

Matthew 14:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But Jesus said unto them, They need not depart; give ye them to eat.

Analysis

Jesus' response 'They need not depart; give ye them to eat' transforms the disciples' problem into their assignment. 'They need not depart' shows Jesus' compassion and sufficiency. 'Give ye them to eat' commissions the disciples to participate in the miracle—God uses human instruments in divine provision. This command appeared impossible (v. 17 shows they had only five loaves and two fish), testing whether they would trust Jesus despite inadequate resources.

Historical Context

Jesus deliberately involved the disciples in the miracle's distribution, teaching that God multiplies what we offer Him. The command to feed thousands with minimal resources seemed absurd, but Jesus was training them to depend on His power, not their resources. Faith steps forward in obedience despite impossibility.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. What 'impossible' assignment is Jesus giving you that requires His miraculous provision?
2. How does Jesus involving the disciples teach about participating in God's work?

Interlinear Text

ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν αὐτοῖς Οὐ χρεῖαν ἔχουσιν
G3588 But Jesus said them not They need G2192
G1161 G2424 G2036 G846 G3756 G5532

ἀπελθεῖν δότε αὐτοῖς ὑμεῖς φαγεῖν
depart give them ye to eat
G565 G1325 G846 G5210 G5315

Additional Cross-References

Ecclesiastes 11:2 (Parallel theme): Give a portion to seven, and also to eight; for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth.

John 13:29 (References Jesus): For some of them thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him, Buy those things that we have need of against the feast; or, that he should give something to the poor.