

This story teaches us that with our little we may do great good. The disciples had only five barley loaves, but with these five thousand hungry men were fed. We think we have nothing with which we can do much good, but we do not dream of how much we could do if only we would do with our little what the disciples did with their loaves.

We must notice, that Jesus did not Himself distribute the bread among the people. When He had blessed it He gave it back to His disciples, and they distributed it. Christ does not do our work for us—He works through us and with us. If the disciples had not taken the bread to the people, the hungry would not have been fed. So it always is. We are co-workers with Christ; we can do nothing without Him, but neither will He work without us in the things which it is our duty to do.

Applying the Lesson to Life.

(1) Christ always draws needy people to Him. He has something to give which meets men's wants. Crowds followed Him when He was on the earth, because He could do them good. It is so to-day. The weary, the hungry-hearted, the sorrowing, defeated, those who are conscious of sinfulness, all turn to Christ for love, mercy, and help.

(2) Jesus is always thoughtful. A multitude had gathered in the wilderness. They were hungry and there was no place where they could get food. Jesus had compassion on them and spread a table for them. We may be sure that He knows when we are in any need, that He always has compassion, and will in His own way provide for our wants.

(3) The story of the boy is interesting. He and Jesus fed five thousand hungry people with five loaves. Christ can use our smallest possessions in doing good. The boy himself could not have fed more than five people, but when Jesus had blessed his loaves there was enough for all. We should bring our little to Jesus for His blessing, and then we can do much good with it.

(4) We are all, naturally, like these people in the wilderness, hungry, with no way of getting bread. We have spiritual hungers, and Christ is the only one who can feed us. But none need ever depart from Him unsatisfied.

"I asked for bread : God gave a stone instead.
Yet while I pillowed there my weary head,
The angels made a ladder of my dreams,
Which upward to celestial mountains led,
And when I woke, beneath the morning's beams,
Around my resting place fresh manna lay ;
And, praising God, I went upon my way,
For I was fed."

(5) We get a lesson on caring for fragments, even for crumbs. One day Carlyle was seen, in crossing a road, to stoop and pick up something, from which he brushed the mud, and to carry it to the pavement and gently lay it down on the curb, saying, "That is only a crust of bread, yet I was taught by my mother never to waste anything, above all bread, more precious than gold. I am sure that the little sparrows or a hungry dog will get nourishment from that bit of bread."

Illustration.—A lone traveler in the desert, famishing for food, found in the sands a bag which had been dropped by some passing caravan. It seemed to be a bag of provisions. Catching at it with wild eagerness, he cried, "Thank God! here is bread." But when he had for it open, expecting to find dates, it contained—only pearls. They were worth a vast sum of money, but to the poor pilgrim, dying of hunger, they were only a bitter mockery. He

flung the bag from him and hasted on, seeking bread. Like mockeries are this world's richest treasures to one in sorrow or trouble. It is bread of life he wants.

LESSON 9.—FEBRUARY 26, 1899.

Christ at the Feast.

(Lesson Text: John 7: 14, 28-37. Commit to Memory Verses 28-31.)

(Study the whole chapter.)

GOLDEN TEXT.—"If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink."—John 7: 37.

DAILY READINGS.—Monday: John 7: 1-13. Tuesday: John 7: 14-27. Wednesday: John 7: 28-37. Thursday: John 7: 40-52. Friday: John 8: 12-20. Saturday: John 8: 21-30. Sunday: Rev. 22: 13-17.

Suggestions and Practical Helps.

The feast of tabernacles was held in the fall—in September or October of our year. It lasted seven days. It was called also the feast of ingathering—a thanksgiving for the harvest—the products of the farms, gardens, and vineyards having now been gathered in. It was also a commemoration of the forty years in the wilderness, the memory of which was preserved in the custom of living in booths or tents during the week devoted to the feast. Everywhere these booths were set up—in courts, open spaces, and public squares, and also on the flat house-tops. They were made of boughs of trees. At night the temple was brilliantly illuminated by great candelabra in the court of the women, and by torches everywhere. Another feature was the ceremony of pouring water. Christ was the fulfillment of both these types—the light and the water—as He was the fulfillment of all the types and ceremonies of the Jewish law.

The "last day" was "the great day" of the feast. The devout worshippers left their booths at daybreak to take part in the glad services of the day. The throngs were all in festive array. Each pilgrim carried in his right hand a branch of myrtle and willow tied together with a palm branch. In his left hand he carried a bough of citron. The multitude divided into three bands. One of these started in a procession from the temple. It was led by a priest, bearing a golden pitcher, and proceeded to the fountain or pool of Siloam. Here the priest filled the golden pitcher with water and brought it into the court of the temple, amid the shouts of the multitude and the sound of musical instruments. The rejoicing was so great that the rabbis used to say that he who had never been present at this ceremony and at the other ceremonies of this feast, did not know what rejoicing meant. The company returned to the temple just at the time when the morning sacrifice was being laid upon the altar by the priest. The water from the golden pitcher was poured upon the altar. The choirs then broke out in a great antiphonal chant. It was probably during a pause in this festive service that the voice of Jesus rang out in tones loud enough to be heard throughout the entire temple, crying, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink."

We all have our thirsts. Yet thirst is a wholesome experience. There is a beatitude for those who hunger and thirst after righteousness. If our thirst is for evil things it is not blessed; longing for that which is not pure and holy debases the life. But longing for that which is good and true and right is blessed, because it draws the life upward toward God.

Applying the Lesson to Life.

(1) Jesus was always teaching. The words He spoke were the most wonderful words that were