

He Gave

advent 2021 at doxa

HE GAVE: He Gave Us Provision

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John 6:1-14

Today we'll be reading John 6:1-14. After this, Jesus went away to the other side of the sea of Galilee, which is the sea of Tiberius. And a large crowd was following him because they saw the signs that he was doing on the sick. Jesus went up the mountain and he sat down with his disciples. Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews was at hand. Lifting up his eyes then, and seeing the large crowd was coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, where are we to buy bread so that the people may eat. He said this to test him for the people knew what he would do. Philip answered him, 200 denarii worth of bread would not be enough for each of them to get a little. One of the disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother said to him, there's a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are they for so many? Jesus said, have the people sit down. Now there was much grass in the place, so the men sat down about 5,000 in number. Jesus then took the loaves.

And when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated, so also fish as much as they wanted. And when they had eaten their fill, he told his disciples gather up the leftover fragments that nothing may be lost. So when they gathered them up and filled 12 baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves left by those who had eaten, when the people saw the sign that he had done, they said, this is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world. This is the word of the Lord. You may be seated.

Good afternoon/evening. Oh man, you're gonna have to bring more energy than that. You're gonna have to. Last week I shared, well, by the way, my name is Eddie. I'm the lead teaching pastor here at Doxa. If you're new, glad you could be here. I'm honored. Last week I shared that I was coaching my kids' basketball before, and so I lost my voice and I was this close to being

healed. Until yesterday where we played our next game and I blew it back out. Okay. And we almost won and we lost, but that's why I screamed a little bit more. So I'm gonna need your energy to come with me to help me get through this message this morning. Sound good? All right. I'm relying on you. This is a team. We're a team. Okay. This is Doxa-Team Doxa.

So let me pray for us and we will get into John chapter six. Lord Jesus, I pray for your provision for this message, that this would be nourishment for us, Lord God; that you would help my voice get through this Lord; that this message would be timely for the people that are here, Lord God; that this would be helpful, profitable, pleasing, and ultimately, Lord God, that in a season where so many people can provide for themselves, Lord Jesus, we ask that you demonstrate what we don't know, which is that there are things that in our hearts that we can't provide for ourselves. And for those out there Lord, that do have things that they are lacking, Lord God, I pray that you show up; that you be the God of provision and show that you do love them and you can meet those needs. We love you. We praise you and let this message glorify you Jesus, in his name. Amen.

All right. Well, if you're new, we are in week four of our series He Gave and we're getting ready for Christmas. Christmas is next Thursday for us. We're doing our Christmas service gatherings on the 23rd. And so this is it. This is our last Sunday of 2021 in this building. So that's great. We made it to the end of the year. Congratulations. 2021 behind you, right?! Praise God for that if nothing else. Right? That is good news. Right? The only part that sucks about 2022 is that you have to say the word 2020 in it, right? You have to say 2020-two, like part two, right? Like Home Alone, two. Let's hope it doesn't end up that way. Okay. So did I just depress everybody like, oh my gosh, I'm sorry.

So we're talking about provision. And when I think of provision, I think of some of the wealthiest regions in the United States. I think of people that have everything. Like, for instance, when I lived in the Bay Area in San Francisco, I always liked to get out of the city because it's a little stuffy. So we would often go up to the North Bay. And if you know anything about the Bay Area and the North Bay, that's where all the money is. It's where lots of people that have significant amounts of wealth live.

And there's a beautiful place where we could walk around by the water and my wife's parents, they sailed. And so we'd always go walk around by the boats and we'd go all over the moorage. And if you walk around that moorage, you see lots of different, nice boats, right? I mean, nice boats, like big, like battleship size boats for people that just take out for a random weekend, right? Maybe some of you have one of those-congratulations. But one of the things I had to deal with when walking around there is my daughter saying, daddy, when are we gonna get one of these? And I'd have to say, daddy's a pastor. We will never have one of these. That conversation repeated that over and over again.

And here in Seattle and Seattle area, you know, we have a unique burden too. I mean, there's, there's also lots of wealth here. Obviously, there's lots of major companies. Some of you work at those places, right. And Seattle, and the Bay Area are really alike. In fact, they are the two

least-churched metro regions in the United States. So that's also in common. What's interesting about that is, I had some church planter friends in the Bay Area and I asked him one time about the churches in the North Bay, like what's going on up there. And he says, oh, actually the North Bay is the least-churched region in the least-churched region of the country. And I asked him like, why, like, why is it like that? I mean, it's so beautiful. It would make sense that there'd be a lot of people wanting to plant churches there. When he said, oh, well, when you have everything, why do you feel like God would be necessary? If you could provide everything for yourselves-why do you need God. If you've got a boat, if you've got the accounts, if you've got the job, if you've got maybe the spouse you love or the lifestyle you're living, it's hard for those people to grasp that.

It's interesting because we also here in the same area, very much, very similar have that same unique burden, right? We are very much like the Bay Area here in the Seattle and the Puget sound. In fact, you have easy access to ports and the ability to ship logs. I mean, actually Seattle made its living and grew as a city shipping logs down to the Bay Area. It's the ethos of the city-providing logs to regions. And it's no stranger that a few of our largest companies actually make their living providing gifts as well. I mean, think about Amazon. Amazon's job is providing, right? Costco. It's the ethos of the region-providing. There is such tremendous affluence particular in this area.

So I did a little research and I wanted to figure out like, is that actually true? And I looked up the 570 cities that have the largest Christmas budgets per family. And as you might guess, Bellevue, Washington's on the list. It's not at the top, but it's close. It's number six-the sixth largest Christmas budget per family in the entire United States. So, there is some wealth. So as we're putting together our sort of Christmas lists, we sort of have that ability to do that. Now I know that's not true for everybody. I totally understand, and if that's your story...I grew up in a single-parent home on Section 8 housing. I grew up poor. I understand maybe your play, but to a large degree, a community like this has almost everything it needs. And that's fascinating. But do you know that there are things in your life, even in a region like this, there are things in your life that you actually don't have the answers for.

Do you know that you have needs that cannot be met with external circumstances? Do you know that? It turns out there are things that we cannot provide for ourselves, even in a region like this. Despite what our teachers or our parents try to tell us about when we're children, that the depth of our need internally cannot be fulfilled by hard work, circumstance, family, marriage, job, and money. It's true. It's possible. And in this story, we get to learn about God providing for a people in ways they don't even see. And I think that's what we need as a region. We need God to provide for us in ways we don't see, because oftentimes places like this, we don't see our need at least externally, right? We all have clothes on our backs. We all have food on our table.

In this story, Jesus feeds 5,000 people, at least 5,000 men plus women and children. And he does it with some bread and fish, right? That's how he does it. Now just for a little background, this story is the only gospel miracle told in its in totality, in all four gospels. So that

tells us (the Bible is intelligently designed, it doesn't make mistakes) if it's repeating this story over and over and over and over again, that there is significance for us in this story. But the story isn't just about the miracle itself. It's not just about God taking bread and fish and turning it into a lot. If you think that's the only point of this story, I hope we can enlighten you this morning. There's actually a little bit more to it. It's not just about this miracle. Actually, the story more importantly is about Jesus' radical provision towards his people, in general. I hope to prove that to you.

So in this, we're gonna learn four things. We're gonna learn four things about God's provision for his people. More specifically, we're gonna learn that God is providing for you in ways you may not even see or may not even know about, because we're often unaware of it. One theologian says that God is doing ten thousand things in any believer's life and we're aware of three or four of them. And that's not even including all people through his general revelation and his general provision for us through oxygen and through grass and through weather. All of it. So what do we know about God's provision in this story? How are we gonna learn these four things?

Well, the first thing we know about God's provision after reading the story is it is instinctual. Jesus' provision for us is instinctual. Check it out. Verse one of chapter six, after this, Jesus went away to the other side of the sea of Galilee which is the sea of Tiberius. And a large crowd was following him because they saw signs that he was doing on the sick. Jesus went up on the mountain and there he sat down with his disciples. Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews was at hand. Lifting up his eyes then and seeing a large crowd was coming towards him, Jesus says to Philip, where are we to buy bread so that these people might eat. Now, my first thing comes to mind, and it might come to your mind, is this, why does Jesus find himself immediately responsible to feed all these people? If he looks out on a crowd and sees that many people, I don't think, well, how do we get them food?

That is quite a significant burden for him to have. This is a lot of people. You know, my wife, I've gotten to know her, obviously being married to her but before that, I got to know her when she wasn't married, and she didn't have children. And some of you are gonna relate to the story. And you know what happens when you put your kids in the back of a car, when you're going to a store. It's chaos, it's chaos. They eventually hit an age where it's just nonstop fights. Like they fight all the time. Isn't that right, Manny? Oh, yes. Yeah. They fight. They fight and they always fight over two things in the backseat when me and my wife are in the car. They say two things: they hit me and I'm hungry. These are the two biggest things. Is there another one? I'm sure there's more, but these are the two biggest things.

And here's what happens. Oftentimes there'll be some commotion going on the backseat and we're driving down the road and one of them will yell, I'm hungry. And I'm talking to my wife so of course, as the dad driving, I'm like, cartoonishly upset about what's happening, right? And so my wife's in the middle of sentence and she just keeps talking. Doesn't hear the kids, at least I thought. And then as they're kind of yelling for food, she sort of reaches between her legs down to the ground and then magically reveals a bag of treats, like snacks. And she's still talking to

me. She hasn't stopped. She's still locking eyes. She opens the bag, hands it back, reaches down, grabs another bag, open, hands it back. Repeat two more times without breaking sentence, without breaking eye contact. And she's just talking, and I had to stop her. And I'm like hold on a second. Where did you get that food? And she said, oh, I just thought, you know, the kids could be hungry so I might as well, you know, prepare some snacks for them, you know. It's so thoughtful. I'm like, well, we're just going to target. I mean, it's 15 minutes round trip. I mean, I don't think we need to pack sack lunches for children for that short amount of time. But she did anyway. She instinctually provides for them.

It's fascinating. Like a couple weeks ago we got to do some sort of parent commissioning and we gotta see some families up here. And if you've ever done this with people that have new children...when I was in San Francisco, we had young people getting married and having kids. And this was like this for me, when you're 24 or 25 years old or whatever age you are, and you don't have any children and you're not married, your life is about you really. I mean, let's be honest. Maybe you're really servant hearted, praise God. But for the most part, you've got a lot of time on your hands, right? You got a lot of time on your hands. So you get to see these people go from being incredibly center focused on themselves to then all of a sudden being so absorbed with this sort of eight-pound ball of flesh.

And they're like, okay, what do we do this thing? How do we make sure its needs are met in every way. You pick out the bedding, you buy the crib, all of this stuff, right? Do I put shoes on them-they can't use shoes. Do they not need shoes? Do I put a hat on them? Is that too warm? Is that too cold? You're just so overwhelmed by this kid. Providing-it's an instinct. It's instinct for a mother and a father to do so.

You know, just a few years ago, there was a boy hit by a car in London and he was trapped under the weight of the car. The car was 2,800 pounds, not a huge car, but a car nonetheless, right? Two moms ages, 29 and 47 were right there walking with their children and saw it. And they grabbed that car, and they didn't pick the car up over their head like Superman, but they were able to get that car up enough so that that little boy can get out. And he got out unharmed. Isn't that crazy? You always hear about this, like mother strength. Now they're not superheroes. And you may think maybe that's sort of like psychobabble or something crazy. But what we do know is that scientists have said that the gross motor skills of a mother can dramatically increase in the case of a trapped child. It's instinctual.

What we know and what the crowds and Jesus disciples are finding out, is that Jesus (we're gonna talk about soon) is the king of Israel. And he and the father are one. And so what happens is Jesus looks across this horizon as the king of Israel, and he sees his people coming down and Jesus instinctively thinks I've gotta provide for them, they need food, because he has the heart of the father. He's instinctually providing. So God's provision for us is instinctual. Second thing. It's over our heads. It's over our heads. We don't always see God's provision. We don't always understand God's provision.

And we often think God's provision cannot happen in our lives. So let me ask you a question. Have you ever had a need and want to pray for it, but deep down you feel like God's not gonna answer it. Have you ever felt that? I know I have. Have you ever had a need and want to pray for it, but deep down you feel like God wouldn't answer? Or you ever see a need so large in your life that it was so big that prayer doesn't even cross your mind to pray, because you just consider it the lost cause. Have you ever been there? I have. It's tough. But God wants to provide, even in those scenarios. Look at verse five, lifting up his eyes then and seeing a large crowd was coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, where are we to buy bread so that these people may eat.

Verse six, he said this to test him for he himself knew what he would do. Now, we later find in other gospels that there are 5,000 men, but there's also women and children included. Matthew's gospel actually says that women and children are not included in the count. So we're talking 10,000 plus people, 15,000, perhaps, maybe even 20,000 people, which just seems crazy. This is a soccer/basketball arena, soccer stadium, or basketball arena, full of people coming towards Jesus. And that's overwhelming, right? I mean, think about that's a lot of people just to see outside. And so what does Jesus do in this moment? He turns to his buddy, Philip. Philip. Not Peter, not James, not John, not even one of the top tier disciples. Let's be honest, Philip, you know, he's somewhere in the middle of the pack. And he turns to our buddy Philip and Phillip's like, uh, okay, so, the guy I'm pretty sure the Messiah is, is asking me how to feed 15 plus thousand people. I don't know the answer to that question, right? I'm gonna punt this one. Fair enough. Phillip must have felt so inadequate in this moment. Like what was he supposed to do? What is he supposed to do with this? Why does Jesus ask him such a question? Why do you think? Jesus is asking this question so Philip realizes the insurmountable feat of feeding all these people. Jesus' question brings us and Philip here, to the end of ourselves. Jesus knew what he was gonna do, but he wanted Phillip to realize the gravity of his inadequacy. God will often ask us questions in our lives to show us how little we actually have. He likes to bring us to the end of ourself so we know where he begins.

God will often put us in situations where our inadequacy is clear so that his sufficiency will be obvious in our lives. But like the disciples, sometimes we miss the clues, right? We miss the clues. Jesus is giving us clues and we miss it. And in the disciples response here, we're gonna see a sort of shadow of ourselves. Look at verse seven. Philip answers, well, 200 denarii worth of bread would not be enough for each of them to even get a little. One of his disciples, Andrew, again, mid-tier disciple, he pops in. He says, (Simon Peter's brother) he said to him, there is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they for so many. So what did Phillip and Andrew do? They go to their calculator, they pull out their calculator and they start typing in the numbers here and they go, okay, carry the one, okay, how many people? Five fish. Oh man. Nope. Two fish. Five loves. Okay. I don't think this is enough, Jesus. I've done the calculations and my math may be off, but I think we need like several more zeros on the end of this number if we're gonna be able to feed these people. We often look to our resources and see that the need outweighs our ability.

In our lives, we're going to have to look at the resources we have. And oftentimes we find that our need, especially internal, outweighs our ability to meet that need. Let me just say it is way easier to give God your strengths than it is to give him your weaknesses. Here's what I mean. Imagine Philip and Andrew here had 90% of the bread. Then a prayer makes a lot of sense, right? Lord Jesus, we have 90% of the bread for all of these people-10,000, 15,000 people, Lord God, we're gonna ask you by the power of the Holy Spirit, that there is a baker nearby who would somehow place this bread in the mouth of Ravens, who would then come and reign this bread down, Lord God, because we only need just a few more loaves. It's way easier to do that, isn't it.

But if you have no bread, why pray? God's not gonna...I mean, come on. God might give us a little bread, but is he gonna give us all of the bread? He couldn't do that. That's difficult. We often underestimate the wealth we have in Jesus. But even in this moment, I'll just be honest with you I sense so much resistance on this. I sense so much fear. Jesus says, if you have the faith of a mustard seed, the faith of a mustard seed, how little is our faith if it's not even that. And I'm in that boat too. It is so hard to trust this God with everything. And these 12 guys, Philip and Andrew included walk with him for three years and they still don't trust him. This is so difficult. We underestimate the wealth we have in Jesus. The disciples did this and we do this. But Jesus doesn't operate this way. He has access. Jesus is like this sort of spiritual bank account. Like you can swipe and swipe and swipe. And his provision comes to you, comes to you, comes to you, if you have the faith of a mustard seed.

We often shrink the size of God with our limiting thoughts. There's a great quote by Thomas Carlisle. He says, men are like the God they serve. So what kind of God do you serve? Because if your God is limited, then you're gonna pray limited prayers. If your God is radically generous, then you're gonna pray radical prayers. But you know what, if I'm honest with you, I find myself praying limited prayers all the time. I asked those questions to you earlier about could God provide, you know, do you even pray if the need is so big. And the answer so oftentimes in my life is no. Because I've gotta use my calculator to figure out the answer. And I've already figured out and ascertained that it can't be done. So why pray? Because I serve a generous God who wants to meet your need. That's why. And he's waiting to meet your need. He loves you.

Let's keep going. There's more here, guys. There's so much more. God's provision in our lives is instinctual. It's instinctual. It is over our heads and it is often more than enough. More than enough. Look at verse 10. Jesus said, have the people sit down. Now, there was much grass in the place, obviously. So they sat down about 5,000 in number. Then Jesus 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. Now, I think it's funny how Jesus hears Philip and Andrew's answer, and then doesn't respond to it. He just says, have the people sit down. He hears it-they're like, oh Jesus, we're not gonna be able to feed the people. And he goes, there are so many things that are wrong about what you just said, that I don't have time to address it. Just have the people sit down, right? And then he ends this text here, verse 11, with all that he distributed to them, those who were seated, and also the fish, the bread and the fish, as much as they wanted.

Now, I'm not God. I don't claim to be God, obviously. But if I were, I feel like just enough bread and fish, would've been great. It still would've been a miracle. It still, would've got the point across that Jesus multiplied all this fish and bread, but Jesus isn't like us. He gives them how much? As much as they wanted. So that leads me to ask how much of God do you want in your life? You can have as much as you want. You can have as much Lord in your life, as you want. Every need, every prayer, every ask can be asked to God. How much can you have? As much God as you want. Those who go to God for their needs to be met, will not find him a stingy God. They get as much as they want.

Now that doesn't mean that, okay, our greed and overbearing appetites will be met. Okay? If you're praying for multiple Teslas, probably, I don't know, might not come from heaven for you, okay? That's not what I'm getting at. But if you have your needs, they'll be met by God. Now again, a hard message to swallow if you can provide almost everything for yourself. Tough. Something to consider.

Over the last 50 years our modern philosophers, yes, modern philosophers they're the best...they've discovered a new finding about this passage that Jesus did not in fact, multiply the loaves as a miracle. But he has inspired a little boy to share his lunch. And since he inspired this-the little boy, the little boy then inspires the crowd. And the crowd then decides oh, I have a lunch as well. And then they all begin to share their lunches, their bread, and their fish. And all of a sudden everyone has their needs met. And so the real miracle was not actually Jesus. It was in our heart. And Jesus inspired us to be great.

This is a real breakdown of this text so I have three things to say about this if you're in that camp. First, that is such a human explanation of what happened. When you read the Bible...when you read the Bible and the Christians believe, if you're new, that the Bible is the divinely inspired word of God. And if a human were to write it, certainly a human would be the hero. Because that makes a lot of sense, right? But when God writes a book, God knows the truth and understands that human beings are finite, and so Jesus comes out as the hero. But instead Jesus becomes this really awesome, sort of coach. It's like a coach that will, you know, one hour on zoom a week and he'll coach you up to be the best version of yourself.

That's what Jesus is in this explanation. Very human explanation. Second thing, this explanation does violence to the text. Again, I said this miracle is the most explained miracle in all four gospels, most explained in all the Bible. And there is nothing in any of those gospels that people were inspired to then provide for themselves. Didn't happen. Third, this explanation is the exact opposite of what is trying to be shown. We do not have the resources we need. Jesus meets the deficiencies that we have, he meets our need. We don't have it. He does. We're not enough. He's enough. And not only are we enough; he gives us more than enough. Self-sufficient, human psycho-babble, it gets us to point inward. Jesus is trying to get us to look outward. He's trying to get us to look outward.

Look at verse 12, and when they had eaten their fill, he told his disciples gather up the leftover fragments that nothing may be lost. So they gathered them up and filled 12 baskets with

fragments from the five barley loaves left by those who had eaten. So not only did everyone get to eat everything they wanted, as much as they wanted. There were 12 baskets left over. I mean, God is just, he is raining it down on him. He gives you way more than you want. You know, when you go to God, the Psalmist says, I go to God with my cup. And when I meet the Spirit, when I meet God, my cup runneth over. My cup over-floweth. When you go to God and you sit with him spiritually, you rest in him, you pray with him, you meditate, you read scripture, you go into community with people and you get prayer, you confess your sins, you pray for people and God fills your cup, okay?

And your cup isn't just filled to the brim, it runneth over. And it's once that cup is filled, you actually get to serve and love the people around you in your life, with what's overflowed out of your cup. And so if you go to the Lord often, you're gonna find yourself with an abundance of spiritual wealth. You're gonna find yourself not being so upset at the coworker next to you. You're gonna find yourself not being so moved by the children. You're gonna find yourself that when bills are tight or things aren't coming through, or you feel like it's time to change jobs or move across the country, that you're gonna have a little bit of an inner ballast. That all of a sudden God's providing you with a little bit of energy, emotional energy, to handle things in your life, because you've been with him. You've sat with him. You felt him.

The needs surpass the resources without him, but with him, the resources surpass the need. In the presence of Jesus, money is not the answer. Filling your cup is. In the presence of Jesus human innovation is not the answer. Pulling your calculator out is not the answer. Being with Jesus is. And in the presence of Jesus, teamwork and collaboration, just like Philip, Andrew, is not the answer. Jesus presented a problem only he can solve. And he's trying to do that for us.

Now, listen, I know this can be hard to believe. One of the hardest things for me when I became a Christian in college was trying to understand that God actually loved me. This is a really hard thing. Maybe for some of you, you get it. Or maybe you feel like he loves you as much as maybe like, your father does, which is kind of a lot, but you have conflict with him. He actually loves you way more than that. Like way more than that. When I was in college, I was so limited by what my earthly father was like in my life that I never could understand that God actually loves me far more than any earthly father has ever loved their son. And that's a lot. And then I came across Isaiah 30 verse 18, and I want to put it on the screen. It says this, therefore the Lord waits to be gracious to you. And therefore he exalts himself to show mercy to you.

The God of the universe waits to give you mercy. He exalts himself to show mercy to you. He loves you that much, that he wants to be gracious to you. He's waiting. And Sean, Sarah, Rebecca, John, I'm waiting. I'm waiting to show you mercy. And I know you feel like you've got a lot going for you and guess what? I did provide all that for you as well, but there's more for you here and I want to give it to you. And that's what he's waiting for. So I want to encourage you to respond, respond to God's generosity, because actually God's over-filling our cup can actually motivate us to help fill other people's cups. Because the word Christian, you know, actually began as a pejorative term. it means little Christs. But we actually get to be the hands and feet of Jesus that because God has filled us and has radically provided for us in our lives with all of

the things we have as little or as much as we think it may be, we actually can shower other people with overwhelming service and generosity.

Do you know that you have an unending trough of wealth in Jesus? Do you get that? I hope you believe that. All that treasure that you have, that God has given you as little or as much as you think it is, can be multiplied to serve a church, to serve a cause, to give to those less in need. And that thousand-dollar gift, to that \$500 gift to that \$50 gift we're thinking of getting for Christmas, that can be given to Jesus to watch him create kingdom impact. Kingdom impact. Now God turns five loaves and feeds 5,000 people, right? What is that? A thousand times growth. Right, you math people? Maybe you're getting 18% because you're crushing it with your hedge fund. I don't know. How does a thousand, how does a thousand X sound? That's what God does. Kingdom impact.

I want ridiculous lives of generosity for you. Because when we're ridiculously generous, we are acknowledging the fact that we actually don't need any of the things we think we have, because we have Jesus. He provides all of it. Yeah, he's always shown up. Always shown up. There's not a single time he didn't show up. You know, planting a church is a really scary thing. I did that. Me and my wife did that with some friends and it's very hard to do in really expensive cities. And the money goes really quick, really short runway in large cities, as you well know, paying right here. It's just hard. But every single time we needed money, it showed up. Like I was a guy, if you would've asked me before that, I would've said yeah, of course God can give you money. Of course, of course like it says it right here in the Bible, yada, yada, yada, of course.

But when you actually get a check anonymously from somebody you're like, well, I read about these stories in books, but what?! Like to the dime of the amount of money we needed. And then when our little church would provide checks to other companies and nonprofits and people, they would get the money they needed to the dime. We gave a PTA at a school, the exact dollar amount they needed to meet their budget. We had no clue. We just gave a check and it wasn't that much. And it was like, oh you just are an answer to a prayer. It's because God's back there orchestrating. I want you to blow people away with the kingdom of God, living inside of you.

And you can do that if you understand that God is for you, he's providing for you. Last thing, and we're gonna end here. God's provision is instinctual. It's over our heads, right? We often think it can't happen. And it's also bigger than we think. Jesus...just when you thought Jesus' generosity was overwhelming, it's just getting started. It really is. Now we might see, we might be like beginning to see that God's provision is instinctual. We're starting to see it's over our heads and that it's more than enough, but his provision is also much larger than we think. And there was a clue for this back in verse four, check this out.

We're gonna read verse one through four again, after this, Jesus went away to the other side of the sea of Galilee and I'll skip through... And a large crowd was following him because they saw signs that he was doing on the sick.

Jesus went up to the mountain and there he sat down with his disciples. Verse four, now the Passover, the feast of the Jews was at hand. The most unremarkable statement in all of these verses, is a clue, because that's how God works. The writer, John, the apostle notes, (John the Apostle's the one who wrote the book of John) he notes that it's Passover.

Now Passover is a story of God's remarkable provision in the book of Exodus where God makes a way for his people to be free from oppression in Egypt and over Pharaoh. So God, what he does is he sacrifices an animal and anyone who would paint the blood over their doors would be passed over. And everyone who didn't have that blood over their door, essentially the firstborn would be sacrificed. And so God makes the way for Israelites to have themselves passed over and then God frees them from Egypt and then brings them out at the desert. And they're journey in the desert to a place of ultimate provision where there'll be land of milk and land with honey.

I mean, sounds great, right? They're headed out this way. And of course on their journey, something happens. What do you think that is? They start to complain because that's Israel and they complain in two ways. "They hit me" and "I'm hungry." That's how they complain. They were hungry. And do you remember how God provided food for those people in the desert when they were hungry. In Exodus chapter 16, what happened? God promises that he would rain down bread from heaven, called it manna Jesus, by providing bread on the Passover to Israel was telling the crowds, the disciples and us, the readers, something, that he, and the God of Israel, the God of Israel who provides bread in the wilderness, are one. That's his point.

His miracle of providing bread is a spiritual hyperlink back to the miracle of raining bread down from heaven. The same God that provided then is providing now. That's what's happening. Jesus here is saying, he's linking himself back to this epic story of provision. All along the way human beings are these great people raised up by God in Adam and Eve. They sin. And then all human beings have sin and fall short of the glory of God as a result. And all along this journey, God says he's gonna send his son Jesus to redeem, renew and restore the world, that anyone who would believe in him would not suffer death, but have eternal life. And along the way he decides he's going to provide bread for those people physically, but also spiritually. See Jesus was ultimate provision. We may have eaten bread in the wilderness as Israel. These people may have eaten bread on a grassy hill, but now we feast on the bread of life. And anyone who would believe in Jesus would get not just temporal nourishment, but eternal nourishment for their souls and their spirit.

You see this miracle is so much bigger than we even thought. Now what's the proper reaction to an act like this, by the way? Verse 14, when the people saw the sign he had done, they said, this is indeed the prophet who has come into the world. That's right. He is the descendant from Abraham, from the kingly line of David that would come into the world and provide this ultimate provision, which by the way, is the reason we're here celebrating Christmas, that ultimately the bread of life has come into the flesh as Jesus.

Now the response here as we close is not to try to pay God back. How do I pay God back for all that wonderful bread he's given me? Oh no, no, no, no, no. Can you pay your mom back for changing all your diapers? No, you can't pay your parent back. You can't pay God back. And by the way, he doesn't want it because he waits to be gracious to you and to show mercy to you. That's why he provides. And we get to provide as a result. Your nothing, plus God is everything we need. So we thank him and we praise him and we give as he gave, as we await the ultimate provision, when the world will ultimately be restored again, let's pray.

Well, father, it's tough, it's tough to see our needs sometimes. It really is. So I'm praying for our eyes to be opened this evening. Would you show us the ways we are needy? Maybe it's that thing we just keep doing and we can't stop doing. Maybe it's that relationship that's been broken. We haven't fixed Lord. Maybe it's actually a physical need that we literally have. Maybe it's a sickness. Lord God, would you show and clearly radically demonstrate our need to each other this evening, as we respond with worship to you. We love you and we give you all things. In Jesus' name. Amen.