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Well, good morning, everyone. We are closing down summer pretty quickly, it seems.

I, on the other hand, am very excited about school resuming. Anyone? Any other parents? Like? Yes.

Okay. Yes, school is great. We love school. Hey, before we jump in, I don't know about you guys, but I've been just saying horrible stuff as they are uncovering bodies and recovering stuff from Texas that happened last weekend and Sunday just similarly, there was still too much news to really begin to assess, even process it. But we've had a week to process that.

It's really horrific stuff. Can we just take a moment and just pray for the workers, relief workers down there that are doing just a horrible job. They're doing a fantastic job at a horrible task. And the churches down there that are, are taking care of people and loving on people and trying to bring comfort and hope where it's just pretty devastating. So before we start, I just want to take a moment.

Let's just spend some time in silence. You lift up the areas that you are particularly aware of, and if you're not aware of any issue, then you just, just blanket that whole Texas mid zone with prayer because they still, they still need it. Can we do that? Okay, let's pray.

Jesus, it just seems like sometimes we are just caught completely by surprise by tragedy.

Here's how I know how to pray. Lord Jesus, bring comfort and peace to those who are hurting and broken.

Bring strength and perseverance to those who are working and bring somehow a glorious story of redemption from a tragic story of loss.

And I pray this in Jesus name, Amen. Oh, okay.

Prayer matters, guys. It may seem like we didn't do much there, but when we bring heaven into our situations, the small ones and the big ones, it can transform our thought process. Today we're going to look a little bit about that. Before we jump into that, I want to point back to the very, very back. I believe Cameron is sitting back there.

Cameron, can you stand up? He's a tall guy, so you're going to see him. If you do, he's at the very, very, very, very backity, back, back, back. Darren, who loves to rearrange all our furniture here, you guys have experienced that yourselves, has done it again. He's moved some sofas and chairs back there.

He's put a little sign that says prayer corner. Here's the, here's the rule about prayer here. We can pray at all times about all things. Anyone, Anyone disagree with me on that? That means that in the middle of my sermon, if you feel like you need to pray about something, and you need someone to pray with.

You do not have to wait till the end of the sermon to talk to me. You can chippity chop, hippity hop right out of your seat, don't hippity hop, but just walk nicely back to the back, and someone will be back there to pray with you about whatever's going on. That can happen before service, after service, or during service. Because we don't want anyone to leave here without feeling like they've. They've had someone help them encounter Jesus in the middle of their situation.

Okay, this is what we're going through as our. As our series this summer. We're encountering Jesus in different situations. We're calling it Hills and lakes and valleys or lakes and hills or mountains and lakes. I don't know what it is.

We're up high and we're down low with Jesus, and it's been good. We started out at the beginning. We're looking basically through the Book of Matthew, but we're jumping into the other gospels as well. But at the beginning, we followed Jesus up into the desert, up into the mountains, where Jesus was tempted to shortcut his mission. He says, no, I'm going to do it God's way.

Then we followed him down to the shore where he met some fishermen, where they were, and he called them to follow him and learn something new about themselves and about him. Then we climbed up a steep hillside where Jesus preached this long and amazing sermon about what the kingdom looked like and what he's offering to those who will follow him. And it's so different than what the world promotes and offers. From there, we made the long afternoon journey. Remember that Sunday afternoon after that sermon he preached?

And it seemed to take forever to get to the boat. And when he finally got to the boat, the storms came up and they're just terrified. But we stayed in the boat. We didn't. We didn't let our fears overwhelm us.

We stayed in the boat because Jesus was in the boat with us. And so he stayed right there where Jesus was. And he calmed us down and he calmed the storms. And man, it was good to know that we were with the Lord. Then after all of that, just a lot, you know how it is.

You go through a season and you need some rest. And Jesus did too. His disciples did, too. We just need to get away for a time of rest and replenishment. And you think that's going to happen.

But as Allen taught us last week, it didn't happen the way we imagine it is going to happen instead, in the middle of our busy and chaotic

circumstances where the expectations and responsibilities of life and discipleship are overwhelming, Jesus meets with us there in the middle of that. We don't need a spa weekend, we don't need a mountain retreat. We need in the moment to meet with Jesus. Today. We're going to follow him back up the hill.

We're going back up a hillside. He's going to teach us an important lesson about his ability to provide for us, to provide abundantly for us when we follow him and offer him what we have. Some of you already know what story we're talking about today, but I'm going to pray and you're going to turn to the Gospel of Matthew, which is the very first book in the New Testament part of the Bible. And if you've got a Bible with red letters, it's the first book of the Bible with red letters. So if you want to turn there, you can.

If you want to follow on the screen with the Scriptures, you can do that as well. Heavenly Father, as we open your word to us, we love following you. We're following where you lead us. And you may lead us through floods and devastation, but you also lead us to green pastures and still waters. And that's where we want to find you today, where we are at rest.

And we are trusting you with what we have and trusting you to do with what we have, what only you can do. So instruct us, teach us, inspire us, and build faith in us as we read your word in Jesus name. Amen. So we are in Matthew if you're there in your Bibles, Matthew, and we're going to be in Matthew chapter 14. We're moving quite along.

We're skipping over a bunch of stuff, if you've noticed. We're not doing verse by verse through Matthew, but we're doing a survey through Matthew so far. And today we're in Matthew chapter 14. This account that we're going to read is also covered by Mark in his Gospel as well. And there's some interesting parallels.

In many ways they're verbatim with each other. Like Matthew heard that Mark was. Because Mark was there. Matthew heard the story and was recounting it the way Mark told him. But Matthew's got a got a take on it.

Mark's got a take on it. We're going to look at Matthew's this morning. But yeah, it starts in Matthew, chapter 14. We're going to jump to 13. And it starts this way.

When Jesus heard what had happened, what had Happened. Does anyone know his cousin John the Baptist, the one who had baptized him, had been killed by King Herod.

John the Baptist? Yeah, John the Baptist, dead. And Jesus heard what had happened. And again he wants to withdraw. But the crowds are following him.

So Jesus lands on the other side. The crowds are there. He has compassion on them. He heals their sick. And they're together with all these hordes of people, thousands.

We'll read later. Up to 10,000 people maybe here. Evenings coming on, they and the disciples come to him and say, okay, we're in the middle of nowhere. Jesus, it is getting really late. You need to wrap it up.

So send the crowds away so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food. And Jesus replies, they don't need to go away. You give them something to eat. Now, Mark, if you're reading Mark, this is in chapter six. Mark says the disciples were looking at the crowds and they're sort of mentally calculating how much this is going to run them.

And it's going to run them. It says about half a year's wages to feed the crowd of people that are there. So I don't know what you make a year, but divide that in half and ask yourself the question, am I willing to give half of my year's salary to feed a crowd of people? And the disciples are going, yeah, we don't have that, and we can't do that.

Well, Jesus says, well, find out. What do you have? So the disciples say, well, we have here only five loaves of bread and two fish. Jesus says, well, bring them here to me. And he directed the people to sit down on the grass and taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he.

He gave thanks and he broke the loaves. And then he gave them to the disciples. And the disciples then gave them to the people. Can you picture this scene? Are you picturing this?

And they all ate. And not only did they eat, Matthew says they were satisfied. They pushed away from the table and said, ugh, can't eat another bite. I'm full. They were satisfied.

So the disciples began gathering up the leftovers. And they picked up 12 basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. The number of those who ate was about 5,000 men, besides women and children. Now, as we look at this passage, there's some interesting things here. One, the disciples have rightly discerned that there is an issue here.

One, it's getting dark, it's late. We are in a remote location, close to nothing. I can see them huddling over there in the corner and they're whispering. Okay, okay. They're gonna get angry soon.

Hungry and angry. That's because Matthew says, what's hangry? And John says it means hungry and angry. And they're gonna get angry real soon. So what do we need to do to solve this issue?

And Judas says, well, I'm telling you what, it's going to take half a year's wages to feed these people, and I'm not putting out that kind of money. Are you going to put that money out? No, no, no, no. They say, no, we're not going to do this. Okay, well, what are we going to do?

Okay, well, here's what we need to do. Service has gone on long enough. Send them home. Jesus needs to wrap it up. He's talked long enough.

He's now repeating himself. Send him home and let's get on with our lives. But if you read the Scriptures, here's what you notice. The hungry crowd is not restlessly waiting to be released. We don't get that from them.

We get that from the disciples. The restless crowd or the crowd is happy to stay right there. They're getting what they need from Jesus. They're having a great moment with Jesus. Yeah, it's getting late.

They don't care. Jesus is there. They're hungry. But you know what? They got food at home.

Tomorrow they'll eat. It's not a problem. The disciples are addressing an issue that is not yet a real problem. And in the middle of addressing this issue, they seem to be ignoring something really incredibly big. What is that?

What are they ignoring? Well, they're ignoring Jesus. Now. Think about this. All afternoon long.

Now it's nighttime. So all afternoon long, they've watched him miraculously heal diseases. He's been solving impossible problems. And yet they seem oblivious to the fact that, that, that he's here with them. And there's nothing so far that they've encountered winds and waves included, that, that Jesus has not been able to handle.

They seem oblivious to this and decide that they have to use their own common sense. And they're like, okay, yeah, look at all these healed and delivered people. Look, they're walking around. They can now walk. They can hear.

They can see. They were blind. Now they can see. Look, this is, this is. This is amazing.

They were demon possessed. Now they're not demon possessed, which means they're perfectly able to, to. To. To leave the King of Kings and walk over to Burger King. That's what they really need right now.

They need to say no to the big miracle so they can say yes to the Big

Mac. I'm just getting started. They say, we know you healed the lame and restored sight to the blind. You open deaf and ears. You cast out evil spirits.

But right now, the unseen solution we can find for our growling bellies is Taco Bell.

We laugh, but here's the deal. If you're like me, we do the same. We brood over our personal issues like we have never heard the name of Jesus. Anyone besides me do this, where we try to figure out our things apart from Jesus. They're acting like good managers.

I get it. Managing potential problems. They're finding solutions. But Jesus says, I didn't call you to be a manager. I called you to be a disciple.

Follow me. We need good managers. I love good managers. But in this moment, Jesus is not looking for them to manage a situation. He's looking for them to be part of this miracle moment.

They just need to be here with him.

They devise a great plan. Wrap it up, close it down, say your amen, do the benediction and send them over to Golden Crown. But Jesus says, that's a. That's one plan. But I have a different plan.

Jesus says, in all your ways, acknowledge me, if you will, acknowledge me. I got a plan. You just work my plan. I will direct your steps. Jesus says, why are you going to make them leave?

Everything we need is right here. Good things are happening right here. It's a long walk into town. You guys feed them.

Just do what I asked you to do, okay? They says, what, What. What do we do? How do we. How do we do this?

You want us to feed them? Fine. That's great. That's great. Tell us how he goes.

Assess your resources. What do you have? Do an inventory of what you got going here. So they do. They start surveying the crowd.

10,000 people is the conservative estimate. That's 5,000 men, plus women and children. They report back and they said, Jesus says, okay, what do you got? Well, we've got five loaves and two fish. And they're like, okay, now do you see our point, Jesus?

Now do you understand why we need to wrap it up and send these guys home? Here's what we came up with. 5,000 people. We've got five loaves and two fish. Okay, now what?

Jesus says, okay, we can work with this. He lifts it up to the Father and says, father, thank you for what you have provided. Five loaves and two fish. And he starts breaking it. And he breaks it.

And he hands it to his disciples. And they take it and they take it to the next person and they break it in two. And then that person takes it and that other person takes it, and they break it in two. And within a few people, they realize something is happening here that is different than they've ever experienced in their lives. And all of a sudden they're saying, hey, I ate that piece.

Do you have another piece? Oh, yeah, yeah. I've got three pieces here. I thought I just broke two. No.

Well, I got. Here's. Here, take this one. Before, you know, everyone is eating. The crowds are screaming with excitement of what's going on.

It is absolute chaos as they see what God is doing with five loaves and two fish. A miracle has happened. It is incredible. At the end of the day, they collect and clear plates, and they pick up 12 basketfuls of leftovers from. From this massive food festival.

Jesus says, what do you have? What do you got? And I said, Jesus, I've got bad feet and weak knees. Okay. Jesus says, okay, we can work with that.

I'm gonna call you something that doesn't require great feet and great knees. You'll be able to do something, but I'm not gonna discard you because you got bad feet and weak knees. What about you? Well, I got a lot of social anxiety, and I'm pretty awkward around people. Okay, okay, let's work with that.

I can do amazing things with the socially awkward and the embarrassingly weird people. My life is filled with people like that. Some of you are those people, and God uses you. Jesus says, I can work with that. I got this old van.

It gets horrible gas mileage, but it seats 12. Jesus says, Great, we can use that. That's fantastic. I say, lord, I got this front porch. It used to be clean and tidy.

It isn't anymore. There's fishing lures, there's bikes. There's cardboard Amazon boxes for some reason, everywhere. There's tools all over, scattered all over. Tools I didn't even know I owned are on the front porch right now.

And Jesus says, I can use that front porch. I ain't got a job. Perfect. It sounds like you got some free time. I can use that free

time.

I don't know. I've got this pretty decent breakfast casserole dish. Perfect. We can use that breakfast casserole recipe. I can play four chords on a guitar.

Mm. Okay. We can work with that. I know how to use a rocking chair and rock a baby. You know what?

That is an amazing, amazing gift and skill. We can use that. I have A lawnmower. I have a rake. We can use it.

The disciples did not have a half year's wages to throw out the issue. They could not solve that problem with human resources. They had five loaves and they had two fish.

That's not good. If I'm walking into your home and you're wanting to feed me and my boys and you show up with five loaves of bread and two fish, I'm going to say, you know what? We'll come back later. We're going to stop by McAllister's and pick up something. It doesn't look good, but that's what they've got.

And Jesus says, you know what? I can work with that. So here's the lesson. When we trust Jesus with our little, it will propel us into a deeper experience with Him.

There's a guy named William Thompson, no relation. He was a Scottish scientist and a mathematician. He discovered the first and second laws of thermodynamics. I know you all know what the first and second law of thermodynamics are, so I'm not even going to mention them. But this guy discovered them and he said this.

Every scientific discovery brings with it more questions than answers. And here's what happens when we trust Jesus with what little we have. It propels us into a deeper experience with Him. As we learn more, we more deeply understand what we do not yet know. In every true encounter with Jesus we have, we have to in some way discard wrong or limited ideas about who Jesus is and replace them with new, broader information.

This deepens our relationship and it broadens our experience of walking with Jesus. So these disciples have a solution that doesn't need Jesus. It doesn't require Jesus to send them home and send them off to find food. But Jesus has a solution that does require him. And that solution is going to draw them deeper to experience with Him.

They're going to learn more about who he is because they're going to do it his way and work the plan that he's given them. He's going to. They're going to figure out more and more what he's actually calling them to as well. It's not just about Jesus. It's about who.



Who they are in Jesus. Jesus says, I'm going to call you to do something impossible. You're going to feed 10,000 people with five loaves and two fish. Impossible, the disciples say. But Jesus is always giving us impossible tasks.

Be holy as I am holy. How many of you guys got that one down pat yet? Love your enemies. How many of you guys have managed that one so far? Really good.

You got it. How about blessing those who curse you? Are you there yet on that one? Jesus is always calling us to impossible things.

But there's four reminders for us in this account that in all of this and all the impossible stuff that Jesus calls us to, it's a reminder to always place our dependence completely on God. Oswald Chambers says, our dependence, no. God comes where our helplessness begins. God comes in where our helplessness begins. Think about your life and how God has proven that.

Where we say, I don't know how we're going to do it, and yet somehow it happens. God shows up and you work through it and you look back and go, I don't know how that happened, but it happened. God comes in where my helplessness begins. I love that because I found it to be true. I don't know what.

I don't know if Jesus even knew what his Father had in mind when he said, okay, when. When the disciples show up with the fish and the loaves. Did Jesus know what God had in mind? I don't know. But he knew that he could trust his Father with it.

And so he took what was there and he lifted up to his father and said, lord, you do, Father. You do what only you can do. He placed his full dependence on his Father. We place our full dependence on God, and it's a reminder to bring faith into our doubt. Doubt is not unbelief.

It is true that doubting can hamper God's work in us. Doubting can hamper God's work through us. But doubt is not unbelief. Doubt is just simply that very temporary struggle with understanding what God has up his sleeve.

Unbelief, on the other hand, is a refusal to trust God's words and commands. If the disciples says, no, no, we've done enough. I'm not walking through that crowd again. I'm not walking through the crowd again. I'm not.

I've done it. I've been. I've been out there dealing with people all day long. I'm done, Jesus. I'm walking.

I'm going into town to get food. That is unbelief.

The disciples who go, okay, I don't know. I don't know what he's gonna. He wants us to go through the crowd again. I can.

I'm not going over there. There's that lady over there that will not leave me alone. You go, I'll go. I'll go deal with her. Okay, they walk through the crowd again.

They come back. Okay, okay, Jesus, we did what you asked. Here it is. Here it is.

That's bringing faith into their doubt. They didn't know. They didn't know what God had in mind, but they did what God asked anyway. That's bringing faith into your doubt. Faith is deliberately choosing to trust the character of God even when his ways are not immediately clear.

And that means choosing to trust God and his goodness, even when faced with difficult circumstances or unanswered questions. Okay, it seems that Jesus has a plan. Let's just trust him and let's start surveying the crowd, see what we can come up with. And then this story, this account, reminds me of God's overflowing grace. Because very simply, it's this.

Jesus pronounced a blessing on that little bit of stuff, and then he multiplied it with his abundant grace and generosity. And that's what God does with us. He takes our stuff and he does amazing stuff with us. And then this, this final reminder is that the work called. And this is a big one.

This is a big one to me. And I may just be bent this direction, but it's a reminder that we are called to live out our faith in practical ways in daily life.

Faith is not just what we say we believe. In the early years of the church, while they were enduring this intense persecution from Rome and, and even Jewish leaders, the Christian teachers and pastors developed several statements that iterated their faith in ways that everyone who considered themselves Christian would say, yes, I believe this. You might have grown up in a church where they recited the Apostles Creed or the Nicene Creed, which goes something like this. I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth. Does this sound familiar?

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. I believe in the Holy Spirit. I believe in the Holy Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. These are the things we believe we ascribe to verbally knowing what we believe is important. We are encountering wrong ideas about God, wrong ideas about what it means to follow Jesus all the

time.

So knowing what we believe and how to speak that, verbalize, that is so important. But Jesus calls us to a way of life where our faith and our belief is manifested not just in the words we say and the creeds we pronounce, but in the actual work of our hands and our feet.

Maybe it's just me. I grew up in a church where it was really important to look the look, talk the talk. But I look around and ask myself, what did we do around us in the community that we lived in, the people that were in need around us? How did that church serve there the way that Jesus served? And I was a little kid, maybe I missed stuff, but I think we did good with the words.

We missed out on another part of faith, which is actually putting our hands and feet into people's lives and taking our fish and our loaves and feeding the thousands. And this is what Jesus calls us to. Just as he called the disciples to Cain. Remember what he asked? He goes, am I my brother's keeper?

And God's response to him was, yeah, yeah, you are your brother's keeper. The disciples are like, are these multitudes our responsibility to feed? And Jesus says, yes, yes, they are your responsibility to feed, take care of them.

Jesus calls us as a church to meet real physical needs. And whenever we're serving others in practical ways, we are living out the spiritual life of Christ. Listen to me carefully. When we are meeting the physical needs of people, we are living out the spiritual life of Christ just as much as if we were home praying for them on our knees. In fact, oftentimes, serving them with our hands is a more effective prayer than spending time in our closet.

That's judgy, but this is how I feel about it, so take it up with God if you disagree with me. So here's a closing. If you're a follower of Jesus this morning, what Jesus is calling to you to do, to serve others, to care for those around you, to accept the challenge that he's given you may feel as impossible as feeding 10,000 people with fish and loaves. But Jesus is always calling us to impossible tasks. And those impossible tasks become miracle moments when we bring what we have.

Here's what we got, Lord. I got an old van, I got a porch. I got. I got a backyard. I got some extra stuff in my pantry.

And we take what we have and we say, lord, here it is. Maybe it's people, connections, maybe it's skills, maybe it's possessions, maybe it's. I don't know. But bring that to Jesus. Say, here's what I got, Lord, and you bring it to him, and then you ask him to bless it.

Lord, here's what we have.

All of this stuff looks completely inadequate to the task at hand, but, Lord, here it is. You do something with it, and if you do your part, you stand back and watch God do his. And that's really, for me, the lesson of the morning. We need to trust Jesus with our stuff and see what he does with it. I'm going to pray after we take for communion and then, and then we're going to take up our morning offering.

I want to encourage you guys to give. You're great givers, you're very generous people.

But giving is this act of saying, lord, there's not much in my life I can do, but I can give a little bit. Here's what I can give. And you, before you put it in the offering plate, you put, pray over it. You say, God, take this, bless it, and multiply its effectiveness for the work of Jesus here in, in Bedford, Indiana. That's a preview of an offering meditation.

But right now it's communion. And when you read this story, Sean brought this to my attention last week. He says, it's so interesting to see how the picture that, that Matthew and Mark paint of this moment on the hillside with Jesus view feeding the 5,000 mirrors and, and sort of echoes David's Psalm 23, where he talks about the shepherd bringing the sheep to this green pasture. Mark and Matthew talk about Jesus sitting, sitting the crowds down on the grass and letting them just rest. And, and David paints this picture of the good shepherd bringing his sheep to the green pastures and just letting them rest there.

David talks about God preparing a table before him. And you talk about Jesus bless, taking that bread and breaking it and handing it out and feeding the multitudes. And you think about those multitudes and all of their needs and what they're bringing with them and their hurts and their anguishes, their physical maladies, their spiritual just torment. And Jesus is addressing all of that. There's nothing that they're bringing to him that he can't, that he's not.

That he's not able to address. I think about those crowds gathered there and all of their needs. And Jesus says, it is sufficient. It is more than sufficient. It is 12 basketfuls of excess left over.

And David says, when I'm there in the presence of the Lord, my cup, what does it do? It overflows. God overflows his goodness and his mercies, his kindnesses, his supply overflows. This morning as we come to the table, the bread represents. Jesus is the bread of life.

He is the ample provider for all of our needs. And that cup is very significant in that it looks a little bit like blood. It's red like

blood. And so many people have said this represents the blood of Jesus.

If that's your take this morning, here's what it represents. There's nothing that you can bring to him, nothing impossible that he can't. He can't meet and match because of what he accomplished on the cross. He died for people who had a lot of stuff going on. That's you and me.

Heavenly Father, sometimes it can feel like life is a little overwhelming. And I think about those families in Texas. That puts all of our stuff in perspective so much. So much of our stuff pales in comparison to the anguish that others are feeling. And yet in our moments, it feels almost impossible what you're calling us to or where you've placed us.

Jesus, I thank you that we acknowledge you in these places. We say you're here and so there's nothing impossible when you're here. So, Lord, as we take the bread and the cup, we give thanks for your presence. We give thanks for the way you've provided for us. And we remind ourselves that in our need, you never turn us away.

You never send us off to find supply and sustenance elsewhere. But you say, no, no, no, no, no. Stay with me. I will provide for your needs in this moment. We give you.

You thank. Thanks in Jesus name, Amen.

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