

God's Plan

John 6:3-13

Preface

Illus: There was a fortuneteller, gazing into crystal ball, telling a frog his fortune. "You are going to meet a beautiful young woman. From the moment she sets eyes on you she will have an insatiable desire to know all about you. She will be compelled to get close to you – she will be fascinated by you." The frog reacts, "Oh, where am I, at a singles club?" The fortuneteller says, "No, a biology lab."

Sometimes our dreams and plans don't turn out quite like we expect. Life is going to include disappointments and challenges.

Reading the Bible, one must conclude that God has a plan for every unexpected moment in our life.

Scripture

³ Then Jesus went up on a mountainside and sat down with his disciples. ⁴ The Jewish Passover Feast was near. 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. ⁷ Philip answered him, "Eight months' wages^a would not buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!"

⁸ Another of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, spoke up, ⁹ "Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?" ¹⁰ 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. ¹¹ 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. ¹² When they had all had enough to eat, he said to his disciples, "Gather the pieces that are left over. Let nothing be wasted." ¹³ So they gathered them and filled twelve baskets with the pieces of the five barley loaves left over by those who had eaten. John 6:3-13 NIV

Introduction

Sometimes we get discouraged in life. See if you recognize any of these questions.

Why are all these things happening to me?

Where is God and why doesn't He help me?

Does God care me?

Is there anyone here who hasn't asked these questions at some point in their life?

The miracle of the feeding of 5,000 was a spectacular miracle that changed the way people viewed 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?

As a church and as Christians, it is important that we understand the implications of this great miracle.

Content

1. God's always has a plan

John writes, *"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 how He would handle the challenge before them.

God always has a plan. Even when we can't see a solution, God has a plan. God has a plan for your current crisis. God knows exactly what you are facing. He understands how you feel whether it is fear, apprehension, anxiety, God understands.

We must take comfort in knowing that God has a plan for whatever we are facing. 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.

⁵ *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*

Illus: Pam and I were reflecting this weekend on some of the times God has been there with His solution to our struggles. So many times He has worked things out when we could not see a solution anywhere in sight.

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.

"In all things God works for the good of those who love Him and have been called according to His purpose." Romans 8:28 NIV

We must learn to wait upon the Lord. We must learn to trust in His ways for God always has a plan.

2. God's plan always requires faithfulness

Philip was from Bethsaida which was the closest town. He would have known the local resources for food. So Jesus asked Philip, *"Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?"* This 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 strengthen our faith.**

God educates us to help us understand **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 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: What if the disciples would have refused to distribute the food because they didn't believe there was enough?

We must exercise faith in order to experience the miracles of God.

3. God's plan is always better

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

There was not enough money or enough food to purchase to feed 5,000 people. **The task at hand was humanly impossible.**

But **for God it was no tall task at all.** All that was available was a little boy's lunch. God didn't even need that but it was a good place to demonstrate what could be done.

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 and 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. If we could only understand that truth, we would be eager to see what great things God has in store for our life and our church.

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

Illus: I am reminded of the Garth Books song, "**Thank God for unanswered prayer.**" It is when our plans fail and God's plan unfolds that we realize **God had a better plan all along.**

If our Lord can take a little boys lunch and feed 5-10 thousand people with it, just imagine what He can do in our church and in our lives.

Conclusion

Illus: Most everyone has seen the movie "The Man from Snowy River." It is set in the high country of Australia and includes many fascinating scenes of beautiful horses galloping in the wild. You can see the huge muscles in their legs as they pace through the wilderness. God's plan is like a great thoroughbred horse able to sprint with great speed with 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 so you can ride a little longer.

Illustration: **Rev. R. S. Jones** was a missionary to Brazil. He had many years of Christian service. In 1936, he was retiring due to ill health. At a Convention that year, this missionary was talking to the songwriter **BB McKinney**. Jones told McKinney that his doctor would not let him return to Brazil to continue his missionary work. McKinney asked about his future plans. Jones replied: "I don't know, but wherever He leads I'll go." These words stuck in McKinney's mind. Before that evening was over, McKinney had written the words of an invitation hymn: "Wherever He leads I'll go, Wherever He leads, I'll go. I'll follow my Christ who loves me so, Wherever He Leads I'll go