

## **Pressing into Faith, John 6:1-15**

### **July 5, 2009 - Skip MacMillan**

Matthew 14:13-21; Mark 6:32-44; Luke 9:10-17

**Scene:** After some time (Jesus did many other things during this time), far shore of the Sea of Galilee, and a great crowd came looking for Him because He had performed miraculous signs on the sick (not-as-devoted followers), the only miracle recorded in all four gospels, Jesus with people (not the religious) caring, providing their daily needs.

"The Jewish Passover . . . was to Palestinian Jews what the fourth of July is to Americans" -DA Carson.

### **Numbers vs. Faith**

#### **Jesus' Question to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?"**

##### **Jesus' Questions:**

"What do you want?" (John 1:38); "Why do you involve Me?" (John 2:4); "Do you want to get well?" (John 5:6).

Jesus' questions are to push you into deeper thought.

"He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do" (John 6:6).

- Testing for faith, testing for Philip's understanding of Jesus.
- Getting them to think, pushing to the logical end, and introducing them to His ability, His power and His compassion.
- "Philip, where are we going to go to buy bread for all these people?"
  - What store, Philip? What are we going to do, Philip? How are we going to feed all these people, Philip?
  - Philip being from a town nearby (Bethsaida 1:44) may have known where to get some food.
  - Testing Philip, prompting for faith.
- Jesus' questions are to move them from what is seen to what is unseen; from what is humanly possible into what is possible with God, from the material into faith and to reveal His identity.

##### **Philip's Response and His Problem**

"Eight months wages would not buy enough bread for each one to have a bite" (John 6:7).

- Philip sees the problem clearly and has been running the numbers for several minutes now.
- He sees numbers, spreadsheets, working wages, cost of food, taxes, the natural world.
- His solution, eight month wages, won't even cover the cost.

##### **Problem:**

- He is living his life in what is humanly possible, without bringing Jesus into the problem.
  - He doesn't think to turn to Jesus for help.
  - If there is a material problem, he looks for a material answer.
- Faith has not taken root in Philip's thinking. He doesn't turn to Jesus or doesn't think this is the kind of thing to involve Jesus.
- Even after living with Jesus and seeing the miraculous, Philip has not tapped into or begun to understand the possibilities of Christ and our faith in Christ.
- He admires Jesus, loves Jesus, and is following Jesus, but he is not applying Jesus to his daily life, to real life, to real needs. He doesn't think to bring Jesus into the problem.

##### **Jesus has set the stage perfectly.**

Philip has run all the possible scenarios but come up empty.

All Philip's attempts to rationally figure out the problem have run empty.

As if Jesus is saying, you can't do it, you don't have any answers, it appears impossible; now what? *Where* will you turn now, to whom will you turn for help?

## Philip's Problem is Our Problem

*How would you answer?* How do you respond to problems?

- Can you relate to Philip, running the numbers, spreadsheets, income to cost ratios?
  - Where is Jesus in your solution?
- This is our same struggle.
  - Many of us know Christ, believe, and attempt to follow but we continue to live in a world strictly controlled and governed by our human ability.
  - We had a faith experience that brought us to Christ and that is where we left faith, back there. We tend to be slow to bring our faith in Christ into the everyday.
  - Deeper still, we question whether Jesus works in real time, in real life, in my life?

Like Philip, we try to figure out our own problems on our own.

Not asking the right questions:

How could my faith in Christ apply to this situation?

Is there another way of looking at this situation through the lens of Christ?

If I were to act or live in faith, what would be my response to this situation?

According to Philip, Jesus and the disciples are in a very bad spot, too many questions and not enough food.

Jesus was about to teach Philip and the others about His ability and what can be when we live by faith in Him!

## Andrew

Andrew, in an almost curious, "kinda sorta," "just maybe kinda" way, pushes past the numbers. He's getting his fingertips on something but not quite sure what it is.

He presents Jesus with a boy and his lunch (5 barley loaves (biscuits) and 2 small fish (pickled)).

Andrew brings people to Jesus, Peter his brother, this boy, and some Greeks (John 12:20ff).

"Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish . . ."

- Andrew knows this is not enough to feed all these people.
  - So why is he presenting the boy and his food to Jesus? What is Andrew up to?
  - **Could this be a mustard seed amount of faith?**
- Andrew is pushing past the numbers, bank account, spreadsheets, what is humanly possible and seen, and curiously seeking Jesus for a possible answer, not knowing exactly what Jesus will do. "Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish . . ."

**Then Andrew presents Jesus with a question, "but how far will they go among so many?" (John 6:9)**

- I think I may be tracking with you, I think I might be understanding what you're saying.
- **So here is what we have; "how far (can YOU make them) go among so many?"**

Andrew is turning to Jesus for the answer, for an answer to this basic need.

Andrew is asking, "What can you do with it?" "What will you do, Jesus?"

Andrew is pressing into **the unseen**, fingers extending, reaching into what he does not know, "kinda" grasping what Jesus might be saying.

He is looking to Jesus as the solution to the problem, "where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?"

Andrew is beginning to understand from WHERE his help comes from!

- He is stepping into the realm of FAITH. The numbers don't add up, there isn't enough to cover the cost, but Andrew doesn't give up. He turns to Jesus.
  - Living in faith is to move forward in the promises of God even though you can't see it, even though the numbers aren't there yet.
  - Living in faith is trusting God at His word when there is nothing tangible to support it.
  - Faith is **not** moving forward in your own will and desires and demanding God to bless it.
  - Those in chapter 11 of Hebrews were first given a promise by God and then they followed God even though there was nothing tangible to show for it.

"... being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see" (Hebrews 11:1).

**Faith is:** "restful reliance, trust that reaches out to God, trusting, hoping in the LORD, cleaving to Him, waiting for Him, making Him our shield and tower and taking refuge in Him" - *The Concise Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*.

Andrew acted in faith by presenting Jesus with what little they had mixed with the slightest amount of faith in Jesus, and Jesus did what was unseen but hoped for.

- We can live this same way:
  - I'm going to stay in this marriage although I can't see how it's going to work out – I turn to Jesus.
  - I'm going to live as a follower of Christ even though it is difficult – My hope is in Christ.
  - I'm going to give 10% even though I don't see what difference it will make – I trust in the LORD.
  - I'm going to forgive them even though I don't see it being reciprocated – I wait in the LORD.
  - I'm going to raise my child in the Lord and have faith the Lord will be his God – I rest in Christ.
  - I'm going to serve even though I don't have a lot to offer – I cleave on to Him.
  - God creates beautiful works when you come to Him in faith!
- We are not trained to live in faith, we are trained to live in the "sure thing." We are trained in our culture to avoid risk, "risk management," eliminating unnecessary risk.

Tell me what is a "sure thing"? What in your life is a "sure thing"?  
And yet we say the only things in life that are sure are taxes and death.

**Andrew was beginning to live by faith in Jesus Christ; let's follow his lead.**

- Here is what I have. It is Yours. How far can YOU make it go?

## Jesus

"Have the people sit down. There was plenty of grass in that place, and the men sat down, about five thousand of them. Jesus then took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed to those who were seated as much as they wanted. He did the same with the fish" (John 6:10-11).

- **Turn to Me**, Jesus is saying. Ask Me, invite me into the problem, into your life!
  - Not to the bank, not to spreadsheets and numbers but to the LORD
  - What if Abraham went to the bank and looked at the numbers? What if Noah, Sarah, etc.
  - What if in faith, you turn to Him first, present your situation, obey and believe His promises?
  - He is challenging our way of dealing with life.

- God invites us into His work
  - The LORD involved them in the miracle!
  - The boy and Andrew gave what they had and the Lord made it more than they could imagine.
  - Give God what you have and allow Him to make it into more than you can dream.
  - Those of faith in Hebrews 11 gave what little they had, obedience, trust, willing to move, to change.
  - Keep your focus on the ability of the LORD, not your bread and fish.
- **Two Territories**
  - Our Territory: turn to Him in faith, “being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see” (Heb. 11:1), to give Him our life and see what He will do with it. One boy’s lunch fed 5,000 people.
  - God’s Territory: to multiply, to bless, to provide and to do the miracle.
- God loves faith
  - The Bible says, “without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to Him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek Him” (Hebrews 11:6).

God loves faith because:

1. Faith is believing He exists.
2. Faith is believing that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him.

You are pleasing God when you can’t see the solution, don’t see things getting better, but continue to do what He says, continue to believe in what He promises.

- Provider - God is our provider.
  - God provided manna in the desert for each day’s need; Lord’s prayer - “give us this day our daily bread.” God promises to supply your daily needs! You can have faith in Him that he will.
  - God’s provision is generous, He meets our needs and then some, leftovers.
  - God provides for our eternal needs.
  - “For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world” (John 6:33).

Jesus was teaching His disciples about who He is and what faith in Him looks like.  
 Jesus is teaching us about who He is and what faith in Him looks like.

### **Application**

1. Stop running the numbers again and again and turn to Jesus Christ for the solution, He is closer than you think – He was sitting right next to Philip.
  - a. Life is not a numbers game but a life of faith!
  - b. Where is faith in Christ demonstrated in your life?
2. Press into faith, be curious, ask:
  - a. “How far can You make this go?”
  - b. “What could You (Jesus) do with me if I gave myself over to you?”
3. God is teaching us the deep truths of life. He is calling us into a life of faith (things unseen). He is challenging us to come with what you have and watch what He can do. When we do, He makes our lives more than we can imagine, provides for more people than we can imagine, blesses more people than we can imagine.