

GODS'S SPECIALITY: IMPOSSIBILITIES  
JOHN 6:1-21

INTRODUCTION:

- A. In *Through the Looking Glass*, the White Queen asks Alice a question:  
*"How old are you?"*  
*"I'm seven and a half exactly."*  
*"You needn't say 'exactly,'" the Queen remarked: "I can believe it without that. Now I'll give you something to believe. I'm just one hundred and one, five months and a day."*  
*"I can't believe that," said Alice.*  
*"Can't you?" the Queen said, in a pitying tone. "Try again: draw a long breath, and shut your eyes.*  
*Alice laughed. "There's no use trying," she said: "one can't believe impossible things."*  
*"I daresay you haven't had much practice," said the Queen. "When I was your age, I always did it for half an hour a day. Why, sometimes I've believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast."* (Lewis Carroll, *Alice in Wonderland* (Philadelphia: John C. Winston, 1923, 198)
- B. Let's face it...some things really are impossible to us. Half the time we're a day late and a dollar short. We missed the plane, they hired somebody else for the position and we didn't get the girl. As hard as we try to keep our ducks in a row, it seems like some guy is throwing baseballs at them in a carnival arcade, and he's a really good shot. Circumstances, crises, relationships, sometimes even life itself seem impossible. Where do we turn?
- C. Well, how about God? Luke 18:27 Jesus replied, "What is impossible with men is possible with God."

I. **HOW TO HANDLE A FAITH SUCCESS**

**John 6:1**, *After these things Jesus went away to the other side of the Sea of Galilee.*

**QUESTION: After what things?**

The first apostolic ministry tour: **Luke 9:1-2**, *And He called the twelve together, and gave them power and authority over all the demons, and to heal diseases. <sup>2</sup> And He sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God, and to perform healing.*

A. **Have a Party**

1. Back in chapter 1, Jesus began to invite some men to become his disciples. [Cf. Luke 6:12-14 for the details]
  - **Mark 3:14-15**, *He appointed twelve-- designating them apostles--that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach <sup>15</sup> and to have authority to drive out demons.*
  - **Mark 1:17**, *"Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men."*
2. After more than a year of their just being with Him, He sends them out two-by-two on their first preaching tour: **Luke 9:1**, *When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, <sup>2</sup> and he sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick. <sup>6</sup> So they set out and went from village to village, preaching the gospel and healing people everywhere. The disciples were like teens with a new drivers license on the first night with dad's keys and the car. **In verse 10**, they have a reunion and debriefing session.  
**Mark 6:30**, *And the apostles gathered together with Jesus; and they reported to Him all that they had done and taught. (KJV)*  
 They were doing things that hadn't been seen in Israel for 400 years. There hadn't been an official miracle performed in Israel since the days of the*

prophets. Even the celebrated John the Baptist hadn't done any miracles. Beside all this, they were preaching in public forums. It was like a small town softball team lecturing PhD's at MIT or a PTA group addressing a joint session of congress. Every place they went, they announced the long-expected Kingdom of God and there in the crowds were the learned Pharisees and Sadducees who had spent their lives studying theology and teaching the people.

3. I suspect that the disciples were as thrilled as were the 72 when they checked back with Jesus in  
**Luke 10:17, 21,** <sup>17</sup> *And the seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name."* <sup>18</sup> *He replied, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. 19 I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. 20 However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."* <sup>21</sup> *At that very time He rejoiced greatly in the Holy Spirit, and said, "I praise Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou didst hide these things from the wise and intelligent and didst reveal them to babes. Yes, Father, for thus it was well-pleasing in Thy sight.*
4. When we experience a spiritual success, there is a powerful temptation to want to camp there. We want to dig in, throw up some perimeter defenses and just enjoy the view. We worked hard for God. We took some risks. We prayed and trusted and it paid off. God worked and the thing came off.
  - You did get a new job.
  - Your marriage was restored.
  - Your wayward son is back walking with God.
  - Your neighbor accepted Christ.**Hey, it's time to take a break and savor the triumph!**
5. Hey, parties are great.
  - Even Jesus hosted them!
  - God invented great annual parties for the Israelites to celebrate the victories they had with God
    - Passover
    - Tabernacles
    - Nehemiah threw a big party when the broken wall of Jerusalem was rebuilt.
  - But parties can't last too long, because after every spiritual triumph and after every spiritual celebration, there is another summit to be taken. Like the Israelites at Mt. Sinai, God announced,
    - **Deuteronomy 1:6-7,** *The LORD our God said to us at Horeb, "You have stayed long enough at this mountain. <sup>7</sup> Break camp and advance into the hill country of the Amorites...*
  - So, have a party but...

**B. Look for the Next Challenge**

**John 6:2,** *And a great multitude was following Him, because they were seeing the signs which He was performing on those who were sick.*

*[Jesus] kept after them constantly, giving them increasingly more attention as his ministry on earth came to a close. He would not let them rest in success or failure. No matter what they did, there was always more to do and to learn. He rejoiced in their success, but nothing less than world conquest was his goal, and to that end he always superintended their efforts. --Robert E. Coleman, Master Plan of Evangelism Fleming H. Revell, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1963, 93)*

2. Jesus has a "What's Next" for them in less than 24 hours. As they tried to tell Jesus all about their triumphs, the crowds were so thick that they hoped a boat

- and sailed across Galilee for a little R&R. But the people ran faster than they could sail. When they beached the boat, there were the crowds waiting for them. Mark 6:44 tells us that Jesus had compassion on the people because they were like sheep without a shepherd. He dropped everything on his own calendar and began to teach them about the Kingdom of God and he healed their sick.
3. The sun crawled across the sky and finally the disciples get Jesus' attention: said, *"Send the crowd away so they can go to the surrounding villages and countryside and find food and lodging, because we are in a remote place here."*
  4. And Jesus gives them the "What's Next." Still flushed with the euphoria of a successful Gospel crusade and healing tour, Jesus slams them headfirst into an impossibility. And He absolutely did it on purpose. **13** *He replied, "You give them something to eat."*
  5. John's Gospel throws in a fascinating aside that Jesus had with Philip: **John 6:5**, *When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?"* **6** *He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do.*
  6. That's a great line. God always knows what He's going to do. With God there never any emergency. But we never know exactly what God's going to do. That's why the faith-walk is always an uphill climb with us. And this time, for the disciples, Jesus made it very vertical: from party-time to panic-time in less than 24 hours. From feeling like faith-veterans in the morning to feeling like faith-wimps before the sun went down.
  7. It's an old story with many chapters:
    - Elijah was brilliant in faith on Mt. Carmel: one man vs. 450 prophets of Baal. But in ACT II he is utterly devastated by the threat of one woman.
    - Peter whacked off the ear of the High Priest's servant in defense of Jesus. But within hours he was swearing he didn't even know Jesus.
  8. Enjoy the thrill of victory, but get ready, there's another giant just around the corner and he's bigger than the last one and, get this, God sent him your way!

## II. HOW TO RECOGNIZE A FAITH ADVENTURE

### A. It's Usually Opposed to Conventional Wisdom

1. Ah, yes, conventional wisdom. So widely revered and so often wrong. The year before premed student **Roger Bannister** broke the four minute mile, *"scholarly papers were published arguing that the four-minute mile was physiologically impossible."* But when Bannister stopped the clock at 3:59.4, *"runners throughout the world - including several high school students - started recording sub-four-minute miles regularly."* (Charles Garfield, *Peak Performers*, 1986, 69-70)

**John 6:5-7**, *Jesus therefore lifting up His eyes, and seeing that a great multitude was coming to Him, said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread, that these may eat?"* <sup>6</sup> *And this He was saying to test him; for He Himself knew what He was intending to do.* <sup>7</sup> *Philip answered Him, "Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, for everyone to receive a little."*

2. Jesus said, "You give them something to eat" and the disciples practically died laughing. 5,000 hungry hikers staring at 13 poor preachers. Philip glances at their limp purse and announces, "It would take eight months wages to give them each just a bite!" (John 6:7) Andrew conducts a wider survey and comes up with a kid's lunch, five loaves, two fish: "...but how far will they go among so many?" he asks as Peter elbows John, snickering in his beard. (John 8:9). All

- resources were accounted for: a few coins, a sack lunch and 5,000 growling stomachs. Enter data, calculate, press total button. Answer: IMPOSSIBLE!
3. Too bad they hadn't been reading their Bibles. Israel needed a bridge over the Red Sea and God gave them a dry path. Israel needed water and God squeezed it out of the rock. Israel wanted meat and millions of quail invaded the camp. There were several million Israelites in the wilderness when God spread a banquet on the sand. What's a paltry 5,000 to Jesus?! But 5,000 was a lot to the disciples. It was so impossible, it might just as well have been millions. The caption for this scene reads: *When you don't have enough resources, you just don't have enough.*
  4. But wait! They'd left something out of their equation. They checked the purse, they checked the lunch sack, but they didn't check out Jesus.

*In our modern world, our real danger comes not from irreligion, but from **mild religion**.*  
--Elton Trueblood

5. When Jesus told them to give the crowd something to eat, what do you think He expected them to do? I don't think He expected them to do anything, except to ask Him for help. **John 6:6** says that when he told them to feed the crowd, *he already had in mind what he was going to do.* He didn't expect the disciples to do anything, except to place their confidence in Jesus. It would have OK for them to say, *"Jesus, you and we both know that there's no way we can feed some many people. But you can. You're the Son of God. We are your servants. Help us feed these people."* John also adds that Jesus was doing this to test the disciples: How much did they believe in Him?
6. World class missionary, **C. T. Studd** said, *"We're not supposed to be nibblers of the possible, but grabbers of the impossible."* Conventional wisdom doesn't tell us that. But the heart of faith does. Say "Yes"!

## **B. It Feels Like a Prod from God**

1. Here the disciples have us at a disadvantage. Jesus talked out loud to them:

**Luke 9:13**, *But He said to them, "You give them something to eat!"*

It was clear that Jesus wanted the crowd fed and that He wanted the disciples in the catering business.

2. Jesus doesn't talk out loud to me. He never has. I don't think He will till I get to Heaven, and I get a little nervous when I hear other people talk about all the things God tells them, like they have regular audible conversations with God. How do we know whether He wants us to feed the 5,000 hungry people or pronounce the benediction?
  - a. There are certain *impossible* situations about which God has already given us specific direction:
    - 1) About **forgiveness**. When someone really hurts us, we often feel like, "I could never forgive him for that. It's impossible." Jesus in the Bible says, "No, it's not impossible. Forgive him. Trust in my work in your heart and do it." (Ephesians 4:32)
    - 2) About **not worrying**. What really scares you? What keeps you awake at night? The Bible says, *Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.* (Philippians 4:6). I don't think God would tell us not to worry if it wasn't possible. It is possible, with Him!

- 3) Conquering an **addiction**. Boy, this one pushes our faith to the wall. **I Corinthian 6** is a passage that confronts sexual promiscuity and drunkenness to name a few. It says that a Christian is to be mastered by none of these things. The chapter closes with the reason: *19 Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; 20 you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.* This may be hard for you, but don't say it's impossible. God never commands us to do anything that's impossible for, when we ask Him for His help.
- 4) Trying to **lead people to Jesus Christ**. Yancey writes, "*Jesus never met a disease he could not cure, a birth defect he could not reverse, a demon he could not exorcise. But he did meet skeptics he could not convince and sinners he could not convert.*" ("Jesus, the Reluctant Miracle Worker," CT, May 19, 1997, 80) It's pretty exciting when we pray for God to heal someone who is desperately sick, and He does. But the greatest miracle we see in this world is when God opens an unbeliever's heart to know and love Jesus Christ. You can't make anyone trust Christ as his savior. It's impossible. But God can do it and He wants to use you to do it!
- b. There are certain unique situations in which Jesus moves our hearts to tackle the impossible. MY "CALL" TO THE MINISTRY
- c. There are some impossible situations that are simply thrust upon us: illness, treachery, false accusation, overwhelming assignments, divorce. **I Corinthians 10:13**, *And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.*
- d. And just be aware that not every idea that comes into our heads is necessarily from God. Russian novelist, **Leo Tolstoy**, when a nine-year-old boy, was convinced that God would protect him from injury. So he dove headfirst out of a third-floor window. Fortunately, he survived to laugh his childish foolishness. (Philip Yancey, *Disappointment with God*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1988, 77)
- e. **God has something great He would love to do through you.**
- **Bill Hybels** "leadings"—*Too Busy Not to Pray*
    - He calls these "private promptings" (156)
    - He asks, "How can I be sure that a leading is truly from God?" (158)—He suggests three criteria:
      - *Fist, all leadings that come from God are consistent his Word, the Bible.*
      - *The second criterion: God's leadings are usually consistent with the person he made you to be.*
      - Third, *God's leadings usually involve servanthood.* I find that many counterfeit leadings are fairly easy to discern, because they are self-promoting or self-serving. (163)
- f. Doesn't that give you pause—to think that God has something great that he would like to do through you? We can't see God. He doesn't print out the script of our lives. He doesn't even fill out our Daytimer a day in advance. This is one of those things that we have to take by faith.

*Faith is the substance of things hoped for; the evidence of things not seen.*

- **Eugene Peterson** was watching his little grandson play with a ball. Little Andrew would throw the ball, crawl after it, and then do it again. This went on about 15 minutes until the ball rolled under a piece of furniture. *The moment it disappeared, Andrew stopped, sat back on his well-diapered bottom and looked around for something else to do, as if there had never been a tennis ball to chase. I looked to his mother, "Lynn, what's wrong with Andrew?" ....Why did he quit chasing the ball? Was there a missing gene in his DNA?.... Lynn, not bothering to look up from her book, said coolly, and just a bit condescendingly I thought, "Andrew has not yet acquired object permanence."*  
*"What does that mean?"*  
*"It means that if he can't see it, it doesn't exist."*  
*Oh, I've got a whole church of people like that!*  
 --(Eugene Peterson, *Subversive Spirituality*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI, 16)

### C. **It Will Fail if God Doesn't Show Up**

- **GREAT QUESTION:** *What are doing in your life that will only succeed if God shows up?*

**John 6:8-9**, *One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to Him, <sup>9</sup> "There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are these for so many people?"*

1. How would you feel if you were one of the disciples and Jesus told you to go out and organize the crowd into groups of 50 (**Luke 7:14**). You'd probably think, *"I don't want to be here. I don't want to do this. We're creating an expectation here that we are not going to be able to fulfill. This could turn ugly. Doesn't Jesus understand that we are all going to look like a bunch of fools.*
- 2.. How would you feel when Jesus handled you a basket and told you to start passing out food? (verse 16) *"Oh, really? Well what do I do when I run out? Man, this is really embarrassing!"*
3. Every time I stick my neck out to do something for God that looks impossible, a little voice inside me is saying, *Aren't you being a little extreme? What makes you think you can do this? If this doesn't come off, it could really hurt your reputation, Tim.* I remember when I said goodbye to my SS class at AMCC to come out here and help plant this church, I told them this was uncharacteristic of me; that it was the riskiest thing I'd ever done. I told them that all my life I had always been careful to only try things that I was sure I could do. But I was tired of always playing it safe. I wanted to step out and trust God to use me to do something that would only succeed with His power. Time after time, when problems and impossibilities have arisen in this church, I have this little prayer that I use. It goes like this: *"Lord, this is your church, not mine. I know you love this church and these people a lot more than I do. So I ask you to take care of your people and build your church."* About every two weeks something comes up and Gordon I look at each other and say, *"Well, God's going to have to do another miracle!"*
4. **In some arena, you are the key.**

- There are some things that influence others that only you can do. In some arena, You/I are the Key. What is your arena? What enemy/challenge does God want you to take on???
- We all have a measure of faith. Bill Bright and Billy Graham have faith for the world. I have faith for my family and this church.
  - I struggle to have faith for a five-mile radius from this point on the map.
  - I hold a key to my family. I hold a key for my neighborhood. I hold a key for this church. I hold a key for some people who don't know Jesus—and I may be the only Jesus key-holder in their lives.
  - Eva Kiersey held the key for a room full of 2-year-olds.
  - Jehoash held the key for a nation.
  - What key do you hold? A small group of men? Your carpool? Your boss? A Discipleship-Group of Junior High girls? An unsaved brother? A vision for a new ministry?

**1 Peter 4:10-11**, *As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. <sup>11</sup> Whoever speaks, let him speak, as it were, the utterances of God; whoever serves, let him do so as by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.*

*“We’re not supposed to be nibblers of the possible, but grabbers of the impossible.” -- C. T. Studd*

5. Are you willing to risk it for God? Do you believe that you can really trust Him out on the edge of your faith? Listen to these comments from **C. S. Lewis**:

*You never know how much you really believe anything until its truth or falsehood becomes a matter of life and death to you. It is easy to say you believe a rope to be strong and sound as long as you are merely using it cord a box. But suppose you had to hang by that rope over a precipice. Wouldn't you then first discover how much you really trusted it? ...Only a real risk tests the reality of a belief. --C. S. Lewis*

### III. **HOW TO ACCELERATE THE FAITH JOURNEY**

#### A. **Learn the Faith Lesson Well**

1. There are Bible scholars who try to convince us that Jesus didn't really do a miracle here. They claim that lots of the people in the crowd had lunches with them, but they had them concealed under their robes and didn't want to share with the people who had no food. When Jesus began to distribute the little boys lunch, every felt embarrassed and sheepishly brought forth their food and began to share with the hungry people around them. Those folks would be comfortable with **Thomas Jefferson's** edition of the Bible which is on display in the Smithsonian museum in Washington. It's a leather-bound book in which he *pasted all the passages in the Gospels that contain no miraculous element. This was the Bible he read every day toward the end of his life...* (Philip Yancey, *The Jesus I Never Knew*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1995, 166)
2. The disciples certainly believed this was a miracle. They watched incredulously as that sack lunch in the hands of Jesus filled basket after basket. Peter walked into the crowd, passing out food until his basket was empty. Then back to Jesus for a refill. Back and forth, Back and forth. The food kept flowing.
3. Then, after everyone had his fill, Jesus said something I never would have expected. He passed out the twelve baskets, one to a disciple, and told them to collect the leftovers.

**John 6:11-13**, *Jesus therefore took the loaves; and having given thanks, He distributed to those who were seated; likewise also of the fish as much as they wanted.* <sup>12</sup> *And when they were filled, He said to His disciples, "Gather up the leftover fragments that nothing may be lost."* <sup>13</sup> *And so they gathered them up, and filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves, which were left over by those who had eaten.*

4. How would you feel when Jesus told you to go out and pick up the left-overs? (**John 6:12**) *We started with a sack lunch and we're supposed to gather leftovers? Excuse me, sir, you wouldn't happen to have any leftovers would you. I didn't think so. Pardon me for asking such a foolish question.*
5. So out them went into the crowd again. And they each returned with a basket full of scraps. Why did Jesus do this? I believe he wanted to impress upon the disciples that not only does God miraculously meet our needs, He does it abundantly. He gives us what we need and **more** than we need.

Compare **Mark 8:15-21** [**AFTER THE FEEDING OF THE FOUR THOUSAND**], *And He was giving orders to them, saying, "Watch out! Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod."* <sup>16</sup> *And they began to discuss with one another the fact that they had no bread.* <sup>17</sup> *And Jesus, aware of this, said to them, "Why do you discuss the fact that you have no bread? Do you not yet see or understand? Do you have a hardened heart?"* <sup>18</sup> *"Having eyes, do you not see? And having ears, do you not hear? And do you not remember, 19 when I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces you picked up?" They said to Him, "Twelve."* <sup>20</sup> *"And when I broke the seven for the four thousand, how many large baskets full of broken pieces did you pick up?" And they said to Him, "Seven."* <sup>21</sup> *And He was saying to them, "Do you not yet understand?"*

6. What was Jesus getting at? The disciples were still focusing on their own resources. Bread is never the problem when you walk with the Son of God. The only thing to be afraid of is our hardness of heart. Jesus was warning them of the hypocrisy and spiritual deadness of the Pharisees and Herod.
  - Sometimes I pray fervently for God to do something. Then, when it happens, sometimes I forget to even say "Thank you." I'm just glad the impossibility is solved and on to better things. I'm embarrassed to admit that sometimes I even like to give myself the credit, as in, *It must have been that persuasive letter that I wrote.* Actually, that's a perfect place to pause and enjoy God. To savor the moment. To give Him glory. To say, *God, you are great and good and powerful. Your mighty hand has done this and I am deeply grateful.*

## **B. Expect and Embrace Something Harder**

1. Quaker philosopher, **Elton Trueblood**: *Occasionally we talk of our Christianity as something that solves problems, and there is a sense in which it does. Long before it does so, however, it creases both the number and the intensity of the problems.*
2. That's what happened here. They get through the Feeding of the Five Thousand, and within hours they are fighting a storm on the Sea of Galilee and then they are being assaulted by a ghost.

**John 6:16-20**, *Now when evening came, His disciples went down to the sea,* <sup>17</sup> *and after getting into a boat, they started to cross the sea to Capernaum. And it had already become dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them.* <sup>18</sup> *And the sea began to be stirred up because a strong wind was blowing.* <sup>19</sup> *When therefore they had rowed about three or*

four miles, they beheld Jesus walking on the sea and drawing near to the boat; and they were frightened. <sup>20</sup> But He said to them, "It is I; do not be afraid."

3. The March 15 selection of Oswald Chambers' *My Utmost for His Highest*, is called, "The Discipline of Dismay." The verse is **Mark 10:32**, *They were on their way up to Jerusalem, with Jesus leading the way, and the disciples were astonished, while those who followed were afraid.*
  - *At the beginning of our life with Jesus Christ, we were sure we knew all there was to know about following Him. It was a delight to forsake everything else and to throw ourselves before Him in a fearless statement of love. But now we are not quite so sure. Jesus is far ahead of us and is beginning to seem different and unfamiliar...*
  - *There is an aspect of Jesus that chills even a disciple's heart to its depth and makes his entire spiritual life gasp for air....He strikes terror right through me.*
  - *At first I was confident that I understood Him, but now I am not quite so sure. I begin to realize that there is a distance between Jesus and me..... I have no idea where He is going, and the goal has become distant.*
  - *[W]hen the darkness of dismay comes, endure until it is over, because out of it will come the ability to follow Jesus truly, which brings inexpressibly wonderful joy.*

**Matthew 14:28-33**, *And Peter answered Him and said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water." <sup>29</sup> And He said, "Come!" And Peter got out of the boat, and walked on the water and came toward Jesus. <sup>30</sup> But seeing the wind, he became afraid, and beginning to sink, he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!" <sup>31</sup> And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and took hold of him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" <sup>32</sup> And when they got into the boat, the wind stopped. <sup>33</sup> And those who were in the boat worshiped Him, saying, "You are certainly God's Son!"*

4. Just like here in John 6 with **The Feeding of the 5000**.
  - *You give them something to eat.*
  - *Then they almost die in a storm on Galilee.*
  - *Next morning the crowds show up again and Jesus does his hard sermon on bread of life. Many disciples walk away. **John 6:67**, "You do not want to leave too do you?" Jesus asked the Twelve*
5. What are we to learn from this? This is the only miracle Jesus performed which is recorded in **all four Gospels**. I suspect that God did that for a reason. I think this is an especially important miracle with an especially powerful lesson. Here it is: the most important thing when God helps us in an impossible situation is not the miracle. It is God himself. The big deal was not the bread, it was who Jesus was revealed to be. He, who gives us food, is more satisfying than food. He is the bread of life.

*I used to ask God if He would come and help me; then I asked God if might come and help Him; then I ended by asking God to do His work through me. --Hudson Taylor*

#### CONCLUSION:

- A. *There was a very cautious man  
Who never laughed or played.  
He never risked, he never tried,  
He never sang or prayed.*

*And when he one day passed away,  
His insurance was denied.  
For since he never really lived,  
They claimed he never died.*

- B `Shortly after we started this church I was asked to give a seminar to PNW about our church planting experience. I did the talk and gave it the title: **Running Scared**. I was running scared from the minute we decided to start this church—and I’m just as scared right now as I ever was—probably more scared.
- It reminds me a Coach **Bear Bryant** story, from his football days at the University of Alabama. They were ahead by 6 points with less than 2 minutes on the clock. Bryant told his quarterback to play it safe and run out the clock. But the quarterback decided to pull a surprise and throw a pass. It was intercepted, and the opposing team’s speedster cornerback sprinted for the end zone. Bryant’s quarterback, not known for speed, ran him down, tackling him at the 5-yard line and saving the game. *After the clock ran out, the opposing coach approached Bear Bryant and said, “What’s this business about your quarterback not being a runner? He ran down my speedster from behind!”*  
Bryant responded, *“Your man was running for six points, My man was running for his life.”* (John C. Maxwell, *Failing Forward*, 2000, 119)

Timothy G. Walton  
Alderwood Community Church  
April 6, 2008