**John 6:1-15 After this, Jesus crossed over to the other side of the Sea of Galilee (or Tiberias). 2A large crowd followed him because they saw the miraculous signs he was performing on those who were sick. 3Jesus went up on the hillside and sat down there with his disciples. 4The Jewish Passover Festival was near. 5When Jesus looked up and saw a huge crowd coming toward him, he asked Philip, “Where can we buy bread for these people to eat?” 6But Jesus was saying this to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do. 7Philip answered him, “Two hundred denarii worth of bread would not be enough for each of them to have just a little.” 8One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, said to him, 9“There’s a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what is that for so many people?” 10Jesus said, “Have the people sit down.” There was plenty of grass in that place, so they sat down. There were about five thousand men. 11Then Jesus took the loaves and, after giving thanks, he distributed pieces to those who were seated. He also did the same with the fish—as much as they wanted. 12When the people were full, he told his disciples, “Gather the pieces that are left over so that nothing is wasted.” 13So they gathered them and filled twelve baskets with pieces from the five barley loaves left over by those who had eaten. 14When the people saw the miraculous sign Jesus did, they said, “This really is the Prophet who is coming into the world.” 15When Jesus realized that they intended to come and take him by force to make him king, he withdrew again to the mountain by himself.**

“Go out there and show the false prophets for who they are. They want to kill you but go meet with them. Both them and you build an altar and place a burnt offering on it but don’t light the fire. The God who sends fire that is the real God.” Sounds impossible but that’s what Elijah did. (1 Kings 18)

“Take these 300 people who are still with you against the Midianites who are as numerous as locusts. I will give you the victory. I have given them into your hands.” Sounds impossible but that’s what Gideon did. (Judges 6-8)

“Although you are a virgin, you will give birth to a son, and he will be the Son of God.” How impossible. But Mary believed the divine message. (Luke 1)

We see again and again in the Bible God’s people facing the impossible. Think of Noah, Abraham, Moses, Ruth, David, Daniel, Esther and many more. Still today, God’s people, you included, face the impossible. We’re no Abraham or Elijah or Mary. How are we supposed to do it?

Points to consider as an individual or with a small group:

* Look up three of the follow and list what was impossible.
  + Abraham (Genesis 15)
  + Moses (Exodus 2-3)
  + Ruth (Ruth 1-4)
  + David (1 Samuel 27-31)
  + Daniel (Daniel 1)
  + Esther (Esther 4-5)

Let’s see how Jesus trained the disciples to face the impossible.

Jesus had taken his disciples to a remote shore of the Sea of Galilee. It took effort to get there. The crowds, however, eager for his miracles followed him. 1000’s of people, possibly more than 10,000 people. Jesus asks the impossible of Philip. **“Where can we buy bread for these people to eat?”** Philip took in the request and explained to Jesus, **“Two hundred denarii worth of bread would not be enough for each of them to have just a little.”** Eight months of wages. That wasn’t just being carried around in the disciples’ joint money bag. They didn’t have the money to feed these people and even if they did where would they buy food in this remote place?

Jesus don’t give him a solution. Remember Jesus asked this when he first saw the crowd. Then, he went on to teach them for the rest of the day and heal the sick. Can you picture Philip and the other disciples discussing this among themselves all day? “How are we going to feed all these people? Do Jesus even know what he asked us to do? Jesus is going to have to send them away at some point. If he would only stop teaching and let them go find their own food. That’s the only solution. We certainly can’t feed all of them. That’s impossible.”

Points to consider as an individual or with a small group:

* Calculate the amount of money it would take today to feed the crowd. (Denarius = one day of wages)

In fact, the disciples tried to get Jesus to send the people away that they might get food. They had come up with a reasonable way to feed the people. Let them feed themselves. But Jesus told the disciples to feed them all. All of the disciples knew how impossible it would be. They had too little to give to all these thousands of people. **One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, said to him, 9“There’s a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what is that for so many people?”** You see, Jesus, it’s just impossible. We don’t have enough.

Points to consider as an individual or with a small group:

* List three human solutions when a person faces the impossible.

What impossible things has Jesus placed before you? Jesus asks you to face the future without worry about money, without being consumed by what you have or don’t have. In our time where so many luxuries are viewed as necessities, he asks you to be content with basic food and clothing. Despite our world gauging success by how many things you accumulate and measuring happiness on have more than those around you, Jesus asks you to give cheerfully, freely, abundantly to support his work and to help the needy, trusting him to take care of you and bring you happiness. If he can feed over 5,000, he can feed you. He is your priceless treasure. Yet it seems so impossible, for so much of our time and energy is wrapped in earthly things, just like those disciples worried about earthly food.

There’s more to the impossible. When faces with temptation, no matter how powerful, Jesus asks you to refuse it without regretting what you think you’re missing. When faced with pain, illness, disease, he asks you to bear it patiently. When faced with the loss of a dear friend or loved one or faced with rejection, he asks you to persevere. When insulted or mistreated, he asks you to return kindness. When wronged, he asks you to forgive. In all those things that lead us to cry out, “Why me? It’s too much! I can’t put up with it! I’ll try things my way. You have to take it away.” we sound like the disciples: “Send the people away to fend for themselves. It’s impossible for us to feed all these people.” It’s impossible for me to patiently endure. I just can’t do it.

Points to consider as an individual or with a small group:

* What is the impossible Jesus has placed before you to which you must say, “I can’t”? (Come up with two)

Jesus likes to hear those words from you. “I can’t do it.” Jesus likes to hear “I can’t” from people who struggle with thinking “I can.” Jesus confronts us with the impossible to bring us to our knees so we admit “I can’t. Even using all the things that I have; I can’t do it.” He brought that home to the disciples. Even after gathering all the things that they had together, they only had five barley loaves and two fish. But what did the disciples do with what they had? They brought it to Jesus. That is what must follow our cry, “I can’t.” Then, take it to Jesus.

The world will never do that. When the world faces the impossible, they might redefine success claiming, “I can do it well enough.” They might dismiss it as unimportant. They might try to find another way. They might excuse it by looking at others, “I can’t do it but it was mostly their fault that it didn’t work.” They might use it to indulge laziness. They might falsely appeal to the strength of humanity, “I can’t do it, but we can do it together.” They might give up in despair, “I can’t so its all hopeless.” The world will not bring it to Jesus.

You, dear Christian, when faced with the impossible, entrust it to Jesus. That’s why he places the impossible in front of us. He does it so that we entrust it to him. He works it out his way, not ours.

So often with earthly thing, Jesus teaches us contentment not by giving us more, which would be our way of handling it. Rather he teaches us that no matter how little there is, we have everything we need if we have him. In him, we have true happiness, contentment, and security, no matter what our earthly life looks like.

Points to consider as an individual or with a small group:

* Explain: Contentment is to take all that you are and give it to Jesus for his care.

What great blessing he has worked for you by traveling the most impossible path of all. He takes sinners like you and me and prepares us for the presence of the holy God, the brightness of our heavenly home, and the glory before the throne of the Almighty. He prepares us to join Elijah, Gideon, Mary, and Abraham and all those who have gone before us in the faith, to join them in singing, *Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ, because the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, the one who accuses them before our God day and night* (Revelation 12:10).

Our Savior, Jesus, was slain and with his blood he purchased you for God. He made you to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God. What blessings he has worked out for you by traveling that impossible path of the cross, weighed down by the sins of the world, that impossible path by which our God became one of us and died in our place. The impossible path by which he conquered death and rose in victory to give life to you who believe in him. Jesus followed the impossible path to bring you the glory of heavenly riches beyond whatever we could imagine.

When faced with the impossible, entrust it to Jesus. Remember that he does great things in the face of the impossible. Follow him on the impossible path of life. Entrust all that he has given to you back into his hands. He feeds you not only for a day. He feeds you for all eternity with his heavenly blessings and forgiveness. Amen.

Points to consider as an individual or with a small group:

* What does the miracle of the feeding of the more than 5,000 teach to you?