

1 One Of Five Thousand

(John 6:1-15.)

We would have made him King by force! Well, so would you if you had been there. If you had seen, if you had met him as we did. This man whose look seemed to fill you with something extraordinary and unexplainable. This man whose words seemed to wrap themselves around you, settling in every corner and crevice of your mind and spirit. This man whose touch brought sight to the blind, sound to the deaf, dancing to the lame, even life to the dead. This man who we followed, who we hunted, whose presence we could not bear to be out of. O yes, you would have felt the same if you had met him as we did, if you had seen the things we saw. For his kingship shone, despite his ordinary appearance, despite his grubby clothes and matted hair, despite everything, his kingship shone and drew us to him. Unavoidably, irresistibly, captivatingly, causing us to forget ourselves and pursue him for just one look, one word, one touch from this extraordinary and bewildering king.

And O yes, I am one of them. One of the five thousand. One of those who saw it happen. One of those who ate the bread and the fish. One of those who was filled, filled beyond anything we had ever experienced or imagined before. And I can tell you, hand on heart, so help me God, there were only five of them. Five small barley loaves and the two fish. That was all, nothing else, not a crumb more. And yet we ate, we ate and we had our fill. Each one of us ate and were satisfied, five thousand of us, including me!

Is it any wonder we wanted to make him King? To take him, whether willing or by force, down into Jerusalem and make him King right there and then? Is it any wonder? You would have wanted to do the same if you had been there with us. If you had seen what we had seen, if you had been filled as we were filled. But it was not to be. Despite the following he had, despite the army he could have mustered, despite the popularity and status that could have been his, despite all of this he chose another way; and what a way!

It didn't go away though. That feeling, or rather that filling. We ate our fill, yes, but we ate more than bread and fish. This was more than the filling of stomachs, but somehow it was the filling of lives, of hearts, of minds, of spirits, of souls. A filling of something in me that I had never known was empty, never known, until that is, he filled it.

Oh yes, I saw him again. I saw him on the road into Jerusalem as the donkey made it's way down the Mount of Olives. I added my voice to the crowd as they welcomed him as King and Messiah and Christ. I saw him in the temple during the festival and I saw the sly looks and heard the low whispers of Pharisees and teachers and temple guards. I saw him in the square, and I listened as the crowd

cried out for his death, for his crucifixion. I listened in tear-filled agony to every shout, to every cry for the blood of this man, this extraordinary man.

And I saw, 'it,' happen. I was there, as with nails and thorns, they took this man that we had wanted to make king, as they took him and pierced his flesh, nailed him blow by blow to that rough and splintering wood and left him to suffer in that unspeakable way.

And yet it seemed, no it more than seemed, it really did happen, that as I gazed through tear filled eyes at his bleeding agony, he was still filling me, he was still giving to me, he was still blessing me.

Yes, we would have made him King by force. Now though I watch, I watch as a broken, blood drained, sun scorched corpse is taken down and rushed away. And yet still is he? Could he be? Filling me?

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