

Mailing Address:  
PO Box 797  
Molalla, OR 97038

Pastor Dale Satrum



Phone: 503-829-5101  
Fax: 503-829-9502

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**Growing Our Faith**  
***“God’s Process For The Miraculous”***  
(Part 7)

**Intro:** Share total figures: What I want to do today is put these figures in a spiritual context. What are we to think about all this? Where do we go from here? What about the other half million that we need? I believe on Monday, the Lord told me what He wanted to say to us today on our “Post Commitment Card” Sunday. Jesus feeding the 5000.

This story is one of the few stories repeated in every Gospel. WHY? Because it is central to the life of the believer. Repetition is there for a reason. There are things here God does not want us to miss!

Summarize story of the Feeding of the 5000.

- 4 truths about God’s process for the miraculous we need to understand.

**I. The Need Will Always Exceed Our Natural Resources**

*John 6:5-7 “Jesus soon saw a great crowd of people...Turning to Philip He asked; ‘Philip, where can we buy bread to feed all these people?’...Philip replied, ‘It would take a small fortune to feed them!’” (NLT) And, we don’t have one to give!!!*

A. God always calls us to go beyond how we naturally think

1. Feeding 15,000 people never even entered into Philip’s mind. It was the farthest thing in his mind. I can almost see Jesus asking Philip this with a little grin on his face!
2. Jesus was always challenging the way people thought. WHY? Because our natural thinking can hinder the miraculous. Most of the time, we never see the miraculous because we think it is impossible. Our thinking gets in the way!
3. Especially in our Western culture where technology and science has more credibility than the supernatural. If something is impossible because science, technology, or reason says so, then it must be impossible.
4. God loves to challenge this natural way of thinking. The purchase of this facility is challenging the way many of you naturally think. “Let’s purchase a facility for around \$2.7 million!” Say what??? That’s financially impossible! Many of you area having a hard time wrapping your mind around it.

5. Even after the results of our commitment cards, reason may tell us that it is impossible.

6. God wants us to have transformed thinking.

*Rom 12:2 "...but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think..."* (NLT) Since this is what God wants to do, doesn't it make sense that He is going to challenge our thinking?

B. God always calls us to go beyond what we naturally have

1. They didn't have the financial resources to purchase food for all these people. It was impossible! Philip quickly pointed this out to Jesus...It would take a small fortune!
2. Philip quickly pointed out the practical problems with Jesus' request and just why it wouldn't work. In fact, in the other Gospels, he even provided an alternate solution. He told Jesus to send them into the nearby villages to get food. (Just do the natural thing – Do what makes sense!)
3. Unless we are willing to follow God beyond our natural resources; beyond what just makes sense, we will never see the power of God. God is calling us as a people to trust Him with something that is beyond the resources we currently have.
4. You see, what glory does God receive when we only operate in the natural? If everything that happens is simply explained by rational thinking / good planning / skilled leadership / wealthy supporters. All these things have their place...don't get me wrong! But, where is God's power?
5. God loves to "set the stage" for His intervention. We need to recognize this is where we are at as a church. The Lord is asking us to go beyond how we think and to trust Him beyond what we have.
6. This is not just in the area of finances, but in the area of ministry. Many of you limit what God can do through you because of the way you think. You're so convinced that you just don't have much you can offer. You don't have many natural talents or skills to give.
7. God gets more glory doing supernatural things using ordinary people than with Christian superstars. If we limit God to only what our natural resources can do, we limit the power of God.
  - So don't be surprised that the need exceeds our resources!

## II. The Struggle Will Always Be To Live By Faith Or Live By Sight

*John 6:6 "He was testing Philip for He already knew what He was going to do."*

(NLT) What was He testing? He was testing his faith! Would he look at the situation naturally or supernaturally. Through the eyes of faith or through natural sight?

A. Faith sees what CAN BE not simply what is

1. This is a test we constantly face. Will I just be caught up in the natural interpretation of the situation, OR can I look beyond it with the eyes of faith and see what could be?
  2. It's not that faith ignores the circumstances / obstacles. Jesus saw the 15,000 people. Jesus knew they needed something to eat. He knew they were too tired to head into the villages. He knew they had no money. He saw all the practical issues. They just weren't bigger than His faith.
  3. Faith sees the purchase of this facility. Faith sees the fulfillment of your financial commitments. Faith sees the expansion of ministry. Faith sees people giving their lives to Jesus. Faith sees the Children's Ministry Center. Faith sees people's lives being healed.
  4. Of course there are obstacles ahead of us, but our faith sees past them and our faith grows as we persevere through them. Our faith is bigger.
- II Cor. 4:18 "So we don't look at the troubles we can see right now; rather, we look forward to what we have not yet seen..." (NLT)*
5. We focus on what will be. We focus on the results of our faith. We focus on the blessings of obedience. Faith sees what can be!

**B. Faith agrees with God's preordained agenda**

1. Notice that Jesus already knew what He was going to do. He was simply following God's agenda. Jesus knew failure was impossible if He just did what His Father told Him to do. He knew what the plan was.
2. God has a preordained plan for this church. All we are doing is simply agreeing with what God already wants to do. He birthed this church. He called it into existence. It wasn't man's idea, it was God's idea.
3. What God preordains He provides for. Failure is impossible as long as we follow His agenda. It's His plan and His plans CANNOT fail.
4. By giving ourselves to the purchase of this facility, what we are doing is agreeing with God's expanding agenda for this community. We are agreeing with God that He wants to reach more people / heal more people / have a greater presence in this community / that His work of transformation goes beyond what we are currently experiencing.
5. We are agreeing that God wants to reach 1000's of unchurched people in our geographic area and we simply do NOT have the room to do this.
6. It is impossible to live by faith unless you embrace God's preordained agenda. Until we realign our lives to His program. The strength of our faith comes from the confidence of whose agenda we're following. You know!!
7. Have you ever had someone give you directions and you had no confidence in what they told you? You wondered if they really knew what they were talking about. (Going to funeral in Portland – stopped at 7-11 – Share)

*Jer. 29:11 "For I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord. They are plans*

*for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.” (NLT)*

8. We are on board with God’s agenda. Our directions come from Him, and as a result, we can live by faith rather than by sight. We have confidence!

### **III. The Choice Is Always To Simply Give God What We Have**

*John 6:8-9 “Then, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother spoke up. ‘There’s a young boy here with five barley loaves and two fish. But what good is that with this huge crowd?’” (NLT)*

#### **A. Our willingness is more important than amounts**

1. So here is this willing boy with 5 little bread cakes and two sardines. Remember, this is a little boy’s lunch. There’s not much to it. 15,000 people and all they can scrounge up is a kid’s sack lunch.
2. Notice the thinking of the disciples. “What good is that…” It’s too insignificant to make a difference. The need is too great and the gift is too small. It just can’t meet the need. OR, at least that’s how they thought.
3. Jesus was teaching His disciples that the amount is irrelevant but the willingness is everything. Attitude always trumps amount!
4. So many people get hung up here. They think that what they have to offer whether it be time / talents / treasure – finances is so insignificant compared to the need, they never offer what they have.
5. God’s not looking for great amounts. He’s looking for great willingness. As we rejoice in what God is doing through us as we purchase this facility, the issue is this: “Did you willingly give God what He asked?” Large or small. The amount really doesn’t matter. Why is willingness more important?

#### **B. Our willingness sets the stage for the miraculous**

- This is what set the stage for God’s power in the story, not the amount.
1. God always wants to do the miraculous through His people. We are His ambassadors on earth. We represent His character / His values / His purposes / and His power.
  2. God doesn’t need great amounts to show people who He is, He’s looking for great willingness from His people. This is what He waits for. Some people wonder why God isn’t doing more in Molalla. Folks, He’s waiting for His people!!!
  3. I believe our willingness to trust God financially has set the stage for God to intervene now and provide all the rest that we need. I believe that things will be unleashed in the spiritual realm. WHY?
  4. Because God doesn’t need our money. He already owns everything! He doesn’t care about how much money was pledged. The amount is really irrelevant! He wants our hearts / our willingness to just trust Him.

5. If Jesus fed over 15,000 people with a kids sack lunch do you think He can provide the rest of the money for this facility if we give Him over \$430,000? This doesn't mean that we shouldn't keep looking for ways to cooperate with Him / involve more people / be creative with raising money.
6. It's still going to be a sack lunch compared to the need! The stage is set!!!

#### **IV. The Result Is That God Always Multiplies The Willing Gift**

*John 6:10- "Tell everyone to sit down", Jesus ordered...the men alone numbered 5000...Then Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks to God, and passed them out to all the people. Afterwards, He did the same with the fish. And they all ate until they were full. 'Now gather the leftovers', Jesus told His disciples...There were only five barely loaves to start with, but twelve baskets were filled with the pieces people did not eat!" (NLT)*

##### **A. Never underestimate God's power to multiply what is given to Him**

1. The disciples experienced Divine multiplication. One willing boy + his sack lunch + Jesus = feeding a multitude! AND, not just feeding them with a little. Notice God's abundance!!! They all ate until full and had leftovers!
2. Do you see the extravagant generosity of God when we are willing to simply be generous with what we have? The power of Divine multiplication!
3. In God's Kingdom  $2+2$  doesn't = 4 if Jesus is in the equation. Jesus is the Divine multiplier!
4. This \$430,000 is our willing gift that is now offered to Jesus, the Divine Multiplier. What will He multiply this to? I don't know. I do know He understands how much we need. He knows how much the building costs. We should never underestimate what God can do with a willing gift.
5. I believe over the next 16 months God will do miracles in our midst. There will be miracles in some of your personal lives. I believe we will see God provide resources from places we never dreamed. BUT, one's thing is for certain, He will multiply what we give.

##### **B. Never underestimate God's power to fulfill His agenda.**

1. Just because it sounds too good to be true and beyond anything you've ever experienced, doesn't mean God will not accomplish it. What He tends to wait for is someone to simply believe what He's said. Remember, Jesus already knew what He was going to do. (He was waiting for the boy)
2. When it comes to this community, Jesus already knows what He's going to do. He's just been waiting for us to give Him our sack lunches so He can transform a multitude!
3. I believe God has been waiting for years for a church to truly trust Him so that His agenda can be realized. I don't think His agenda for this community has ever changed ever since this town was founded. The multitudes have always

been weary and hungry. Jesus has always been ready and willing to feed and heal them.

4. He's waiting for His people to stop looking at the size of the need and see the size of their God!.
5. This is why we participate in things like "Seek God for the City" – Books. Because God has something more for this city. We believe in God's power to fulfill His agenda for this area.
6. He's just been waiting for a group of people to just give Him what they have so He can do miracles in our midst. His agenda will be fulfilled if we just cooperate with it.

I want you all to know how proud I am of all of you. I know this process has been stretching. I'm so pleased that we are on this journey together and that we are trusting God together. There is no other place I'd rather be and no other group of people I'd rather be with. God's process for the miraculous is now set. May we walk ahead with confidence in the months ahead experiencing and testifying to the mighty works of God.