterward. This miracle occurred near Passover in the spring and appears in all four Gospel accounts.

In the second miracle, Jesus fed four thousand men from seven loaves of bread and a few small fish, and seven baskets remained. Matthew and Mark recorded this second miracle. The Gospel accounts place it later than the first feeding of the 5000 and also in a different location. Jesus Himself later distinguishes them and requires His disciples to remember the numbers from both miracles. These events led to instructive question-and-answer exchanges that were recorded for us today so we can learn and benefit from them.

The purpose of this message is to show that seeing God's works and remembering God's works must lead to understanding and faith. When testing comes, Christ does not want His disciples to judge the situation exclusively by visible resources.

The First Bread Miracle — Feeding the Five Thousand
Let's begin in John 6:4–6.

John gives an important time marker: "And the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was near."

As a large crowd approaches, Christ asks Philip: "Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?"

But verse 6 immediately tells us an important clue: "And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do."

Christ already knew what He was going to do. Philip was being tested**.**

So, what happens? Philip calculates the cost: "Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them."

Then, Andrew takes inventory: "There is a lad here, which has five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?"

In modern language, Philip and Andrew sounded a little like the professional MBAs and CPAs of their day.

- Philip sees the price.
- Andrew sees the inventory.

Their calculations are not wrong. The problem comes when the calculation becomes the conclusion**.**

They see what is available and conclude: Not enough**.**

But faith must account for something their calculations did not: Who is present? Jesus Christ!

Jesus already knows what He will do

Five Loaves, Two Fish, Twelve Baskets
Now notice John 6:10–13.

Christ takes the five loaves and two fish, and thousands eat. Then He tells the disciples: “Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.” They gather twelve baskets of bread fragments. The lesson should have been unforgettable: Five loaves. Two fish. Five thousand men. And…the remaining twelve baskets.

They had seen it. They had experienced it.

Now they would be expected to remember it.

The Second Bread Miracle — Feeding the Four Thousand
Now let us move on to Mark 8:1–9.

Remember that this is a different miracle in another place and setting. Another large crowd has followed Christ. This crowd has remained with Him for three days.

Jesus says: “I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat.”

Listen carefully to what the apostles say:

Verse 4 [Amplified Bible Translation]

And His disciples replied to Him, how can anyone fill {and} satisfy [these people] with loaves of bread here in [this] desolate {and} uninhabited region?

Their question should surprise us.

They [the apostles] have been in this situation before.

- The setting is different.
- The crowd is different.
- The numbers are different.

But the basic test is familiar:

- A large crowd.
- Insufficient food.
- No visible human solution.

Jesus asks: “How many loaves do you have?”

They answer: “Seven.” There are also a few small fish.

Christ gives thanks. The multitude eats. Again, more bread fragments remained than the disciples began with. Seven baskets.

So, let us keep the two bread miracles distinct in our minds:

First miracle: five loaves, two fish, five thousand men, twelve baskets.

Second miracle: seven loaves, a few fish, four thousand men, seven baskets.

The first feeding appears in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. The second appears in Matthew and Mark. The first has an explicit seasonal marker: Passover was near, placing the event in spring. The second occurs later. Scripture does not give an explicit month or connect the miracle with a fall festival.

Here Comes the Single Loaf Event

Now we reach an episode that brings both bread miracles together. Let us unpack Mark 8:14–21. The disciples enter a boat. Mark records a small detail: They forgot to take bread. Come to find out, they had only one loaf of bread with them.

Jesus begins teaching yet again: "Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod." The disciples begin reasoning among themselves. They think Christ is speaking about their failure to bring enough bread. Consider the scenario:

- They are sitting in a boat.
- They only have one loaf.
- They are worried about bread.

And sitting in the boat with them is the One who had already performed two separate miracles of bread.

- He fed five thousand.
- He fed four thousand.
- They witnessed both.

Yet, the apostles are counting loaves again. Five loaves had looked inadequate. Seven loaves had looked inadequate. Now one loaf looked very inadequate. The physical and material inventory changed. But at that point, the apostles' reasoning did not.

Eyes, Ears, Memory—and Understanding

Jesus responds: "Why reason ye, because ye have no bread?" Then He started to question the apostles: "Perceive you not yet, neither understand?" "Have you your heart yet hardened?" "Having eyes, see you not?" "Having ears, hear you not?"

And then comes the key question of Jesus: "And do you not remember?"

Christ deliberately takes them back to both bread miracles.

Jesus said: “When I broke the five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took you up?”

The disciples answered: “Twelve.” Then Christ asks about the other occasion: “And when the seven among four thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took you up?” They answered: “Seven.”

- The apostles remember perfectly.
- Five thousand—twelve baskets.
- Four thousand—seven baskets.
- They pass the memory test.

Yet Jesus asks them: “How is it that you do not understand?” That question is the heart of this sermonette.

Remembering what God did is not the same as understanding what God's actions should teach. The apostles remembered the miracles. They remembered the numbers. They remembered what Christ had done, but they had not yet learned to reason from what Christ had done.

That is what I call the MBA and CPA mindset problem. The pattern is now clear.

- Five loaves and two fish: Not enough.
- Seven loaves and a few fish: Not enough.
- One loaf in the boat: Definitely not enough.

The calculations were reasonable. But they left out the decisive factor: Who was present?

True faith does not ignore available resources. It refuses to make those resources the limit of what God can accomplish.

Christ wanted the disciples to remember what they had already seen Him do. The greater question was no longer, “Do we have enough?” It was: “Do you remember?”

What is the Application of the Bread Miracles for Us Today?
The testing of our faith often come in painfully practical forms.

- Not enough time.
- Not enough strength.
- Not enough money.
- Not enough people.
- Not enough ability.
- Not enough opportunity.

Our minds begin calculating. Our calculations may even be accurate. But the danger comes when the calculation becomes the conclusion. Philip's calculation could not anticipate what Christ already knew. Scripture tells us: “For he himself knew what he would do.” Philip did not know. Andrew did not know. The crowd did not know.

But…Christ knew.

The problem with the apostles was not the lack of evidence. Their problem was a failure to understand what the evidence meant. They could see. They could hear. They could even remember. But Christ expected seeing, hearing, and remembering to produce understanding. And so, for us today -- our practical reasoning has to remain secondary to faith. In short, faith recognizes that what we can calculate is not all that God knows.

- Sound judgment still has a place.
- The disciples still counted the loaves.
- They organized the people.
- They distributed the food.
- They gathered the fragments.
- Their practical responsibility remained.

Conclusion
Christ performed two separate bread miracles in different settings. The first: five loaves; two fish; five thousand men; twelve baskets remaining. The second: seven loaves; a few fish; four thousand men; seven baskets remaining. Then came the boat incident which tied those two previous bread miracles: One loaf.

In all these instances of bread, the disciples only saw scarcity. Christ therefore directed their attention away from the single loaf and back toward what they had already witnessed. He asked them:

- Having eyes, do you not see?
- Having ears, do you not hear?
- Do you not remember?

The apostles remembered the numbers. Christ wanted them to understand the meaning. The lesson is not that careful planning has no place.

The lesson is that visible scarcity must never become the measure of God's capacity.

- Philip could calculate.
- Andrew could count.
- Both skills had value.

But neither calculation could tell them what Christ already knew He would do.

When our next test comes,

- Count what is available.
- Understand the circumstances.
- Exercise sound judgment.

THEN,
Remember the one loaf in the boat.

Above all, remember **Who was in that boat**.

<u>And then, hear the question of Jesus Christ:</u>

“How is it that you do not understand?”