

# The Watford Word

[www.watfordchurchofchrist.org](http://www.watfordchurchofchrist.org)

## What's on

Wednesday 26 July - Men's gathering

Friday 28th July - Women's gathering

**Sunday 30 July - 10:30AM. Stefan speaking.**

**Sunday 06 August - 10:30AM. Andy Ezeilo speaking.**

**Sunday 13 August - 10:30AM. Malcolm speaking.**

**Sunday 27 August - 10:30AM. Barry Lamb speaking.**

**Sunday 17 Sept - 10:30AM. Dr Andy Boakye**

**Sunday 17 December - 10:30AM. Carol service**

## Prayers

- For Tanya and family as they return to Ukraine
- For students deciding about future study
- For our youth as they go to camps this summer

## John 6.1-13

Today Mike is speaking on this section of John's gospel. Here is the text followed by a few observations that I hope will take you deeper into the passage.

*"After this Jesus went to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, also called the Sea of Tiberias. A large crowd kept following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing for the sick. Jesus went up the mountain and sat down there with his disciples. Now the Passover, the festival of the Jews, was near. When he looked up and saw a large crowd coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?" He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do. Philip answered him, "Six months' wages would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little." One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, "There is a boy here who has five*

*barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many people?" Jesus said, "Make the people sit down." Now there was a great deal of grass in the place; so they sat down, about five thousand in all. Then Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated; so also the fish, as much as they wanted. When they were satisfied, he told his disciples, "Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost." So they gathered them up, and from the fragments of the five barley loaves, left by those who had eaten, they filled twelve baskets."*

*(John 6:1-13 NRSV)*

## "The Feeding of the Five Thousand: Profound Significance and Symbolism"

### Introduction

The miracle of the feeding of the five thousand, as recorded in John 6:1-13, is one of the most remarkable events in Jesus' ministry. Let's delve into the historical context and symbolic elements surrounding this significant event, shedding light on the poignancy of Jesus' later declaration, the parallel with the Sermon on the Mount, the Passover connection, and the profound lessons it imparts.

### 1. Context and Jesus' Declaration

Matthew's account (Matt 14:12-13) adds emotional depth to the story, as it reveals that Jesus had just learned of John the Baptist's execution. Seeking solitude, Jesus withdrew to the wilderness with His disciples. Later in the chapter, Jesus declares that He will give His flesh, foreshadowing His sacrificial death on the cross. The context adds poignancy to this declaration, underscoring the gravity of His forthcoming sacrifice.

## 2. Parallels with the Sermon on the Mount

John 6:3 presents parallels with the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5. Notably, the location of the miracle might have been in the area known as the Golan Heights today. The parallel with the Sermon on the Mount suggests that Jesus' teachings are timeless and applicable to diverse situations and locations.

## 3. Passover Connection

John 6:4 references the Passover, and Jesus deliberately sets the teaching about the bread of life within its context. The proximity to Passover may have prompted the listeners to see Jesus more clearly as the Passover lamb. This link to deliverance from Egypt and the expected Prophet like Moses, who would provide heavenly "manna," heightened the nationalistic fervour of the time.

## 4. Jesus' Testing of Philip

In John 6:5-6, Jesus tests Philip by asking where they will buy bread to feed the large crowd. The test is not an "exam" but a means to teach the disciples about their responsibilities and to encourage them to propose a plan of action. Jesus wishes to educate and challenge them to think beyond their perceived limitations.

## 5. The Boy's Provisions

The mentioning of the boy's resources in John 6:9 highlights the insignificance of the available resources compared to the vast crowd's needs. The barley loaves symbolise the humble offering of the poor. The parallel with 2 Kings 4:42-44 reinforces the theme of God's ability to provide abundantly from seemingly meagre resources.

## 6. The Act of Thanksgivings and Conservation

In John 6:11-13, Jesus' act of thanksgiving before the miracle reflects a traditional Jewish blessing over bread. The concern for not wasting the leftovers might symbolise stewardship and the avoidance of extravagance, paralleling the removal of yeast during the Passover.

## Conclusion

The feeding of the five thousand in John 6:1-13 holds profound significance and symbolism. Its historical context, Passover connection, and parallels with other teachings offer deep insights into Jesus' divine nature and his mission on Earth. Through this miracle, Jesus demonstrated compassion, divine power, and His role as the Passover lamb. The profound lessons of faith, trust, stewardship, and the potential for God's abundant provision remain relevant and inspiring to us today.

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## Christians and Climate Change

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*'An evening encounter with our creator God on Climate Change'*



Sunday 24th September, 5.30pm, St Mary's church, 1 Church Street, WD18 0EG

Guest speakers: Dr Martin and Rev Margot Hodson; Rachel Johnson

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## AIM UK&I

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The next AIM module is Homiletics — the preparation and delivery of effective lessons. [www.aimukandireland.com](http://www.aimukandireland.com)

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## Watford Media

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YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCj9Qa8D9zumJZdoAtARDUww>

Podcast: <https://www.podbean.com/pu/pbblog-aiinq-raef9o>