

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

ο	δὲ	Ἰησοῦς	εἶπεν	αὐτοῖς	Οὐ	χρείαν	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.