

The Attitude of Expediency

The accounts of the events following the feeding of the 5,000 by Jesus reveal these facts to us, the readers:

Mark wrote in Mark 6.45 that after the people were fed... [Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of Him to Bethsaida, while He dismissed the crowd.](#) And John recorded for us in John 6.14-17: [After the people saw the miraculous sign that Jesus did, they began to say, "Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world." Jesus, knowing that they intended to come and make Him King by force, withdrew again to a mountain by Himself. When evening came, His disciples went down to the lake, where they got into a boat and set off across the lake for Capernaum. By now it was dark, and Jesus had not yet joined them.](#)

When you read them together, you can see why Jesus made them get into the boat immediately because the crowd was going to make Him King by force and He did not want the disciples exposed to such an idea... for the twelve might well have joined in. See that He made them get into the boat... that is, He was standing on the shore supervising that they all got into the boat before He went to the crowd. Yet John wrote that they went down to the boat at evening... and Jesus had not yet joined them. It is obvious then that though Jesus made them get into the boat, they then got out of the boat and left it... probably to see what Jesus would do before going back down to the lake. They did not go **when** made to go, but went when they saw fit to go.

[One of the first tests of your obedience to Jesus and the attitude with which you obey is the expediency with which you carry out what He commands you.](#) To do what He tells you to do when you feel like doing it is not a fruit of the Spirit of Kingship. You may do what He tells you, but when you do it at your convenience, then at most you have the spirit of brotherhood or of friendship or even that of a lazy servant. Those who do what they are told as soon as they are told can be servants of a lord or master, but it is also this group that has the potential to become the servants of the King.

You see, whenever you do not have the ability to do what Jesus wants you to do when He wants you to do it, you do not have the Spirit of Kingship. At Mark 6.45 see that He did not instruct them to go, but [made His disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of Him to Bethsaida.](#) The instructions given them that day were not like the instructions contained in His teachings to them... for teachings like those of Matthew 5, 6 and 7 are teachings to be obeyed and practised whenever the opportunity arises or whenever we are able to. There is no demand on promptness of action, but rather, they are there for any disciple to practise whenever he can... the more often the better of course. But going to Bethsaida that day was an instruction so urgent that Jesus made them get into the boat and go ahead of Him. Therefore, they had no business getting back out of the boat and going away from the lake again. Once more they disobeyed Him at His word, just as they had done earlier in the afternoon.

Before the feeding started, when they recognised the problem of feeding those 5,000 men and families and they came to Him (Jesus), ["This is a remote place," they said, "and it's already very late. Send the people away so they can go to the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat." But He answered, "You give them something to eat." They said to Him, "That would take eight months of a man's wages! Are we to go and spend that much on bread and give it to them to eat?" "How many loaves do you have?" He asked. "Go and see." When they found out, they said, "Five—and two fish."¹ And it is written in Matthew: \["We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish," they answered.\]\(#\)² Now the account in Mark gives you the impression that they checked amongst themselves and found out what they had. Reading the account of Mark you would think that the twelve had five loaves of bread and two fish, but John's account in John 6.9 shows us that this was not their five loaves and two fish, for Andrew spoke up, \["Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?"\]\(#\)](#)

Look at the Lord's instruction to them: ["You give them something to eat. ... How many loaves do you have? Go and see."](#) They were to check and see what they had, not commandeer what a little boy had. Look at the replies of Mark and Matthew... it is as if some of them tried to disguise the fact that those five loaves and two fish came from a little boy until Andrew spoke up. However, they did go and check immediately and even went further and found the little boy with the loaves and fish, but nevertheless, they disobeyed the command... for Jesus wanted to know what they had, not what others had. However, despite the disobedience, Jesus still took the loaves and fish, gave thanks and the food transfigured and

¹ Mark 6.35-38

² Matthew 14.17

multiplied to not only feed 5,000 families, but became of such quality that many followed Jesus around the lake for another feed.³ For the little boy only had five barley loaves and two small fish, unless you are starving, you would not cross the lake in boats for more.

Now see the difference expediency make in the two situations. In both instances they disobeyed the Lord's instruction. However, in the first instance they went to check what they had immediately, even though they never gave Jesus the answer He wanted but instead told Him what the little boy had. Despite that, Jesus was still able to go ahead with the feeding of the 5,000 as He had intended, and they still were able to give the 5,000 something to eat as He had told them, "You give them something to eat." There was disobedience and inaccurate application of instruction, but yet Jesus was able to do what He wanted. However, the later disobedience – when they did not go when they were told, and although they toiled all night rowing and getting nowhere – Jesus could not take them back to Bethsaida as He originally intended, but had to go across the lake to Gennesaret.

Now I have taught earlier that their lack of repentance for their disobedience prevented Jesus from taking them to Bethsaida and certainly not to Capernaum. However, look at the earlier incident... no one repented or apologised for their failure to tell Jesus what they had and yet Jesus was still able to accomplish what He intended – feed the 5,000 without sending them away.

In both cases there was disobedience. In both cases there was no repentance. Yet in one Jesus was still able to accomplish what He wanted, but not in the other. Why? There are a few reasons. One of which may be due to the fact that it was the little boy who gave up his little barley loaves and small fish. The faith of a child, the humility of a child, had to be honoured, for Jesus would later teach in Mark 10.14-15, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not hinder them, for the Kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the Kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." For that little boy may have heard Jesus saying, "You give them something to eat. ... How many loaves do you have? Go and see," and offered his little food to the men. The multiplication and transfiguration of the loaves and fish that day was to honour the faith of the little boy, not the obedience of the disciples. That is one reason.

The second reason may be this... I say 'may be' because it is up to you to hear if you have ears. For when we are speaking of the Spirit of Kingship, if you have ears to hear you will hear what is being said, otherwise this is just another song sung in the markets. The second reason may be because they went immediately, expediently, to see what they had, even taking into account what the little boy had, and gave the account of the little boy as if it was theirs. The expediency with which they executed the first command may be the reason also why Jesus was able to accomplish what He wanted... whereas the lack of expediency later prevented Jesus from compensating for their disobedience and lack of repentance and so took them to Gennesaret.

Now as an aside, why do you think Jesus would ask them to go and see what they had when He already knew what they had? Aside from seeing if they would give up their own food to feed others... what would Jesus do, what was He intending to do, if they came back and said to Him, "Lord, we have nothing," instead of making out as if the five loaves and two fish of the little boy's were theirs? You see, elect, if they had nothing and told Jesus the truth, it would have given Him the opportunity to answer Satan's question – "If You are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread"⁴ – and turned the stones on the ground to bread to feed the 5,000. Not only would He have been able to show His enemy that there are no 'ifs' about His Sonship, but for the 5,000 families there that day, they would have experienced picking their bread and meat off the ground just as their forefathers did in the desert with Moses. Indeed, had that taken place instead of the multiplication of the bread and fish, the status of Jesus in their eyes as the Prophet Moses had spoken of would be firmly entrenched.

Did Jesus intend to do this? I do not know... for He did not do it this way because the twelve brought Him the little boy's loaves and fish. Could He have done it this way? Of course, for He is more than the Prophet, He is the Son of God Himself. What would have been a greater miracle – the multiplication of food or the transfiguration of stones to bread and meat?

Consider then how our disobedience prevents the Lord from doing more than He does do. Consider then how our delay in obeying Him and the liberty we take in reinterpreting what He said to our understanding compromise the glory that is His.

³ John 6.22-26

⁴ Mathew 4.3; Luke 4.3

Expediency in obeying what Jesus commands of you when He commands is then the fruit of the Spirit of Kingship that allows Jesus to accomplish what He wants even if you make a mistake in the execution, like the twelve did with the little boy's loaves and fish. However, failure to do what is demanded/commanded at the time intended prevents Jesus from doing what He wants in its entirety, no matter how you may praise Him, worship Him and be in awe of Him, as it happened on the boat in the middle of the lake.

Expediency in doing what He has said at the time that He has said is the key to the return of our King. So when people ask you, "When is Jesus coming back?" you can reply them truthfully, for you know the answer. Jesus said, "Behold, I am coming soon!"⁵ Now people may ask you, "What does He mean by soon?" It does not matter what Jesus meant when He said "...soon!" What matters is what you understand 'soon' to be. You see, elect, when Jesus said to them, "How many loaves do you have?" it meant, "How many do you personally have?" first, and if the answer is, "None," then the answer is, "None." When Jesus made them get into the boat and go immediately, it did not matter what He meant by 'immediately' so much as what you understand 'immediately' to mean and so do.

Since the time frame Jesus has given us concerning His return is 'soon,' it does not matter that this was spoken 1,900 years ago... it does not matter that all previous generations thought that meant they had time to live a good Christian life, die a ripe old age and then go for a holiday in Heaven before Jesus returns while watching from the balconies of Heaven their children and grandchildren do the same. What matters is what you understand the word 'soon' to mean when you use it yourself. If you use 'soon' to mean a few days, hours, months or years – something in the near future – and yet when you hear Jesus say, "...soon!" to mean something outside of your lifetime, you are guilty of hypocrisy. For you have not done unto Jesus the courtesy of treating His word as you do yours. Although no one knows the date, we can tell by the season... but because we are not helpless as one understands helplessness, we can bring forth the season without waiting for the season. This He showed them by making the boat go immediately from the middle of the lake to the shore as soon as He got in it.

Your expediency, elect, in responding to the promptings of the Holy Spirit will cause the shortening of days so that we will not have to wait for the season to come, but bring forth the season.

Jesus, your King, said, "Behold, I am coming soon!" then labour with what you have to bring forth the season to prepare for His arrival according to your understanding of what 'soon' means. It may seem reckless; it may seem ridiculous; it may seem childish... but let me remind you it was the little boy who was honoured by the Lord for his faith, not the twelve. Behold, He is coming soon! So read and listen, practise His words, acquire the real wealth – the power, knowledge and understanding – that you need so that you are ready for His **soon** arrival, according to how you measure 'soon' to be. "Consider carefully what you hear. With the measure you use, it will be measured to you—and even more."⁶ So how you measure His 'soon' shall it be measured to you.

Little wonder so many struggle in vain waiting for the answer to their prayers, for as they have kept the Lord waiting, so shall the Lord keep them waiting.

He is your King! Mount up and ride with the wind and make ready His people, for He has said, "Behold, I am coming soon!"

⁵ Revelation 22.7,12

⁶ Mark 4.24