

Miracles of Jesus 12-07-29b

We pick up our study in Mark chapter 8 and Matthew chapter 15, looking at the feeding of the 4,000. And we're sort of using this opportunity to look at the role of miracles in general, to review it. We talked about it a little bit in earlier studies.

But the question that I posed and sort of left us with at the end of the first session today was, what about me? I understand miracles in the Scripture, I think. Generally speaking, it seems that this was God's method of providing a witness. In the mouth of two or three witnesses, a thing is established, and here's somebody giving witness to what is allegedly or purportedly or ostensibly God's word and God's will, God's proclaimed message.

Should I believe this or not? Is this man from God or not? Well, there is the witness of the words themselves. If we know God, we tend to know what He would say or does say, or if it's consistent with His known character and attributes and expressions of will and purpose in other places. So the message itself is a witness, either a true or a false witness.

And God provides a second witness in the form of vetting or authenticating or identifying His messenger by granting these expressions of God's own power. Nobody could do these things that you do, Nicodemus says, unless he were from God. And so there's that witness.

And then, of course, we in this age also have the witness of the Holy Spirit in our souls. And He will give us a positive disposition if we are sensitive to Him, if we have cultivated His presence and His voice by learning the Word of God and being consistent and faithful in our prayer and our meditation. God, the Holy Spirit, will bear witness with our spirit.

Paul says this, you know, it's the Spirit of God by which we cry out, Abba, Father. The Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God. It's an inner witness.

You have to be careful about this. It's not so much a voice saying, buy a new car. This is our perception, our grasp of what is right because of the Spirit's illumination of the Word of God in our soul.

It gives us wisdom. We are able to perceive. It isn't a ghostly voice from the outside saying, do or go or say.

It is the Spirit's energizing. He bears witness with our spirit. Our spirit has to be filled and equipped.

So miracles, we know, fulfill this role in Scripture. My question is, and my question to you and probably your question is, if you haven't gotten ahead of me and figured this out already, is are we never to trust God for miracles because that which is perfect has

come, it's all the Scripture and we just kind of academically and it's sort of a minor thing. Does God still do spectacularly supernatural interventions and suspensions of the laws of physics and of weather and of biology and whatever else and miraculously make cancer disappear, restart the heart and brain of someone who has been not just clinically dead or not just failed to register on the instruments but is cold, stiff, starting to smell dead? Can we safely say God never does miracles in the modern age? Do we have Scriptural authority to say no miracles? Anybody that says Jesus or God or anybody else heals or raises the dead or suspends the laws of normal nature is a big fat liar because God doesn't do that anymore.

Can we say that? Where do we stand on miracles? I gave you the example of a gentleman I believe is extremely sincere. I think he's gifted. I think God is using him in what people would describe as a mighty way to spread the gospel in Africa.

Well, what about the miracle side of this? Do we just kind of close one eye to the miracle side and say, well, sure, glad he's preaching the gospel and on the miracles, I just suspend judgment or I don't believe the miracles. I think that God's doing this in spite of or I believe the miracles, God's doing it and this is something that is valid and maybe we ought to start looking for the same thing here. Maybe we're just weak in the faith.

Where do we stand on this whole thing? Is the problem clear? Nod your head if you understand the question I'm posing. All right, well, here's the thing. This miracle I think sheds light on the question because both in the feeding of the 5,000 and in the feeding of the 4,000, Jesus did not look out and say to the disciples, I have compassion on the multitudes that have been here one day or three days.

They have no food. Sit thou at my right hand while I create a feast. Jesus evidently didn't hand a single crust of bread or a single bite of fish to anybody in either one of these crowds.

No record of him having done so. Every morsel was given to the people through the disciples. Jesus confronts them first.

He makes a teaching point out of the miracle with them first, and he's going to do it again. This is a good time for us to skip forward in the Mark account to what immediately follows. Look at verse 9, chapter 8, verse 9. They ate and were filled, and they took up seven large baskets of leftover fragments.

Those who had eaten were about 4,000, and he sent them away, immediately got into the boat with his disciples. What did it say in Matthew? He immediately got into the boat with his disciples to go to, in this case, Dalmanutha. When you go to Matthew, verse 39 of chapter 15, he sent away the multitude, got into the boat and came to the region of Magdala.

Now, both in Matthew chapter 16 and in the ongoing account in Mark chapter 8, we have this next part, which is integral to both crowd feedings. Let's look at it in Mark first. People think Mark was written first.

We'll just look at it first. The Pharisees came out and began to dispute with Jesus, seeking from him a sign. This is Mark 8, verse 11.

Seeking from him a sign from heaven, testing him. These are the Pharisees. These are the religious experts and authorities.

These are the seminary professors. These are the priests and high mucky mucks, leaders in the religious life. They disputed with him.

Now, they sought a sign from heaven and they were testing him. So, what is really the issue here? Why are the Pharisees carping? One of the reasons I have brought up and introduced this lesson the way I did is, are we in danger of being Pharisees when Jesus has just done a miracle, let's say, in Africa or in South America or in some other place where we weren't present? There weren't apparently Pharisees in the crowd for the feedings. So, they're disputing.

They are testing him. They're saying, well, if you did one there, do another one. Let us see one.

Isn't this kind of where we are? Well, that's great for the guy in Africa, but before I'm going to believe that miracles are happening in the modern day, I want to see one, my own self, with my own eyes. Right? So, I'm just saying, we don't want to go too quickly to the, that was then, this is now, that's him and that's fine. You know what I mean? So, we don't want to end up doing the Pharisee dance.

The Pharisees came out and began to dispute with him, seeking from him a sign from heaven, testing him. But he sighed deeply in his spirit. Now, how do the authors of Scripture know that Jesus sighed deeply in his spirit? You know that in Greek, whether you're using the preposition en, E-N, or the dative locative instrumental case, which expresses the same sort of meaning, it can mean in, by, or with.

Jesus sighed, this is a verbal expression, with his spirit, from the depths of his spirit. This is a case where this use, you know, down from the toes up. This is a very intense expression.

From his innermost being, he comes this sigh. And this is what we don't want, right? Jesus looking at us and heaving a heavy sigh from the depths of his spirit, in, with, and by his spirit. The very essence and definition of his being is in despair over us, right? We don't want this.

This is why I think it's important for us to answer this question, figure this thing out. You

cannot be inconclusive. You can't sit the fence.

You can't be neutral and say, well, you know, I just don't know. You know, Herod did that with John the Baptist, and look what it got him. We need to figure this out.

So the Pharisees came out. He sighed deeply in his spirit, and this is what he said. Why does this generation seek a sign? Now, how many people were seeking a sign on the day that Jesus fed the 5,000? Did any of them say, Lord, I appreciate this day of teaching, but could you give us any sort of verification? Could you show us your ID card? Can you pop an angel or two out of the woodwork so we can make sure you're from God? Didn't happen, right? It reminds me, Patty reminded me of something when we were on the way over this morning about how so often it seems like when the more you actively seek a thing, the more it runs away from you.

I've told you a thousand times the crude programming logic in one of the earliest video games I ever played. It was on my old TI-99. You hooked it up to the television.

It had a blistering 16K of RAM. It was the most pathetic, from our perspective, computer you can imagine. But it had this game where you're flying around in space, and one of the little attackers, you've got your typical spaceships that fly around and shoot at you, and you shoot back and try to shoot them out of the, not the sky, shoot them out of space.

But there was a special little opponent that would show up on occasion. It was this round sort of space mine, and the programming logic was extremely crude. The screen would wrap, so if it goes away from you at the left, it's going to come back on the right.

But if you tried to chase it with your spaceship, if you said, forward, ho, let's go get this thing and shoot it out of the sky and get some points, the thing would retreat from you directly. If you turned to the right, it would turn to the left. And really, if you tried to run away from it, because it would suck all the power out of your thing, and then you would explode, and you'd have to start over.

You'd lose a life. And so they very cleverly said, well, if you try to run away from this, it will pursue you. And if you chase it, it will flee.

But if you chase it too far, it will flee and come on the other side of the screen and stick to you anyway and get you. And it was really kind of a, you know, they had to do a lot with a little in those days, 16K. So anyway, I really, it powerfully impressed me, this little piece of programming, because nothing was more visually striking than the way to get this thing is to flee from it.

Because then it will come right, and then just before it attaches itself to you and sucks away all of your power, stop, turn around, and at short range, blow it away. And once you figured this out, it was kind of fun. But you get it by running away from it.

Because you want it to come up from behind and then flip around and shoot it. And it reminds me, you know, Jesus says, if any man wants to come after me, if you want to be raised above the angels, if you want to walk with me in white, if you want to inherit and achieve, it is through denying yourself, taking up your cross. The way to victory is to tread the road that looks like it's going to be defeat.

So much of the plan of God is counterintuitive, right? The way to be blessed and prospered and have actual inner peace and mountains of prosperity and deep contentment is to quit looking for it in the world and by human means and let God give it. These people, the 5,000 and later the 4,000, received bread broken by the hands of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself through the disciples, and they didn't ask for it. The Pharisees come up later and they say, well, look, we're not real sure about you.

Give us a sign and then we'll believe you. I gave you that quote from Thomas Aquinas last time. Do you want the miracle and then you'll believe or do you want to believe and then you'll see miracles? It's sort of the equation.

So they come and Jesus says, why does this generation seek a sign? And it's a great question. We say, well, I hear there are miracles going on. I think I could use a miracle or two.

I've got some real difficult problems, but I'd love to see a miracle. I believe I want a miracle. Why would we seek a miracle? What do we actually want? Why are we chasing the pink thing? Well, what's so attractive about being a part of or experiencing or producing a miracle? Wow, is it the excitement? Is it the notoriety? Is it being impressed? I just think anybody that is in this miracle realm must be closer to God.

I want to be closer to God, so let me get a miracle. Are we testing God? This faith thing, I'm 85% sure I'm on the right track here, but boy, if God would just do a miracle, then I'd be 100% sold out. I'd kind of like to reinforce my faith.

I'm pretty sure. Nothing else looks as good, but a miracle would just clinch the deal. I'd be sold out for God from then on.

Why does anyone seek a sign, a signed miracle? Assuredly, I say to you, no sign shall be given to this generation. Period. That's what it says in Mark.

No sign will be given to this generation. Which generation? He just gave a sign to the people in Decapolis, did he not? Fed them out of nothing. So which generation is it that's not getting it? Jesus has been doing signs from the beginning.

John's got seven of them that form the spine of his gospel. We've got 36 miracles that we're studying in this series. So in what sense does the generation not get a sign? Well, you've got the demonstrative pronoun, right? This generation.

This generation. Later on in Matthew 24, a lot is going to hinge on that very expression. This generation shall not pass away until all these things be fulfilled.

Matthew 24. Signs. Wars and rumors of wars.

The end is not yet. Famines. Earthquakes.

Right? This generation shall not pass away until all these things be fulfilled. This generation seeks a sign. No sign shall be given to this generation.

A little mini-chiasm there. This generation seeks a sign. No sign will be given to this generation.

This generation. What generation? Who's he looking at? Who's talking to him? The Pharisees. People seeking a sign are not going to be given one.

And yet there are other people not seeking a sign that see the mighty power of God. Right? We go back to what we covered in the first session about the purpose of miracles. What did they accomplish? Especially in the Old Testament and in the life and ministry of the Lord Jesus.

And for that matter, the apostles. Peter and John at the temple. Paul the apostle.

Apostle walks by. Shadow strikes somebody that's sick. They get well.

Throw a corpse underground to get away from some robbers. Touches the bones of the prophet. Springs back to life.

What was the purpose of these miracles? Let's take Jonah. Because when you go to Matthew, the parallel account here, and you go to chapter 16, same order and sequence. The Pharisees and Sadducees came and testing him, asked that he would show them a sign from heaven.

We want to see miracles too. He answered and said to them, When it is evening, you say it will be fair weather, for the sky is red. And in the morning it will be foul weather today, for the sky is red and threatening.

Hypocrites, you know how to discern the face of the sky, but you cannot discern the signs of the times. What is Jesus telling these people? What do you mean you want to see a sign? There are signs all around you. You can read the signs in the sky and draw conclusions about the weather, but you can't see the signs that you've already been given.

When we start looking around saying, Boy, I'd like to stick a potato in the ground and get a bumper crop. I would like to find somebody that's dead and raise them to life. I would like to see that kind of divine power exercise in my own life.

Are we the Pharisees and the Sadducees and there are signs all around us? There are signs of God's presence, God's provision, God's power, God's active intervention on our behalf that we're not reading? Sign, sign, sign, sign, sign, sign, sign. Lord, I sure wish you'd give me a sign. This is the response from the Lord Jesus.

You cannot discern the signs of the times. There are signs in your times and you're not reading them. You say, well, the sign is just not big enough, not immediate enough, not spectacular enough, because you don't really want a sign.

You want spectacularity. Do you think these Pharisees and Sadducees had not heard and hadn't seen convincing testimony, even if they weren't present, that Jesus had healed from their fellow Pharisees and Sadducees that had been in the synagogue with the man with the withered hand or had been there when Jesus healed the blind or healed the lepers, the blind man of John 9? Do you think these people didn't already know? Well, I want to be an eyewitness. It's not enough to get a second-hand account.

Well, if we're going to go by that, why are we taking the second-hand account of Scripture? I'm not going to take anything about salvation or Jesus or prophets or Israel or anything else until God tells me through an angel, oh, that's just an angel. I might have eaten something and had a hallucination. No, I want God Himself to tell me.

If God Himself tells me, did I hallucinate, how can I trust the evidence of my senses? Think of the physics of it, rods and cones, light waves, brain interpretation. If you think about it, color and space and dimensionality and all the rest of the things, these are constructs, atoms and molecules, 99.999999 out to infinity, empty space, little tiny points of alleged energy. How do we know what's real? Everything is a sign.

Everything is taken on faith. And there is always some distance. There is always some doubt.

Well, I saw it with my own eyes and I still don't believe it. People will stand before God and look right at Him at the judgment and say, I don't believe it. I don't like this.

I think it's all bogus. Everybody takes things on faith. So now what we're really talking about is just degree.

Everybody sees miracles. The fact that we're alive is a miracle. Everything that happens is miraculous.

We're just talking about degree. I want a bigger miracle. I want a more profound expression.

I want something I didn't expect because I know the laws of physics. No, we don't. We know the routine.

We know the normal. Was the stilling of the wind and the waves an actual miracle or was it a coincidence? Was the parting of the Red Sea and the children of Israel going across a miracle or was it a volcano? You know how they take every biblical miracle and try to explain it away? Well, it was just a conflict. Well, how do we know? Ultimately and finally, everything boils down to what is our heart response to the revelation of the truth of God's existence and His salvation in Jesus Christ.

That's the issue. Seeking a sign is kind of silly. Everything's a sign.

Jesus says you cannot discern the signs you've already got. Now, in certain circumstances, can God give a big unusual sign, a supernatural sign perhaps when necessary? Of course. We see them all through Scripture.

Can He do it now? He's God. He can do whatever He wants, whenever He wants, however He wants. I'm not going to go up to God with my New King James Bible and say, Lord, you can't make this guy's potatoes grow because signs... My understanding of your word is that that was then and this is now.

You're going to go tell God He can't do a miracle if He wants to? None of my business. What He does in Africa is for the Africans to figure out. I've got my hands full trying to discern the signs of my own times and not ending up as a Pharisee and a Sadducee, putting God to the test because what He's done for me is not good enough.

What He has done and the signs He's revealed to me are not powerful enough, not convincing enough. God, You need to do more for me. You need to do more in front of me before I will believe.

Well, when I put it in that light, am I going to ask God to do something extraordinary? Well, if I ask Him to do something extraordinary, it's not going to be on the basis, I just need to see it so that I can really trust You. If I ask God for something extraordinary, it's because I'm going to have a biblical foundation. Now, back to these apostles and disciples, prospective apostles.

A wicked and adulterous, we're in Matthew 16, verse 4. A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign. It doesn't say a wicked and adulterous generation gets a sign. There were other people living at this time that saw all kinds of signs.

The disciples saw all 36 miracles and countless others and even performed their own, didn't they? When Jesus sent them forth by twos and by, you know, sent out the 12 and sent out the 70, didn't they go and do things? Lord, in Your name, we did all kinds of stuff, right? It is a wicked and adulterous generation that seeks a sign. If God chooses to do a sign, great. If we're praying that God will work His will and accomplish His purpose in a given situation, God may do it through seemingly natural means, well, that was providential, that was fortuitous, that was a happy outcome.

How did I know that when I was \$200 short, USAA would send me my subscriber saving account check for \$210? I've got \$10 to the good and I never saw it coming. Well, the check was written weeks ago. I didn't know I was going to be short.

It just appeared. Miracle? I wasn't seeking it. I just asked God to lead me and guide me and help me keep my priorities straight and trust Him for my daily bread.

And God works all things together for that good. Wicked and adulterous generation seeks a sign and no sign shall be given it. The ones seeking a sign for its own sake, seeking a sign for their own reasons, are not going to be given one.

Well, I would prefer those signs of the times, those daily signs, to getting all hot and bothered about signs and trying to seek one and have God saying, you're not going to get any sign at all. By the way, when it says no sign, even the signs of the times are no longer signs to these people. They were getting the signs of the times.

He says, you're having trouble interpreting them. Now that you're seeking a sign and you've made an issue of signs and you're kind of hinging everything on and putting God to the test over signs, you're not getting any signs at all, except the sign of Jonah. Sign of Jonah.

Boy, this is really fascinating. The sign of the prophet Jonah. What's the deal with Jonah? Jonah, go to Nineveh.

I ain't going. I'm going the other way. So he disobeyed the Lord and took his ship and sailed away.

And God says, no you're not. The sailors throw him overboard, swallowed by a great fish. How long is he in the fish? Three days and three nights.

He gets spat back up, and shortly thereafter he makes his way to Nineveh, which is not a coastal town. So not only does he get half digested, but then he gets sunburnt on the way to Nineveh. You know where Nineveh is.

And he had to be a very disreputable, peeling, leprous looking sort of individual by the time he got there. And what is his message? What's the message of the prophet Jonah? The sign of the prophet Jonah is he is going to disappear in what appears to be certain death for three days and three nights. And his message is, there is yet 40 days, and destruction is coming.

Jesus disappears into the heart of the earth for three days and three nights. And the message distributed by his disciples is 40 years and the kingdom is going to be destroyed. And you go 40 years forward from 30 A.D. to 70 A.D. and there is not one stone left upon another when the Roman legions come marching into Jerusalem.

There is a real interesting symmetry there. The sign of Jonah should have alarmed these people. What kept Nineveh from being destroyed on day 40? Godless, pagan Ninevites repented in sackcloth and ashes.

Put sackcloth and ashes on their animals. In case God doesn't see me, he'll see the stock in sackcloth and ashes. And God said, that's all I was looking for, change of mind.

Didn't necessarily give them the gospel. The Ninevites are not necessarily going to be in heaven. He was just looking for change of mind.

He said, you know, we really are pretty depraved around here. We ought to clean up our act. Jonah didn't go in and say, redemption, Passover lamb, blood on the doorpost, lest you be destroyed, the whole gospel story.

He just said, change your mind, or you're going to be destroyed. No other details. And they said, we are destruction worthy.

I'm going to put on the signs of change of mind. And they did, and God did not destroy them. Israel, the people of God, not that smart.

They were given the sign of Jonah, and unlike the godless, pagan Ninevites, did not repent. They're the Pharisees. You need to show me a bigger sign.

Then I'll give this repentance thing some thought. Well, now you've got a sign. Jesus predicted that no stone would be left upon another on the temple mount.

As near as some scholars can tell, even the ground the temple sat on is gone. That's real interesting. Matt gave me some study that's been done, and it appears that it's like it's been scooped out of the earth.

And there may be no place up there where the dome of the rock or anything else is where the temple sat. There's some thought that where it was, God just literally scooped the whole thing off. Be that as it may, keep reading.

We're in Matthew 16, just stay there, verse 5. When His disciples had come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread. Come to the other side of the lake, right? Got in the boat. Jesus said to them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees.

What is the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees? Chapter 16, verse 1. They came and testing Him, asked that He would show them a sign. You don't have to go to the philosophical publications of the Pharisees and Sadducees. We know exactly what their leaven is.

Their leaven is, God, show me something. Make it big. Putting God to the test in that way.

And Jesus has been thinking about that all the way across the lake, and the disciples say, We've got no bread. Well, how many times have the disciples seen Jesus multiply and feed crowds with bread now? Twice. Within the space of a pretty short period of time.

You get the 5,000, you get the 4,000, and they're kind of getting careless about the bread now. They get to the other side and they have no bread. Jesus says, Beware the leaven of the Pharisees.

Why would He say that? What is He countering in their hearts, do you think? Did He just come up with this out of the blue? The disciples are looking around, have no bread. Can you imagine Nathaniel and Philip or somebody over here saying, Well, you know, bread's not a problem. Let's get the Lord to create some bread here.

Let's go to the Lord and get Him to do another one of these signed miracle bread makings. And before they can even finish the thought, Jesus says, Beware the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees. Don't start expecting the miraculous any time you want to flip the switch.

Right? This is how it seems to me. I've always wondered, why out of the blue does He say, Beware the leaven? We'll just look right up there. Show us a sign.

Lord, we're out of bread. Can you show us a sign? Can you miraculously produce some bread? Because I forgot. I didn't do what I was supposed to do, but you can miraculously fix it for me.

Beware that leaven. They reasoned among themselves saying, It's because we have taken no bread. Because that's what was on their mind.

They were just in the middle of discussing this. Jesus, being aware of it, said to them, O ye of little faith, why do you reason among yourselves? Because you have brought no bread. Do you not yet understand or remember? Wow.

How many Bible classes have we been in? How long have we had exposure to the truth of God's Word and the presence and power in teaching ministry, comfort and encouragement of God's Holy Spirit? How long have we had it? What a convicting thing it would be for Jesus to come to us and say, Do you not yet understand or remember? Have you not gotten to that point of intelligent application and wisdom in circumstances that ought to come from seeing and hearing and knowing? Do you not yet understand? Do you not yet remember the five loaves of the 5,000 and how many baskets you took up? Nor the seven loaves of the 4,000 and how many large baskets you took up? How is it you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread? Isn't He in the midst of speaking to them about bread? 5,000, five baskets. 4,000, seven baskets. Don't you know that I'm not talking to you about bread? Remember the bread? I'm not talking to you about bread.

Remember the bread? It's not about the bread. Do you not yet understand or remember? They should have drawn a conclusion from this. Well, there's a lot you can say, but let me offer a fresh thought.

Feeding of the 5,000. Everybody eats and is satisfied. They go back and they take up 12 baskets of fragments.

We didn't talk about this last week. The conclusion I usually come to first about that is, well, isn't the provision of God perfect? Why is there this excess? If the bread represents the teaching of the Word, as we think it does, nourishment for the soul, represented by nourishment for the body, it is as though a lot of it got rejected. Twelve whole baskets are gathered up.

That's one idea. Here's a fresh idea. How many baskets of fragments are taken up? This is the question Jesus asks, right? He didn't say how many people didn't finish their meal.

He says how many baskets were taken up. How many baskets were taken up? Say it out loud. How many baskets? How many disciples are there? When they leave the area, because He says, let nothing be wasted, it kind of reminds you of the manna, don't leave any over.

So when they leave, what happens with these baskets of fragments? What do you think? Every disciple has a basket to carry, right? Twelve baskets of fragments. I don't think Jesus is lugging one and Judas doesn't have one. There's twelve baskets of fragments.

Every disciple has a basket of bread to take with him, right? The people don't take it. He doesn't say, well, there's twelve baskets, go back and give them a snack for the road home. The disciples have the baskets.

He said, take it up, bring it back. Every disciple's got a bag of bread, right? Now, there's also some fish involved in here and I'm way over time. I'm probably going to have to take another Sunday.

But I will give you a quick thought. What's the difference in bread and fish? Five loaves, Books of Moses, two fish, Prophets in the Writings. Great.

Don't dismiss that, but I don't think it exhausts it either. What's the difference in bread and fish? Why wasn't it bread and berries? Why wasn't it bread and jerky? Why wasn't it bread and anything else you want to name? Bread and spinach. Bread and grain, like the prophet for the hundred.

It's bread and fish. Fish. Fish.

Man, fish. Throw the net on the other side, pulling up the fish. I'm going to have to take another Sunday.

I'm way over time and I haven't even gotten to the last scene on the Sea of Galilee, remember? I'm going to go fishing, Peter says. He goes out there. There's Jesus standing on the shore.

In dives Peter, swims to the shore. What's Jesus doing there? Cooking breakfast. And when they get there, what has He got? What are the components of the breakfast? Bread and fish.

You threw your net on the other side of the boat. Up they came. Jesus tells the disciples, go get some of the fish you caught and bring it.

But He's already got the fire, He's got bread, and they've got fish. Now, what's the proportion? Well, we're going to have to do this next week. But think about it.

Chew on this. Help me out here. What's the proportion of bread to fish for the 5,000? Mostly bread, little bit of fish.

What's the proportion for the multitudes? 4,000. Don't even know the number of fish. It's all about the bread, right? We've got seven loaves of bread and a few fish.

So what's the proportion here? Bread, fish. Bread, fish. Jesus did not bring a giant basket of bread on the seashore.

What did the disciples catch? We've got the number of fish that were caught, right? What's the proportion of bread? Well, we'll cover this next week or we'll look at it. But let me leave you with a thought. How long can you carry bread? It doesn't say they took up seven baskets of fish, does it? What is, you know, what they like to say after a corporate training class, what's the takeaway? What's the takeaway here? What do we learn? Well, what's the takeaway from this? Is it bread or is it fish? It's bread.

Fish, everybody knows, prepare fish. How long does that stuff keep? There's nothing that will go bad faster than a fish. You catch it, you eat it.

So if I'm thinking about the symbolic value of bread as a long duration, take it with me on the journey thing, and I'm thinking about fish, I mean, there's a lot you can factor into this. Fish is the immediate. When they look around and say, we brought no bread, are they worried about starving? They're by the lake.

They are fishermen. There's nets in the boat. They can go catch fish.

They're not worried about, gosh, we've got nothing to eat. Something about the bread. We brought no bread.

They left the feeding of the 5,000 with 12 baskets, one basket for each of them. They left the feeding of the 4,000 just earlier with seven baskets of fish or bread? Bread. What happened to the seven baskets? Where are the seven baskets of bread? We brought no

bread.

Twice now, we've taken up the fragments and taken them with us, and yet we ourselves have no bread. That which is supposed to stay with us, to carry around for future use. Fish is the immediate, right? Now, the last thing I'll tell you, and I'm egregiously over time.

Think about the, and this is why I warned you ahead of time that I had not fully digested this. When I run long, it's because my preparation isn't as complete as I would like it to be. Good preparation, short class.

Bad preparation, long class. So given the time, you know what kind of class I feel this is. However, it's a lot to, it's a lot for me to get at, but here's the last thought I'll give you.

Israel, leaving Egypt, delivered. Where are they going? Think of the map. Egypt, promised land.

What's the quickest way to get there? There's a nice coastal Highway 1 right here. Anybody from California knows Highway 1. It's the coastal highway, right? It's called the Way of the Sea. God's doing miracles.

Parting waters, raining down provision, defeating Amalekites and so on. So what's the problem in taking the Israelites by the Way of the Sea? Plus, you've got, what, two million people? What's the easiest way to feed two million people? Way of the Sea, wade out in the water, cast a few nets, fish every day. Fish every day.

Fish. Lots of fish. Lots of people.

Way of the Sea. Logistically speaking, if I was planning the trip, which way would I go? We know we're going to have to feed these people. It's going to take a few days.

Lots of people to move. Where are we going to get the chow? Slaughter all of our animals. We're not going to have anything to start with when we get to the land.

Eat all our grain. We're not going to have anything to plant, because we won't be able to plant the first year we're there, right? Well, let's go by the Way of the Sea. Lots of fish.

Don't go by the Way of the Sea. Go by the Way of the Desert. Well, you're on the move.

Can you plant crops and come back and harvest them? Got any big bodies of water where you can fish? No bread, no fish in the desert. That's the way God tells them to go. Very counterintuitive, right? To me.

So what does God do? Does He rain fish from heaven? The manna is the bread of heaven. We sang about it. Bread of heaven, bread of heaven.

Feed me until I lack nothing. It's the exact provision. Well, it's bread.

Bread for the journey. Bread that will last. Bread that has a calculated duration.

Lasts twice as long on the weekends for the Sabbath and so on. Fish? Not so much. Not so much journey food.

Well, we're driving to Arkansas today. Let's put some fish in a Tupperware and we'll eat them this afternoon. No.

No, we're not. Bread? Make sandwiches? Great. So there is something about bread and its lack by disciples who had been joined twice by Jesus to not only distribute it but come back with some to carry.

Fish? Different thing. But at the end, this proportion shifts and they've got a super abundance of fish and just the bread that Jesus brought. So we'll delve into this further next week.

But by way of conclusion and suggested application, look at the Pharisees and Sadducees as they process the information of Jesus' miraculous feeding. Think about John's follow-up when the multitudes want to make Jesus king. There are lots of wrong ways to respond to the miraculous.

And there's only one right way. The right way is to concentrate on what is given to you to take along. The Pharisees want to see something bigger.

They want to see something firsthand. That generation is not going to get a sign. The people who came for the teaching, and that's what they were really thinking about, they're the ones that got fed.

The men enjoined to be a part of that provision are supposed to keep it with them, always have it, not be caught without it. Fish, you can catch any time. And when necessary, God can give you a lot of fish in a short space.

Bread, different thing. So we'll look at this further, but rather than focusing on miracles and whether or not they are present or absent, we have been given plenty of signs in our times. And if we don't carry those with us, like bread, if we don't keep them before us and remember what God has already done, do I really need a convincing demonstration of God's power given everything that God has done for me up to this point? What do I lack? What do I want that I haven't already got? What am I failing to trust? What am I failing to apply that I've already got? I say, oh God, if you could just miraculously fix this situation, maybe God has already given us the bread.

He's already given us the provision. And we're just not looking. We want something bigger.

We want something that conforms to our definition of deliverance or power or glory. No sign is coming in response to that attitude. We look at what God has given us.

Well, we'll look at the numbers. I'm real intrigued by seven baskets. Were there five disciples that didn't have to carry anything? Jesus has already weeded out the five bad ones, Judas and four others.

We'll get into this some next week, but let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for the truth of your word. Thank you for the challenge that you put before us.

Thank you for your grace and faithfulness in providing for us and in supernaturally working all things together in our lives as we recognize our calling and seek to walk in its light. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will find us teachable and malleable and correctable as we meditate and pray in the light of the things that we've learned. May we grow in grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ and be more and more fully equipped to serve and to walk in the light and perform those works that have been ordained for us.

We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.