

DOING THE IMPOSSIBLE

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John 6:1-14

1. This incident is recorded in all four of the Gospels.
2. The twelve disciples had returned from their first mission trip and reported all that had taken place.
3. Jesus suggested, “Come away by yourselves to a secluded place and rest awhile.” Mark 6:31
4. Getting away proved to be impossible, because when Jesus and the disciples arrived at the other side of the Sea of Galilee they were met by a great multitude of people who had figured out where they going and beat them there. Mark 6:32-34
5. It is important to notice why the people were flocking to Jesus wherever He went.
6. Most, as we will see more clearly over the next couple of weeks, were motivated by curiosity and selfish desire. See John 6:2, 26.
7. From a practical standpoint we find Jesus continuing to educate the Apostles by presenting them with an impossible task—they were to feed 5000 men, plus women and children, in a “desolate place.”
8. A close look at this incident in all four of the Gospels will give us some valuable insights into how we can fulfill God’s will for our lives.

I. Jesus had a plan.

- A. John tells us that, “He Himself knew what He was intending to do.” 6
 - B. We can be sure that God has a plan:
 1. For our lives. “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.”
 2. For our church.
 3. For our area, country, and world.
 - C. The disciples also had a plan because they came to Jesus and said, “This place is desolate and the hour is already late; so send the crowds away, that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves.” Matthew 14:15
- NOTE: Their plan was to let the multitude fend for themselves.

II. Jesus clearly defined their mission.

- A. He asked Philip, “Where are we to buy bread, so that these may eat?” John 6:5
 - B. From that point I think the conversation went something like this.
 1. Philip turned to the others and asked, “How much do we have in the treasury?”
 2. They said, after checking with Judas, “We do not have enough money. Tell Him our plan to solve the problem.”
 3. At which point Jesus said with emphasis, “They do not need to go away; you give them something to eat.” Matthew 14:16
 4. Philip then responded, “Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, for everyone to receive a little.”
- NOTE: A denarius was equal to an average day’s wages.
5. Jesus came back with, “How many loaves do you have? Go look!” Mark 6:38
 6. After looking at what was available Andrew reported back, “There is a lad here who has five barley loaves, and two fish, but what are these for so many people?” John 6:9

- C. The disciples were perplexed by the scope of their mission and their apparent lack of resources, but they clearly understood what it was.
- D. Jesus' overall will for the church is clear, but each local church and each Christians must look to Jesus to define their mission.

III. Jesus told them to honestly evaluate their resources.

- A. "What do you have, or what resources are available?"
- B. As individuals and as a church we need to ask the same question of ourselves.
 - 1. What abilities do we have?
 - 2. What are our spiritual gifts?
 - 3. What are our financial resources?

IV. Jesus told them to bring what they had to Him.

- A. Jesus said, "Bring them here to Me." Matthew 14:18
- B. The question is are all of the resources God has made available to us available to Him?
 - 1. On another occasion Jesus addressed a large crowd and said, "So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions." Luke 14:33
 - 2. Paul declared, "Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship."
- C. We should be encouraged by the fact that Jesus can do much with little when it is placed in His hands.

V. Jesus organized what needed to be done.

- A. He said to His disciples, "Have them sit down to eat in groups of about fifty each." Luke 9:14
- B. They obeyed, and had all the people sit down in manageable groups.
- C. We need to rely on God related to both means and methods.

VI. Jesus involved all of the disciples in ministry, and kept giving them what they needed as they continued to look to Him.

- A. "And He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up toward heaven, He blessed the food and broke the loaves and He kept giving them to the disciples to set before them; and He divided up the two fish among them all." Mark 6:41
- B. What a great picture.
 - 1. John 6:10 tells us, "Now there was much grass in the place."
 - 2. Since there were 5000 men, plus women and children, there would have been between 250 to 300 groups of about 50.
 - 3. The disciples kept coming and going until, "They all ate and were satisfied." Mark 6:42
- C. Here we have a great picture of the Church Universal, organized into manageable, local churches, led and fed by God called and equipped pastors, ministering together with cooperative people in the carrying out of God's plans and purposes.

NOTE: Within every group of fifty there would have been those who distributed what was brought to them among the group thus making sure that the needs of each person was met.

"Speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love." Ephesians 4:15-16

APPLICATION

1. I can only imagine the amazement of the disciples as they continued to return to Jesus, over and over again, to be resupplied with what they needed to do what He told them they were to do.
2. Some questions we might ask ourselves are:
 - a. Am I, and all I possess available to Jesus?
 - b. Do I have some sense of mission, some understanding of God's will for my life?
 - c. Am I confident that Jesus Christ can and will use me?
 - d. Am I trusting Him and not myself?
 - e. Who are the people God would have me impact?
3. Every person in that great crowd found themselves part of a specific group of people to which Jesus, through the Apostles, ministered to.