

# ENCOUNTERS WITH JESUS

Sermon Series

## Experiencing God's Plan

John 6:3-13

John 6:3-13 NIV

### Preface

Last week was a fantastic service at our church. This was not because of what I did or what Mike or Jason did; but it was the work of what God did in our presence and in the hearts of people.

It was a joy to see 11 people baptized and to see their smiling and crying faces. God is doing great things in our church and I am so thankful.

I must tell you, I am like an anxious child on Christmas eve. **I can hardly wait to see what God has in store for us next.**

### Scripture

<sup>3</sup> Then Jesus went up on a mountainside and sat down with his disciples. <sup>4</sup> The Jewish Passover Feast was near.

<sup>5</sup> 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?" <sup>6</sup> He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do.

<sup>7</sup> Philip answered him, "Eight months' wages<sup>a</sup> would not buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!"

<sup>8</sup> Another of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, spoke up, <sup>9</sup> "Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?"

<sup>10</sup> Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." There was plenty of grass in that place, and the men sat down, about five thousand of them. <sup>11</sup> 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.

<sup>12</sup> When they had all had enough to eat, he said to his disciples, "Gather the pieces that are left over. Let nothing be wasted." <sup>13</sup> So they gathered them and filled twelve baskets with the pieces of the five barley loaves left over by those who had eaten.

### Introduction

Why are all these things happening to me?  
Where is God and why doesn't he help me?  
Does God even care?

Is there anyone here who hasn't said these things at some point in their life? Perhaps these were your thoughts just this past week?

The miracle of the feeding of 5,000 was a spectacular miracle that peaked the people's expectations of Jesus.

But what does this miracle say to us today? What does this miracle say to you and me personally about our lives?

What does this miracle say about the future of our church?

The answer to these questions isn't so much in the miracle as it is in us. **The answer is in our ability to listen, our ability to be obedient and our ability to exercise faith.**

There some very important truths we can learn from this spectacular miracle.

## Content

### 1. God always has a plan

John says, “*He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do.*” John confirms that Jesus already had a plan. He already knew exactly what he was going to do.

#### God always has a plan.

God has a plan for your life. God has a plan for your current crisis. God has plans for our church.

When you and I think our life is in shambles and nothing makes sense, God has a plan.

**When things look impossible; when you and I think life is at its darkest, God has a plan.** God has everything under control.

*<sup>5</sup> Many, O LORD my God, are the wonders you have done. The things you planned for us no one can recount to you; were I to speak and tell of them, they would be too many to declare. Psalm 40:5 NIV*

So often we have our own plans and we become discouraged when God isn't doing things according to our plans. But we must remember that God has a plan.

Illus: What do you think inspires songs like the Garth Brooks song, “Thank God for unanswered prayer.” It is when our plans fail and God's plan unfolds that we realize that God had a plan all along.

We must learn to wait upon the Lord. We must learn to trust in His ways and trust His plan.

God always has a plan.

### 2. God's plan always requires faithfulness

Philip was from Bethsaida which was the closest town and he would have known the local resources for food. So Jesus asked Philip, “*Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?*” This question was not to seek information but for the purpose of educating the disciples.

The answer to the question posed by Jesus was that it was impossible; **humanly impossible**, for thousands of people to get that much bread late in the day from little neighboring villages.

John tells us that Jesus was testing Philip. God tests us in order to refine our faith. He does not test us to tempt us but to rather strengthen our faith.

God educates us to help us understand that **what seems impossible to us; is not a problem for God.** Many times in our lives, our faith is tested when we don't understand what God is doing or when we don't see a solution to our circumstance.

Philip's response was pretty much; that it can't be done or it will cost a fortune. There will always be the nay-sayers. There will always be those who say it can't be done, or we've never done it that way, or that's going to cost too much money.

Andrew on the other hand went into the crowd to determine just what resources were available. We need to be more like Andrew. **Before we say it can't be done, we should look around at the resources and consider God's possibilities.**

**We need to understand that it is when we are required to exercise faith; it is when we are totally dependent upon Him, that we discover what great things God can do.**

Illus: We sing “My God is an Awesome God” and all the while we rely on our own abilities to work out everything on our own.

**I often wonder what great plans of God we have missed because we just aren't willing to exercise faith.**

Quote: “**Faith is the candle in the darkest night.**”

### 3. God's plan is always bigger than ours

To feed this many people would take 8 months worth of wages; 200 denarii.

We can't tell from the text if this was more money than the disciples had available or if Philip's response was that this is just too much money to spend. Either way, **it was going to be humanly impossible.**

But for God it was no tall task at all. All that was available was a little boy's lunch.

**God uses our limited resources to demonstrate the power of His unlimited resources.**

By the way, there were actually 5,000 men. This number did not include the women and children. The number could have easily been as many as 10,000 people or more.

Regardless of the number, as the disciples obeyed, the miraculous multiplication of the food took place.

John stresses that a miracle had taken place when he says, "*when they had all had enough to eat...*". When it was done, they gathered 12 baskets of leftovers.

**God's plan is always bigger than ours. Don't you want to experience God's plans in your life?**

I want to experience God's plans for my life. Not my little narrow minded plans but God's divine plans.

Quote: **"The task ahead of us is never as great as the power behind us."**

### Conclusion

If our Lord can take a little boys lunch and feed 5-10 thousand people with it, you and I can begin to imagine what He can do with our resources.

Illus: God's plan is like a great thoroughbred horse able to sprint with great speed and full of strength and stamina. Our plans are like the little electric horse in front of the department store that you insert a quarter, bump around for a few minutes and then find that **we are still in the same spot** wishing you had one more quarter.