

# THE FIRST 15

Monday, April 15, 2024

Today is Monday, April 15 and we are studying the Gospel of John.

## OPENING PRAYER

*Blessed Lord God, as I begin another day, I seek your face. I calm the chattering of my busy mind, slow my breathing, and focus on you - Father, Son and Holy Spirit. As I continue to study the Gospel of John, open my heart and mind to hear the particular message you have for me today. Bring your blessing with the reading of this holy word. Amen.*

## SCRIPTURE

***When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?" He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do. Philip answered him, "It would take more than half a year's wages to buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!" Another of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, spoke up, "Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?" Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." There was plenty of grass in that place, and they sat down (about five thousand men were there). Jesus then took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed to those who were seated as much as they wanted. He did the same with the fish. When they had all had enough to eat, he said to his disciples, "Gather the pieces that are left over. Let nothing be wasted." So they gathered them and filled twelve baskets with the pieces of the five barley loaves left over by those who had eaten. John 6:5-13***

## REFLECTION

In the sixth chapter of John's Gospel, Jesus crossed the Sea of Galilee in a boat and landed on the far shore. A large crowd of people found him there. They had heard about the miracles he performed and the people he healed from various diseases and infirmities. The crowd of people followed Jesus and his disciples as they ascended onto a large hillside. When Jesus sat down to teach he realized the people who had been following him were hungry. It was late in the day. Jesus cared about the hungry people, but the disciples had no way to feed so many. Jesus performed a miracle - a multiplication of five loaves of bread and two fish. From this meager portion (a small boy's lunch) five thousand people were fed and twelve basketfuls of scraps remained.

Just as Jesus looked up from his position on the hillside and saw the people coming toward him, Jesus raises his gaze to see me. He sees the condition of my heart. He knows my worries and fears. He sees my hunger and emptiness. Hunger for physical food is a real problem that plagues our communities, our neighbors and our world. Is that the hunger I am experiencing today? Or is it a deeper appetite? There is a different kind of hunger that plagues the human race. The hunger of the soul. We find ourselves swiping, searching, clicking, purchasing, and filling ourselves with the things of this world that satisfy us for a while, but ultimately leave us as empty as before. Jesus sees that hunger. Even when we can't.

“Sit down,” he says. Stop and rest for a while. He takes the bread in his hands, blesses it, breaks it and hands me a piece along with some broiled fish. The people around me are fed as well. There is more than enough for everyone. I am fed - satisfied, nourished, refreshed, restored, and fulfilled. I have had enough to eat. More than enough. I consider the times when I see hunger in others - both physical and spiritual. I don't realize that I have something in my possession to share. I look in my knapsack and find my lunch - my five loaves and two fish. I hold it in my hands.

**Ask:** Am I willing to share what I have with others? Am I ready to hand over to Jesus whatever I have in my possession and trust him to take it, bless it and multiply it to bless others?

**Pause and Pray**

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

*Blessed Lord Jesus, forgive me for endlessly looking to the things of this world to bring me satisfaction and contentment. I return again and again to find myself unfulfilled. You are the Bread of Life that completely satisfies my spirit and quenches the emptiness of my hungry soul. Feed me the good food only you can provide. Nourish my spirit, strengthen my faith, invigorate my heart and fortify my life. Take whatever I have to give. I open my hands and offer it freely, for you to take, multiply, distribute and bless others. Amen.*