

“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.**