

Weekly Gospel Readings
The 2nd Sunday of Meshir
Feeding the Multitudes

On this Sunday (02/18/2024), the 2nd Sunday of the blessed month of Meshir, the Church reads [John 6:5-14](#). In this passage, Christ feeds the 5000 (not including women and children) from 5 loaves and 2 fish. While this story is read numerous times throughout the year, this specific excerpt focuses on the limitless power of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We, as humans, are extremely limited—in our strength, in our energy, and in our rational thinking. However, as seen by this passage, we can achieve far beyond our inherent human limits through Christ.

The passage begins with Christ asking Philip, “Where are we to buy bread, so that these people may eat?” ([John 6:5](#)). Did Christ not know of the miracle to come? Certainly not. Rather, He asks this question to examine the rationale of His disciples. Looking around and seeing the large multitude, Philip cannot fathom how the multitude could be fed. He answers and says, “Two hundred denarii worth of bread would not be enough for each of them to get a little” ([John 6:7](#)). Philip does not comprehend the might and power of our Lord. As St. Cyril explains, “Feebly again does Philip advance, not to the power of Jesus to do all things, and that easily, but on hearing whence shall we buy said to prove him, forthwith he catches at it, and looks at the means by money alone...” By not adding Christ into the equation, Philip’s thinking becomes extremely limited.

Andrew then adds to the conversation by saying, “There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are they for so many?” ([John 6:9](#)). Once again, Andrew has the same mindset as Philip. Andrew notices that there is only a small amount of food available and cannot envision any way of using the mere five loaves and two fish to feed the multitude. St. Cyril of Alexandria explains, “For neither considering the power, nor yet led by the greatness of His preceding works unto Jesus' being able for all things, and that most easily; he points out what the lad has, but is evidently weak in faith...” Thus, the limited rationale of both Philip and Andrew is simply due to their lack of faith.

If the disciples who lived and learned from Jesus every single day exhibit a lack of faith, how much harder is it for us to have faith that expands our mindsets? Yet, we need to have a strong faith rooted in Christ in order to overcome the trials and tribulations in our lives. If you look at society and the world we live in, it may seem impossible to resist the world and focus solely on Christ. However, as seen by this miracle and countless other miracles, nothing is impossible as long as we have a strong faith.

St. Paul writes, “I can do all things through Him Who strengthens me” ([Philippians 4:13](#)). St. John Chrysostom expands on this saying, “Any achievement I have had belongs not to me but to the One Who gave me strength.” Let us always keep this mindset in our hearts so that we can achieve and serve far beyond our own human limits.

Sources:

- Bible. English Standard Version
- Catena, Orthodox Bible Commentaries
- Commentary on the Gospel of St. John by Father Tadros Malaty