

Remember to Gather the Fragments

John 6:4–14 (NKJV)

⁴Now the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was near.

⁵Then Jesus lifted up His eyes, and seeing a great multitude coming toward Him, He said to Philip, “Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?”

⁶But this He said to test him, for He Himself knew what He would do.

⁷Philip answered Him, “Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may have a little.”

⁸One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, said to Him,

⁹“There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish, but what are they among so many?”

¹⁰Then Jesus said, “Make the people sit down.” Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand.

¹¹And Jesus took the loaves, and when He had given thanks He distributed them to the disciples, and the disciples to those sitting down; and likewise of the fish, as much as they wanted.

¹²So when they were filled, He said to His disciples, “Gather up the fragments that remain, so that nothing is lost.”

¹³Therefore they gathered them up, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves which were left over by those who had eaten.

¹⁴Then those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said, “This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world.”

- *Each of the four gospels record the feeding of the five thousand and the Gospels of Matthew and Mark also record the feeding of the four thousand. Apart from the miracle of Jesus’ physical resurrection, this is the only miracle reported in all four gospels.*
- *In the feeding of the five thousand as recorded in John, Chapter six, we can see at least 12 principles which illustrate how God deals with us.*
- *However, today we are going to focus on only the last principle: “Gather up the fragments that remain, so that nothing is lost.”*
- *In each of the four gospels, the feeding of the multitudes always concludes with the disciples gathering together the fragments.*
- *Jesus’ instruction to “gather up the fragments that remain so that nothing is lost” clearly indicates the purpose was not garbage collection but gathering together something that was valuable and had an ongoing purpose. In fact, the importance of the fragments is emphasized by the fact that the number of baskets that were filled was recorded at every occurrence. “Therefore they gathered them up, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves which were left over by those who had eaten.”*

- **“Gather up the fragments that remain, so that nothing is lost.”** – *This represents the principle of thoroughness. God has many riches to share with us in His Word and in how He deals with us daily, but we need to be attentive.*
- **“So when they were filled”** – *The word “when” implies that something more had to be done beyond meeting their immediate needs. In the natural they were gathering bread for the next day, but Jesus wanted them to take note of how much remained. The fragments that remained were many times greater than the original five loaves. There was something much deeper and more enduring that God wanted to reveal to them and accomplish in their hearts.*
- *Jesus wanted His disciples to take note of God’s faithfulness that transcended anything they had ever understood or even imagined. He wanted His disciples to be filled—not just with bread, but with how awesome and wonderful God is!*
- **“So when they were filled”** – *The Greek word “were filled” used here means “to be filled, to have one’s desires satisfied.” Some Christians stop seeking God once their immediate needs have been met or the crisis has passed.*
- *The principle of thoroughness is being able to capture those fragments, those experiences with God, collect them and build upon them, so that they can sustain us in the future.*
- *A carnal Christian only seeks to have his or her immediate needs met. They fail to recognize that God has a greater purpose for their lives. “Jesus answered them and said, “Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled.” (John 6:26).*
- *One of the sure signs that we are failing to “gather up the fragments that remain” is if every time we face new difficulties we question God’s faithfulness. Also we will find ourselves constantly seeking new confirmations and new signs to prove that He is still with us.*
- *A spiritually minded Christian will seek to grow in Christ through every experience they have with God. They will hear God say, “Gather up the fragments that remain, so that nothing is lost.” They will cherish every experience with God. They will go beyond looking at God’s hand of provision to seek to see His face and to know His person.*
- **“Gather up the fragments”** – *The Greek word for “gather up” means to “gather together; keep in a place, to turn into cash.”*
- *We are to take every experience we have with God and collect them together so that it becomes meaningful for the future and a reserve for future needs and growth. In every new circumstance, need, or crisis we face we can draw on our past experiences with God to give us faith and courage to enable us to deal with*

our current situation.

- **“Gather up the fragments”**- *The Greek word for “gather up” also has the meaning of “bringing things together, join together; join in one those things that were previously separated.” The fragments by themselves were just small pieces of bread but together they made up much more.*
- **“There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish, but what are they among so many?”** (John 6:9).
- *Imagine the impact of this lad’s generosity. He gave Jesus five loaves, yet there were twelve baskets of leftovers! He would remember what Jesus did with his small meal for the rest of his life. Look what God can do when we give Him everything!!*
- *It is easy for us to take for granted all the things God has done for us if we fail to gather them together and to consider them daily. However, if we begin to meditate upon the enormity and the many times God has demonstrated His power and faithfulness to us, the impact on us will be immense.*
- **“and filled twelve baskets with the fragments”** – *The Greek word translated here as “filled” means “to fill entirely.” Twelve baskets were filled entirely with the abundance that remained. The fragments may have appeared insignificant when scattered all over the ground but when gathered together twelve baskets were filled with bread.*
- *The fragments provided more than leftovers. They brought joy just remembering God’s supernatural provision and faithfulness. Those present would carry that memory with them for the rest of their lives. The bread they ate provided for their immediate needs. However, if they chose to remember, dwell on, and meditate on God’s faithfulness the bread would feed them for a lifetime.*
- *It is recorded in Mark 8 that Jesus was in a boat with His disciples and He warned them: “Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod.” Jesus was cautioning them to beware of the false doctrine of the Pharisees that leads to self-righteousness, pride, and independence from God. (Mark 8:15).*
- *However, they totally misunderstood what Jesus was trying to tell them and they thought Jesus was worried they would go hungry because they forgotten to bring any bread. “And they reasoned among themselves, saying, ‘It is because we have no bread.’”*
- *What is so amazing about the disciples’ response is that shortly before, possibly even the same day, Jesus had miraculously fed the four thousand. (Mark 8:1-8).*

How quickly we forget!

“But Jesus, being aware of it, said to them, “Why do you reason because you have no bread? Do you not yet perceive nor understand? Is your heart still hardened? Having eyes, do you not see? And having ears, do you not hear? And do you not remember? When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments did you take up?” They said to Him, “Twelve.” “Also, when I broke the seven for the four thousand, how many large baskets full of fragments did you take up?” And they said, “Seven.” So He said to them, “How is it you do not understand?” (*Mark 8:17-21*).

- *Jesus’ response was to direct them back to the miracles of feeding the multitudes and specifically how many baskets of fragments they had gathered.*
- *Although the disciples had collected the fragments physically they had not allowed the impact of the miracle to collect in their hearts.*
- *We clearly see that the disciples’ inability to understand what Jesus was saying was due to a hardened heart. They had so quickly forgotten the wonder of God’s provision.*
- *At the Last Supper before Jesus’ crucifixion, He gave them an ordinance which they were to do in order to keep in remembrance all that He was about to do for them. “And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them and said, ‘Take, eat; this is My body.’” (*Mark 14:22*).*
- *Jesus took the bread and broke it and gave them each a fragment, something tangible to remind them constantly that they had been redeemed by sacrifice of “the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world.” (*John 1:29*).*
- *King David described how choosing to think of all God’s faithful acts sustains us. “Trust in the LORD, and do good; Dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness.” (*Psalm 37:3*). The way we “feed on His faithfulness” is to continually remember all God’s faithful acts toward us starting from when we first received Christ to all the answered prayers and miracles He has done.*
- *Faith is the currency of the kingdom!*
- *“Gather up the fragments that remain” – The Greek word for “that remain” means “to be over and above, to abound, provide in excess, over abundantly, have greater advantage.”*
- *The bread they ate fulfilled their immediate need, but the fragments of the bread when collected together were tomorrow’s provision and represented the continued overflow of the grace and power of God for the future.*

- *God could have demonstrated the power, perfection, and precision of His foreknowledge by providing exactly the amount of bread required to satisfy each and every person to the last crumb with nothing remaining. However, God chose to show His superabundant and extravagant provision that He has for our lives by providing excess bread in overflowing abundance.*
- *“so that nothing is lost.” – The Greek word for “lost” means “ruined, destroyed, unaware of the location, disappear.”*
- *If we are not careful to take every experience we have with God and gather it together in our hearts we will lose the effect that it is to have on us.*
- *The power and delight of those experiences will be lost and we will always be looking for new experiences to prove God’s faithfulness to us.*

John 6:13 (KJV)

¹³ Therefore they gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten.

- *The bread was for the present need but the fragments were the super abundant overflow for our future needs “which remained over and above.”*
- *The bread sustained them for a day but the fragments sustained them for a lifetime!*
- *The fragments are a tangible reminder of God’s faithfulness.*

Deuteronomy 6:4–9 (NKJV)

⁴“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one!

⁵You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.

⁶“And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart.

⁷You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.

⁸You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.

⁹You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

- *This passage in Deuteronomy is a beautiful picture of gathering the fragments so that nothing is lost.*
- *If we allow our thoughts to constantly wander it produces scattering instead of gathering.*

- *Paul instructed the believers in the church in Corinth to celebrate Jesus' as our Passover Lamb. "For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast (Passover)." (1 Corinthians 5:7-8).*
- *In Psalm 103, David provides a wonderful pattern of how to gather the fragments so nothing will be lost.*
- *We gather the fragments by giving testimony of God's faithfulness.*
- *We gather the fragments by giving thanks to God in prayer and praise.*
- *We gather the fragments by mediating upon His Word and His acts.*

Psalm 103:1–7 (NKJV)

¹**Bless the LORD, O my soul; And all that is within me, bless His holy name!**

²**Bless the LORD, O my soul, And forget not all His benefits:**

³**Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases,**

⁴**Who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies,**

⁵**Who satisfies your mouth with good things, So that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.**

⁶**The LORD executes righteousness And justice for all who are oppressed.**

⁷**He made known His ways to Moses, His acts to the children of Israel.**

- *Israel ate the manna and saw the miracles but Moses gathered the fragments as he spent time in God's presence.*
- *Israel saw the acts of God but Moses knew the person of God. "So the LORD spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend." (Exodus 33:11a).*

Psalm 62:11–12 (NKJV)

¹¹**God has spoken once, Twice I have heard this: That power belongs to God.**

¹²**Also to You, O Lord, belongs mercy; For You render to each one according to his work.**

- *When God speaks once but we have heard twice, it means we have gathered together the fragments!*
- *"Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, And the LORD listened and heard them; So a book of remembrance was written before Him For those who fear the LORD And who meditate on His name." (Malachi 3:16). *If God keeps a book of all our deeds, we would be wise to keep a book of all the deeds God has done in our lives. Then we can open our "book of remembrance" and delight in God's faithfulness to us. Such memories will sustain us through difficult and dry times.**

- *BUSY = Being Under Satan's Yoke*

Luke 10:38–42 (NKJV)

³⁸Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house.

³⁹And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word.

⁴⁰But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me."

⁴¹And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things.

⁴²But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her."

- *"But Martha was distracted with much serving" – Jesus was trying to impart something essential for both Mary and Martha but Martha was so busy serving Jesus that she was not in a position to receive—and then was resentful that she had to serve.*
- *"But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her." – Mary sat at the feet of Jesus and just listened and gathered the fragments that would not be taken away from her and it would become an overflow in her life.*
- *The most important thing we can do is learn to enjoy the presence of God and sit at His feet and listen to what He is saying just like Mary did.*
- *Thanksgiving, worship, and adoration will enable us to recognize and gather the fragments.*
- *No matter how many miracles the Pharisees saw it had no long lasting impact on them. They always sought another supernatural sign.*
- *We are to gather all the overflow of God's faithfulness in our lives so that we will walk in complete trust and rest in the leading of the Lord.*
- *When our memories are filled with God's faithfulness then we will abide in God conscious faith and the delight of the reverential fear of the Lord will be our constant companion.*
- *As we meditate daily on the goodness of God and the faithful acts of God in our lives we are gathering the fragments.*
- *We are to be attentive to every circumstance so that every day we can gather all the fragments of God's overflowing abundant grace.*