

The year is 1996, It's Sunday morning, and my life is about to change forever. I'm sitting on a long wooden pew about 13 rows back. I'm wearing a 3-piece purple suit, with these church shoes that are a little tight. My mother's sitting to my right, we're in the overflow room, it's packed with over 500 people and we're watching this mega screen showing a man sweating profusely and passionately preaching God's word. That day I surrendered my life to Jesus, accepted him as my savior, and by his grace I've been living for him ever since. But something else happened that day. Deep down I had a growing desire to do for others what that preacher did for me, to lead people into a growing faith in Jesus Christ. I wanted every person to experience the incredible life change that happens when you meet Jesus.

Fast forward to about 8 years ago. my wife, Deana and I, along with our soon-to-be 1 year old daughter, London moved from Chicagoland to Dallas just to attend Dallas Theological Seminary. I had a growing desire to know God more through his word. Shortly after we get here, we find this church, we hear Gary Brandenburg preach and it seals the deal for me. The following year we get accepted to Dallas Seminary, I would eventually join the staff at this church, and under Gary's mentorship I learn more about preaching. And life is fantastic because I get to do what God has called me to do.

And then the pandemic happens. Our 4-person family was going stir crazy, locked down in our 850 sq ft apartment.

My wife, who recently severed from her Director of Food service role at Sky Ranch Camps is experimenting cooking plant meals at home for our family. A lady hears about it and asks her if she can cook meals for her and her husband. Deana say's that's fine. Well 10 meals per week grow into an entire business overnight. All of a sudden, we're working 12–18-hour days as entrepreneurs serving meals to people's homes. And school is beginning to suffer. But that's not all that's happening.

Fellowship is also experiencing a transition. It's losing members every week and it's was a hard time for me.

And suddenly, out of nowhere my congenital thyroid disease that I'd taken medicine for since birth decided to flare out of control. I had brain fog, mood swings and school continued to suffer.

Well things haven't really changed other than we've been busier than ever. The business is over 1000 meals per week, our 4-person family will soon be 5. And every time I'm asked the question, are you done with seminary yet? I ask myself will I ever get done so that I can preach his word the way I know he wants me to?

Have you ever been here before? Where God has this incredible task in front of you and you feel you may not have enough in the tank to get it done.

What do you do when as you're following Jesus, you sense he's asking you to do something you cannot do? You don't have enough money to meet the budget, the time to meet the obligations, you don't know even have enough knowledge to it done. You're clearly in over your head. Yet you have an overwhelming sense that God is at your command center, leading all of it. What do you do when it seems that God has stacked the deck against himself with what he's asked you to do?

This is precisely the predicament 12 men, who having been walking with Jesus are about to experience. They've been on this trip of discipleship, where Jesus is training them to imitate him as they step into the rule and reign of God that has come to earth. God's kingdom is here and will soon be carried out through them.

Today, we're going to take a look at the situation these men are in, and then we're going to learn three important lessons from their experience with Jesus about not having enough to do what God has clearly called you to do.

Turn with me to Mark 6:30.

The disciples have just completed a successful missionary journey on which Jesus sent them. He told them to take nothing, no food, no bag, no money. He charged them to proclaim that people repent, that their minds and purpose for living would be changed and they would walk with God and turn away from their sin towards God. He gave them authority over demons and healing the sick. And these 12 men are about to report on what they had done.

Mark 6:30 reads, **30** The apostles returned to Jesus and told him all that they had done and taught. **31** And he said to them, "Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while." For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. **32** And they went away in the boat to a desolate place by themselves. **33** Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they ran there on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. **34** When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. And he began to teach them many things. **35** And when it grew late, his disciples came to him and said, "This is a desolate place, and the hour is now late. **36** Send them away to go into the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat." **37** "But he answered them, "You give them something to eat."

And it's here where we learn our first lesson, and it is that...

God sometimes gives us a task that is seemingly impossible.

Mark 6:37 reads, "But he answered them, "You give them something to eat." And they said to him, "Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give it to them to eat?"

Here Jesus has invited his 12 followers to a desolate, isolated, wilderness, **desert**, to rest from their work.

And if we know anything about God, we know that the desert is an important place in his training program. It's where he provides for and prepares his people to step into and live out his kingdom on earth.

At the very beginning of his book, Mark announces the prophecy, the foretelling from Isaiah in verse 2 of chapter 1, where he writes "Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way, the voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.'" The desert is where the kingdom of God has begun.

The deserts also a place of preparation. It's a similar place where God fed the Egypt generation and gave them his law, preparing his people to enter the promised land. It's a similar place where Jesus successfully endures forty days of testing by Satan (Matt 4:1-11), before he begins his ministry.

And now it's a place these 12 followers of Jesus have been given the incredible task of feeding people from all the towns and cities. "You give them something to eat."

And this all starts because Jesus sees a great crowd and has compassion on them. People who "were **like sheep without a shepherd.**" A phrase that projects a powerful picture of untended sheep who lacked a shepherd to care for them. A phrase that similar to what Moses prayed toward the end of his life in Numbers 27:17 where he said, "who shall go out before them and come in before them, who shall lead them out and bring them in, that the congregation of the Lord may not be as sheep that have no shepherd."

Some of the final words of a man who has led God's people to the wilderness and is about to pass the baton to the next shepherd, Joshua, the Hebrew name for Jesus. And now Mark makes a proclamation that Jesus is the true shepherd of God's sheep, a sheep who followed him into the wilderness and are once more about to be fed.

[And] If your anyone like the disciples you're not particularly on board with God's program. V.37b "Shall we go and buy **two hundred denarii** worth of bread and give it to them to eat?" Their rhetorical response has a **tone of disbelief and disrespect** that Jesus would even make such a request. They thought it was a foolish absurd, unreasonable command. I mean we're talking 8-12 months of earnings to pay the grocery bill for all these folks. And yet Jesus expects them to feed these people.

I've already told you about the challenges my family and I have faced to finish seminary and do what we believe God has called us to.

What is the seemingly impossible task that God has given you, as he prepares you to live out the kingdom of God in your neighborhood, at your job, within your relationships. You may not be in seminary and running a business, but you may have to...

- Provide chronic care for that family member that wasn't in your plans
- Be persistent in showing God's love to that unlovable boss at work.
- Tirelessly train up your child who insists on rebelling against you
- Continue loving through the difficult challenges within your family, your extended family, your in-laws
- Navigating the twists and turns of life, after having left the safety of your parents' home, and you're wanting to remain committed to live for God, although the world that encourages you to live for yourself.
- Fighting for your marriage that is currently on life support, that God would redeem you and your spouse's love for each other and Him.
- It's struggling to pay the bills as you minister to the needs of the people around you.
- You've been given a second chance at life, but it feels overwhelming living for God with all the new challenges you face.

Whatever it is, each of us will learn that...

God sometimes gives us a task that is seemingly impossible. So, what do you do when this happens? Well, we learn our next lesson very next verse. A lesson that says after we've been given this incredible task...

God expects us to make what we have available to him. He expects us to place what we have into his hands.

Verse 38 reads, "And he said to them, 'How many loaves do you have? Go and see.' And when they had found out, they said, 'Five, and two fish.'"

As the disciples struggle to believe his request, Jesus instructs them to assess what they have. Well they only have 5 loaves and 2 fish. I love how one theologian puts it he says, "Jesus asks how much food they have, no doubt in order to encourage them to be discouraged at their poverty in order that they will look away from it to him... (it's not even enough even for their own meal)."¹ Jesus wants them to see that they don't have enough.

It's not Jesus' only time does this. When he wants to make a clear point. In John 11 he learns that his beloved friend, Lazarus is very ill. And In verse 6 it says, "So, when he heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was."

You may be asking, Com' on Jesus. Now why do you have to do that? (in my hood we say, "Why you got to do dat?!") If you and I found out that someone we love was very ill, and we have the power to treat their illness, we wouldn't remain in the place where we

¹ Douglas Mangum, ed., [Lexham Context Commentary: New Testament](#), Lexham Context Commentary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2020), Mk 6:32–44.

are in for another two days. We would drop everything and do everything in our power to make them better.

But Jesus does not do that. I love the way Gary translates what Jesus is doing. He said, "Jesus wants to make sure that Lazarus is good and dead!" So, no one could deny the power of God who raised Lazarus from the dead.

He's doing the same thing here. He wants to make sure that the disciples have no doubt in their minds that they do not have enough. But they must make what they have available to him.

But why don't we do that? Why do we take matters into our own hands?

The reason we typically take matters into our hands is because Jesus' commands are not familiar to us. they simply not the way we've learned life works. 5 + 2 does not = feeding all the cities. It's because Jesus' commands are typically not consistent with human logic. This is why it perplexes and baffles them. This is why it baffles us.

The issue the disciples have is not a lack of intelligence. Mark is showing something more profound here. The disciples are afraid to trust Jesus. Theologian David Rhoads says it this way, "fear inhibits understanding, and misunderstanding generates fear. The disciples are vulnerable to both fear and a lack of understanding because the rule of God is both awesome and contrary to customary patterns of thinking. The disciples are thinking in human terms and have not grasped the mind-set of faith in the rule of God." God's kingdom requires a different type of thinking. You would think the disciples are better equipped for this seemingly illogical request having recently been sent out with nearly nothing, no food, no bag, no money and had success doing what Jesus told them to do. No, they are still struggling.

It's similar to what happens when you first learn to swim. I remember when our daughter London first learned to swim, about 4 years ago. She and I were inside the water. I'm holding her belly and she's swimming around the water. She knows that she's with daddy and she's safe she's kicking moving her arms and very familiar with the water... until I asked her to step onto the ledge and jump back into my arms.

Well her mind paralyzes her with fear, preventing her from jumping into daddy's arms. And all the while she knows daddy loves her

daddy was there when she almost fell off her bike,

daddy was there when I scrapped my knee,

daddy was there when she received her awards at the end of the school year,

She knows daddy's been there entire time, providing for her every need, protecting her and yet she cant trust daddy to catch her.

She sounds like us doesn't she? We know our heavenly father loves us more than anyone could, he has provided our needs but when it comes to giving him the little that we have, we hesitate to jump into his arms.

Mark is making a profound point here that as we follow Jesus sometimes, we will need to abandon human logic in order to jump into the Father's arms, and place what we have into his hands.

Ladies and gentlemen, brothers and sisters this is what it means to walk with Jesus. It means to give him whatever we have and trust him with it. What do you have? What do you have that you need to place into his hands in order for God's power to be demonstrated through your life? Because the final lesson we will learn today is that when we make what we have available to him...

God takes what we have and empowers us with more than we need! God's power works through us and provides more than we need to accomplish whatever he's place in front of us.

Verse 39 continues the story, Then he commanded them all to sit down in groups on the green grass. ⁴⁰ So they sat down in groups, by hundreds and by fifties. ⁴¹ And taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing and broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples to set before the people. And he divided the two fish among them all. ⁴² And they all ate and were satisfied. ⁴³ And they took up twelve baskets full of broken pieces and of the fish. ⁴⁴ And those who ate the loaves were five thousand men.

Jesus arranges the crowd into **groups of hundreds and fifties**, and he has them sit down at his metaphorical table, a foreshadowing of the future messianic feast with Jesus, when he will swallow up death and sin, and they shall be no more.

[And] BTW, this is only miracle that appears in all the gospels, yet this is the only gospel that mentions **green grass**. Again, Mark is painting a picture that previously showed shepherd less sheep at risk of wandering and losing their lives, and are now sitting orderly under the leadership of the true shepherd, Jesus (Ez. 34:26-29). And they are sitting in a desert on green grass (Ps 23:2). A wilderness place that is known for being barren of resources has become a place of refreshment and life through the power of God.

⁴² And they all ate and were satisfied.

When I read this, I think about thanksgiving dinner. A feast we've waited all year long to eat. I think about the taste of aunt Michelle's German chocolate cake; aunt Marilyn's 5-cheese macaroni and cheese; fresh baked dressing or stuffing; savory greens; mouth-watering cranberry sauce. Make sure you eat after church. But when I think of they all ate and were satisfied I can help but think how satisfying it was to be fed by Jesus. And

to think that Jesus fed what could have been near 15,000 people **through the hands of 12 men**. We own a meal prep delivery company. Making and delivering meals is small task. And yet through the power of God 12 men did it. **God takes what we have and empowers us with more than we need!**

And just in case we miss Mark's point he adds in verse 43 ⁴³ And they took up twelve baskets full of broken pieces and of the fish. Why 12 baskets full? He's communicating that the 12 baskets full represent God's 12 tribes of Israel, God's own people, meaning that God has and always will provide for his people.

And he has and always will provide for you and me.

God can...

- Empower you to provide chronic care for your family member in a way that inspires others to faith in Jesus.
- Use your persistent love for your unlovable boss and your challenging family, to meet a void in their life that draws them to the love of God.
- Empower your witness for him in secular circles with colleagues and coworkers to spark a conversation at lunch about faith.
- Can redeem your marriage for the world to see.
- Provide more than what you need to meet your budgets
- Use you to reach the world.

God takes what we have and empowers us with more than we need!

As devastating as our business and seminary story sounded, it hasn't ended yet. God has continued to provide through us.

- I've been able to establish meaning relationships with people who have been touched by the system as a result of where we work.
- I've been able to help other students at Dallas Seminary to develop in their preaching, as a teaching assistant.
- I've developed a better understand of what it means to love my family when times get difficult.
- God continues to provide for our family through our company which now serves over a 1000 meals per week.
- We get to impact the lives of employees, customers, vendors, corporate partnerships, and business relationships to the glory of God.
- I get to preach here today.

God takes what we have and empowers us with more than we need

Let's recap! Today, we've learned from these disciple's time with Jesus that

God sometimes gives us a task that is seemingly impossible.

[When he does this], God expects us to make what we have available to him,

because [then] God takes what we have and empowers us with more than we need!

So church, let's Trust in God to provide more than we need to accomplish the task he's placed in front of us!

Let's pray.

FOLLOW

JESUS THROUGH THE BOOK OF MARK

PART 1: FOLLOW THE PERSON OF JESUS



30 The apostles returned to Jesus and told him all that they had done and taught. 31 And he said to them, "Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while." For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. 32 And they went away in the boat to a desolate place by themselves. 33 Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they ran there on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. 34 When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. And he began to teach them many things. 35 And when it grew late, his disciples came to him and said, "This is a desolate place, and the hour is now late. 36 Send them away to go into the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat." 37 "But he answered them, "You give them something to eat."

MARK 6:30-37

God sometimes gives us a task that is seemingly impossible.

37 “But he answered them, “You give them something to eat.” And they said to him, “Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give it to them to eat?”

MARK 6:37

2“Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way,
the voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make
his paths
straight.”

MARK 1:2

17 where he said, “who shall go out before them and come in before them,
who shall lead them out and bring them in, that the congregation of the Lord
may not be
as sheep that have no shepherd.”

NUMBERS 27:17

God expects us to make what we have available to him

38 And he said to them, “How many loaves do you have? Go and see.” And when they had found out, they said, “Five, and two fish.”

MARK 6:38

6“So, when he heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.”

JOHN 11:6

“Fear inhibits understanding, and misunderstanding generates fear. The disciples are vulnerable to both fear and a lack of understanding because the rule of God is both awesome and contrary to customary patterns of thinking. The disciples are thinking in human terms and have not grasped the mind-set of faith in the rule of God.”

DAVID RHOADES

God takes what we have and empowers us with more than we need!

39 Then he commanded them all to sit down in groups on the green grass.
40 So they sat down in groups, by hundreds and by fifties. 41 And taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing and broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples to set before the people. And he divided the two fish among them all. 42 And they all ate and were satisfied.
43 And they took up twelve baskets full of broken pieces and of the fish. 44 And those who ate the loaves were five thousand men.

MARK 6:39-44

42 And they all ate and were satisfied.

MARK 6:42

1. God sometimes gives us a task that is seemingly impossible.

1. God sometimes gives us a task that is seemingly impossible.
2. God expects us to make what we have available to him,

1. God sometimes gives us a task that is seemingly impossible.
2. God expects us to make what we have available to him,
3. God takes what we have and empowers us with more than we need!

**TRUST IN GOD TO PROVIDE MORE THAN WE NEED TO
ACCOMPLISH THE TASK HE'S PLACED IN FRONT OF US!**