

“This is a Test!”

I. **INTRO:**

- A. **Armando** - to San Bernadino - 3 Jn.1,2; 5-8.
- B. In this chapter, we’re going to see Jesus perform 2 more impressive miracles, impossible feats. We’ve already watched him make *clear water blush*(turn to wine!); *heal a boy* from 20 miles away; & make a *lame man walk*. Today, He’ll feed 5000 & walk on water.
1. If Jesus can do these imagine what He can do for **your life, your impossibilities?**
 2. **Are you a pessimist? What’s on your list of impossibilities?** (*Your marriage, your job, your finances?*)
 3. Really, impossibilities depend on our “*perspective*”.
 - a) **Example:** to a **child**, many things seem impossible, like **long division**, or the game of **chess**. But from an **adults** perspective, these are handled w/relative **ease**.
 4. Let’s try to understand the impossible from **2 different viewpoints**...the **human** & the **divine**.
 - a) **Divine** - **Jeremiah** makes this claim, **Ah, Lord God! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and outstretched arm. There is nothing too hard for You.** Jer.32:17
 - (1) Then **God confirms it** 10 verses later, **Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh. Is there anything too hard for Me?**
 - b) Lk.18:27 **The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.**
- C. This is a time of **testing** for the disciples. Jesus asks: **How can we address the problem of hunger? How can we deal with popularity?**

II. **THIS IS A TEST!**

- A. **FEEDING 5000!** (1-15)
- B. The one miracle, besides the resurrection, that is in all 4 gospels.
- C. On the **banks** of the **Sea of Galilee** [Galilee=circle; 13mi. long; 8mi. Wide; 700’ below sea level]
- D. **Test Questions!** (5,6)
 1. What do **you** see when a **big crowd** shows up (fame, success, glory? **Or** maybe you get overwhelmed w/a swelling sea of people/problems, threatening to crash on your head); but **what did Jesus see...hungry people.**
 2. **Jesus tests the disciples faith:** He asks **how they propose to feed the multitude?**

3. Sometimes we just **focus** on the **wrong thing** completely!
 - a) Like the old story of the **Russian Security Officer** who watched the gate at a plant. Every evening a man had a **wheel barrel** with a **brown bag**. Every evening the guard would stop him & ask, **what's in the bag?** He would show him & it was full of sawdust & wood chips, to heat his home. This went on day after day. Finally the guard couldn't take it any longer & said look, I don't care what your stealing, but I know you're stealing something, **what is it? Wheel barrels!**
4. You will never feed anyone if you **don't ask how you might**;
You will never feed anyone if you **only focus on the problem**;
You will never feed **one** if you only focus on the **many**.
5. (6b) Jesus knew exactly what He was going to **do**. Which means, He's not only in control of **the situation** at hand, **but** several steps ahead of the game.
 - a) Like a brilliant **chess player** who thinks several moves ahead. Maybe even **giving up a minor piece** as a gambit(sacrifice) in order to later **gain an advantage**.
 - b) So Jesus is willing to **give up** a little R & R for His troops, in order to **gain** a *more committed* band of men.

E. **Pessimism at its Finest!** (7,8)

1. **Philip** - It'll take a small fortune! [Philip thought the answer was \$]
 - a) So with *computer speed* Philip analyzes the situation, & gives Jesus a **spreadsheet answer**.
 - b) So how did he do on his exam? **Not so well**. [1] he sees only the **situation**, **not** the possible **solution** [2] he's more concerned about the odds **against** them, **then** about those **for** them [3] he calculates for only a **bare minimum**, "that every one of them may have a **little**".
 - c) So while **Philip** burns out the batteries in his pocket calculator...**Andrew** scurries around looking for how much groceries they had.
2. **Andrew** - at least seeks a solution, even though its a human one.
 - a) But becomes overwhelmed...**what are they among so many?** [Andrew thought **little** was **insignificant**]
 - b) **Sir Michael Costa** was conducting a rehearsal in which the orchestra was joined by a great chorus. About halfway through the session, with trumpets blaring, drums rolling and violins singing their rich melody, the **piccolo player** muttered to himself, "What good am I doing? I might just as well not be playing. Nobody can hear me anyway." So he kept the instrument to his mouth, but he made no sound. Within moments, the conductor cried, "Stop! Stop! Where's the piccolo?" It was missed by the ear of the most important person of all.

3. So **Philip** looked 1st at the **budget** & **Andrew** checked the **pantry**.
 - a) They needed to **look to the Lord**. Remember they've seen him change **water/wine**.
 - b) **We do the same**. We've seen Him change the *old water of our lives* into **new wine**. We've seen him give us *new legs of faith* to our *lame spiritual bodies*.¹
 - c) When we're faced with an impossible situation we need to **look to the Lord**.

4. Always at the time of **human hopelessness**...Jesus takes over!
5. **A Lad with a Lunch!** - If only like this lad we would also give Him our all.
 - a) He will **take it, break it, & use it** to bless others!
 - (1) Book: "***If it Ain't Broke, Break it!***" by Robert Kriegel. Secular book on business. I love some of his chapter titles: *Always Mess w/Success; Playing it Safe is Dangerous; Sacred Cows Make the Best Burgers; Take Risks not Chances*.
 - b) **He'll Take it** (offer yourself & your resources to Him); **He'll Break it** (allow yourself to be thoroughly broken); **He'll Use it** (then & only then can He use it for His glory).

- F. **Scarcity of Food!** (10)
 1. Jesus is **the source** of the answer to men's needs.
 2. Jesus uses what's available.
 3. Then He makes them to lie down in green pastures!

- G. **Surplus of Food!** (11-13)
 1. **Good & Plenty!** - After all have eaten to their full, leftovers!
 2. Jesus takes a **hopeless situation** & turns it into a **scene of hope!**
 - a) Jesus loves taking **question marks** & turning them into **exclamation marks!**
 3. **Filled 12 baskets** -Jesus not only meets needs but supplies more than enough
 - a) **God through Jesus Christ** provides more than is adequate for human needs.
 4. Hey, **what did they do w/the left overs?** Doesn't ever tell us.
 - a) To the animals, birds, to the poor? - **We know, not to waste the Lord's good gifts**.
 - b) Let not **nothing be lost** - After you're filled yourself, don't forget about others around you! **It is not enough to read the Word** for our personal profit; we should also be able to **give some of it** to others.
 - (1) We are responsible for **all** that the Lord gives us. Even the **little things**.

¹ Chuck Swindoll; John; pg.5

c) And remember it was while **Ruth** *gleaned fragments* in the harvest field that the *biggest thing* in her life happened(Boaz).

5. Does Jesus always resolve our every impossibility w/a happy ending in the here & now? - He does want to **nourish** us, but He **never wants** to be reduced to a **genie** who will magically supply our every want.
 - a) He gave the people bread & fish for **just** that one day. But he refused to let the people make Him their **Bread-King** so their stomachs could always be full.

H. **The Prophet!** (14,15)

1. Wow, He is **The Prophet, Messiah**,...Let's make Him "**King**"!
 - a) Oh 1 day He would allow this(Palm Sun) but on His terms, **Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!** Lk.19:38
 - b) Why didn't Jesus wish to be made king by these people? [wouldn't mean anything]
 - c) God's design was not that Jesus manifest Himself as an **earthly king** but as the **suffering servant**.
 - d) This reminds them, His kingdom would be **spiritual**, not *political*
 - e) The crowds seemed more interested in **Jesus' signs** than in **His truth**.
2. **Jesus withdraws & heads for the hills.**
 - a) What might we learn from His **withdrawing from the place of success** to be by Himself?
3. Jesus shows His **divine nature** as He has *power over the natural, created world*. He also showed He is the **Master of quantity**.

I. **WALKING ON WATER!** (16-21)

J. **Stormy Sea!** (16-18)

1. This happens at the **high point** of our Lord's popularity.
 - a) The disciples (*esp Judas*) would have welcomed a **kingdom**.
 - b) **So, Jesus sends them into a storm!**
2. The disciples are threatened by a sudden squall.
3. **From popularity to peril!** - **Do you find yourself toiling against Satan's storms?** Jesus is **praying for you** on the mount & one day will come to **bring peace**.

K. **Sovereign Savior!** (19-21)

1. Another situation of **human hopelessness & fear**.
 - a) Jesus gives **hope**, "**It is I, do not be afraid**".

2. Jesus came to them & met their needs - **When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;** Is.43:2
 3. Jesus walks on water & brings the boat to land immediately.
 - a) With Jesus on board **we will** arrive at our destination!
 4. **Jesus shows His mastery over natural law.**
- L. In Marks account (6:45-52) it ends by saying, **For they had not understood about the loaves, because their heart was hardened.**
1. They didn't grasp yet He was *God in the flesh*, or the *sustaining Bread of Life* come down from heaven.
- M. **End:** Are you facing a *humanly* impossible situation? **What is it?**
1. Is Jesus asking you any **test questions?**
 2. Are you only looking at **your finances & your cupboard?**
 3. Do you feel your **faith** being stretched? Broken?
 4. Jesus **sees, cares,** & can amply **supply our needs,** but He is sovereignly independent from human agendas!!!
 5. He has His own bigger plan, but He still will **calm our stormy seas,** urging us all along to "**not be afraid**" because **He is here!**
- N. **Communion:**
1. Invite up worship team.
- O. **Five broken things in the Bible and the results achieved by them:** [1] **Broken pitchers** (Gideon) and the light shone out [2] **A Broken Alabaster Box** and the ointment was poured out [3] **Broken Bread** and the hungry were fed [4] **A Broken Body** and the world was saved (**Take eat this is my body which is broken for you; do this in memory of me**) [5] **A Broken will** (Psa 51:17) and a life of fulfillment in Christ.
1. Ps.51:17 **The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken**(shattered) **and a contrite**(crushed) **heart - These, O God, You will not despise.** [to empty self]
 - a) **Jesus** sacrifice to **me**, brought me a *spirit made alive* and a *new heart*.
 - b) **My** sacrifice to **God**, is a *shattered spirit* and a *bruised heart*. (i.e. No pride, humility)
 - c) The shattering & bruising are designed by God for the preparation of his people.
 2. Lord, **Take us, Break us, Use us.**