

Jesus Does a Lot w/ a Little

John 6:1-15

- I. Intro → Two things you need to know about OT for this story
 - A. Backstory to God feeding the people in the wilderness with Mana under Moses
 - B. Moses predicting a prophet to come up after him who would be like him
 1. *Deuteronomy 18:15–19, [15] “The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen—[16] just as you desired of the LORD your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly, when you said, ‘Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God or see this great fire any more, lest I die.’ [17] And the LORD said to me, ‘They are right in what they have spoken. [18] I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. [19] And whoever will not listen to my words that he shall speak in my name, I myself will require it of him.*
 2. He would be a prophet like Moses (mediator, exodus, voice of God, covenant cutting, and on and on)
- II. John 6:1-15
 - A. *[1] After this Jesus went away to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias.*
 1. After what? After this comment about Moses.
 - a) Although the timeline is ambiguous, literarily this is important b/c Moses was looking forward to a prophet like him and Jesus is going to argue in John 6 that he is the prophet Moses predicted and more!
 2. Other side: lake is about 7 miles by 13 miles
 - B. *[2] And a large crowd was following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing on the sick.*
 1. They were following him...why? B/C of the signs... Not b/c they believed in him (yet) or b/c they thought he was actually God (yet)
 2. ↑ Jesus knows how to draw a crowd.
 - a) But a crowd doesn't equal belief (as we will see)
 - b) Church in USA and EU is changing, starting to be filled w/ smaller crowds, but might not be bad news! Might be truer faith.
 3. ↓ We like signs, entertainment, attraction.
 - a) We like doing it b/c it is exciting, and it makes us feel like we are accomplishing something even if it isn't real and doesn't last.
 - b) We like going to it because it is high return (e.g. I had a good time) without any cost or risk to me

- c) Once Jesus is up on the cross and the risk is clear, we will see how quickly the crowds prove that they aren't real
- C. *[3] Jesus went up on the mountain, and there he sat down with his disciples.*
 - 1. ↑ Jesus invested in a few without ignoring the crowds.
 - a) Good leadership development plan!
- D. *[4] Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand. [5] Lifting up his eyes, then, and seeing that a large crowd was coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread, so that these people may eat?" [6] He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he would do.*
 - 1. Try to picture this, put yourself in Philip's shoes
 - 2. Here we have a large crowd coming towards him. We read later it's about 5,000 men (maybe 20,000 + people).
 - 3. Bible geography experts group say people walked up to 10 miles to come
 - 4. ↑ Jesus is a compassionate man.
 - a) He sees them and realizes they need food (and more!)
 - 5. Jesus turns to fill and tests him w/ a question. Why Philip? He is from this area. It's his area of expertise. He knows where to find all the inside deals.
 - 6. ↑ **Jesus tests us to remind us of our inability without him.**
 - a) We need Jesus. He does the work, not us! He can do a lot. We can't do too much!
 - b) "I can't do anything about XYZ problem." You probably can't, but he can!
- E. *[7] Philip answered him, "Two hundred denarii worth of bread would not be enough for each of them to get a little."*
 - 1. Denarii is a days wage, so 8 months pay
 - 2. ↓ **We lack the ability to do the impossible.**
 - a) When faced w/ impossible situations, we feel crushed and overwhelmed. We see no way out.
 - b) Maybe you are faced w/ a seemingly impossible situation today.
 - (1) Opportunity for the future. A trial. A family situation.
 - (2) I'm gonna help you: you can't do anything about it
 - c) Jesus loves working in the realm of the impossible for his glory and your good
- F. *[8] One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, [9] "There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are they for so many?"*
 - 1. "Jesus, here's a poor kid. Let's take his lunch. Jesus can you do anything with such little?" Well. Let's see.
- G. *[10] Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, about five thousand in number. [11] Jesus then took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated. So also the fish, as much as they wanted.*

1. In order for Jesus to do the work he was about to do, however, the little boy had to let go of the little that he had and trustingly give it to Jesus.
2. **↑ Jesus can do a lot with very little... if you're willing to give what you have over to him.**
3. Look at the great work that Jesus did: they all had as much as they wanted and then were satisfied!
 - a) When it comes to Jesus, no matter how big your appetite is, he can satisfy it!

H. [12] *And when they had eaten their fill, he told his disciples, "Gather up the leftover fragments, that nothing may be lost." [13] So they gathered them up and filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves left by those who had eaten.*

1. There was overflow! This is an improvement over manna in the wilderness!
 - a) That rotted, this is overflowing so that "nothing may be lost."
 - b) This miracle is better (better tasting, better lasting, less work)
 - c) What's the implication? They pick it up...

I. *[14] When the people saw the sign that he had done, they said, "This is indeed the Prophet who is to come into the world!" [15] Perceiving then that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by himself.*

1. **↑ Jesus is the Prophet promised by Moses.**
 - a) This is a big eureka moment for the crowds!
 - b) It's a step, isn't it? But it's not there yet. He's so much more...
2. **↑ Jesus protects us from getting ahead of ourselves.**
 - a) I love how Jesus is so incremental.
 - b) His timing - perfect. His strategy - flawless.
 - c) He knew that they got part of the picture, but not the whole thing. He knew that he needed to prevent further action. They didn't need a king who would reign (right now). They needed a king who die and then reign over a new humanity.
3. In the coming weeks, we are going to see Jesus explain this miracle and show how he isn't just the prophet... he is more... he is the way of salvation, he is God
 - a) He doesn't drop that all at once. He prepares them and brings them step by step (and still most will reject it!)

III. What do we pull from this story?

A. ↑ Jesus is the Prophet promised by Moses.

1. This is the immediate interpretation of the passage and the intended meaning of the text.
 - a) He gives bread from heaven and then will explain he is the bread from heaven (more on this to come)

b) He is the true and better Moses. Moses was the foreshadow. This is the shadow. End of John 6 Jesus explains the substance.

2. We can also draw out some principles

B. ↑ Jesus does a lot with a little.

1. A little boy... (yet he is crucial to the story)
2. Very little money... (Barley cakes? Couldn't even afford wheat!)
3. Very little food... (Sardines were the common fish of the day...)
4. His leaders had no solutions and little faith (yet God will use them to change the world)
5. The people have very little understanding (yet he has compassion on them and patience)
6. *Ephesians 3:20–21, [20] Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, [21] to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.*
7. Jesus does a lot with a little
8. Jesus is the Prophet predicted by Moses, and he is getting ready to bring humanity on a bigger exodus, not from Egypt, but from sin and death
9. If he is able to do that - the mega-impossible - and wants to do it, he can do a lot of lesser things too
10. He has always been in the business of doing the impossible
11. He created from nothing... He split the sea... He displaced nations for his own kids... He made the sun stand still... He was born to a virgin, lived a sinless life, died on the cross to accomplish a great deal
12. A simple wooden cross - look what it accomplished.

C. ↓ You have very little, but Jesus wants to do a lot with it for HIS glory.

1. Imagine the disciples in Matt 28 or Acts 1 before Jesus' ascension
 - a) Do you think they felt overwhelmed?
2. Jesus doesn't call you to the possible and probable, but to the impossible and the improbable
3. When you look at what Jesus calls you to, he wants it to be big enough that you can't do it, and if you can do it on your own and in your strength, there's a good chance it's not what he's calling you to do
4. Money... mental ability... training... faith... time... obedience...
5. But you have to give it over to Jesus in order for him to use it

D. In this narrative, Jesus feeds some 20,000 people with just a few barley cakes and some sardines. In this process, Jesus proves that he is the prophet Moses predicted, but he also reveals his power - power to do a lot with a very little bit. Jesus is a miracle-working God who does impossible things, and he wants to continue to do that unimaginable work in you and through you.

E. Where is he calling you to trust in his ability rather than in your meager offering?