



**comfort
international**
a little can change a life

Sermon Resources for Harvest 2022

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The Miracle of the loaves

Mark 8: 1-9

The acronym of **CROSS** can be used as laid out below:

1. The Challenge:

- a)** The reason for the miracle explained in v1 – ‘since they had nothing to eat’. Note – repeated in v2 – ‘three days and have nothing to eat’. The practical needs of the hungry are of concern to Jesus.
- b)** The lack of a solution for the people – ‘where ...?’. The poor and hungry are often lacking in resources to find a solution. The need for an intervention from God – ‘where can anyone ...?’

2. The Response

- a)** Jesus – ‘I have compassion’. God feels the challenge of the hungry. To follow Jesus is to have compassion. William Barclay – ‘Over and over again we see Jesus moved with compassion ... it is human to want to avoid the trouble of giving help, it is divine to be moved with compassion and pity that we are compelled to help’
- b)** The disciples – Jesus’ question – ‘what do you have?’ The principle of sharing – Luke 3:11.

3. The Order

- a)** V7 – ‘he told the disciples to distribute’. Harvest is a time for recommitting ourselves to distributing the good things God has given us. God provides, we distribute.
- b)** The miracle required obedience. A stepping out in faith. Thomas Chalmers – ‘Faith is the starting-post of obedience’. John Hercus – ‘God calls people to worship Him with their obedience, and instead they try to fob Him off with their religion’.

4. The Sign

- a)** Although God used what was offered it was His miracle which met the need. We thank God for the natural harvest but look to him for the supernatural coming of the Kingdom.
- b)** The second miracle of feeding following the 5000. Nigerian theologian Victor Babajide says ‘The spiritual victories of yesterday will not suffice for today, for each new experience presents a new challenge to faith’.

5. The Satisfied

- a)** The people were satisfied. God loves to meet needs. He did not distinguish between the people but satisfied all and left it to them to respond to His goodness. Harvest is a time to reflect on God’s heart for ‘equality’ – 2 Cor 8:13 (NASB)
- b)** God’s glory is satisfied. See 2Cor 9:12-15. In the same way we thank and praise God for the harvest, others will thank and praise Him for supplying their needs.



Applications:

Thankfulness - We thank God for the harvest but the greatest provision of God is for our salvation through the cross.

Compassion – the need to cultivate compassion in our hearts

Challenge – Not to throw our hands up in despair at the scale of the need. Also – The challenge of faith – not to allow ourselves to be sucked into a generation of unbelief.

Order – To have open ears and eyes to the cry and needs of the hungry and the call of God to respond.

Sign – Unless a challenge is unsurmountable faith is only a label. As Christians our help for others should be accompanied by an expectation of God's intervention.

Satisfied – when Jesus spoke of two coats etc. He did so to emphasise that we are not to give someone in the cold a T shirt if we have two coats.

