

Make a Difference

by Jim Cymbala

Jim Cymbala's sermon encourages believers to embrace their purpose in making a difference through compassion and faith in God.

Duration: 26:15

Scripture: Zechariah 4:6, Matthew 14:13-33, Mark 6:30-44, Luke 9:10-17, Luke 15:11-32, John 12:24

Topics: "Serving"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on the story of Jesus feeding the multitude with loaves and fishes, which is mentioned multiple times in the Bible. The speaker questions why this story is emphasized and why it was not used again in the history of the church to provide food for starving people. The speaker suggests that this story is a metaphor for how ministry works and emphasizes the importance of making a difference in people's lives. The sermon concludes with the idea that when God gives us a burden or opportunity, there will always be a problem, but we should welcome it and trust in God's provision.

Transcript

We're here to pray. We pray for other people. We pray for ourselves a lot.

We pray for loved ones. I want to end tonight by praying for ourselves that God would come and help us to make a difference. When I started in the ministry with my wife, I got this terrible sinking feeling that because of what I had observed since I was a kid and what I had learned in college, that you can live out your Christian life, you could even be a pastor, and not really make a difference.

Not really be used by God to see the name of Christ exalted, see the kingdom expanded, see people helped. You can just keep on keeping on and be faithful, and that's good, but not see a breakthrough, not see the miracle-working power of God in your life. And oh, the thought of that.

I did get desperate. I did come and say to God that day, God, if you're not going to use me, then let me die. My daughter, Sue, had not been born yet.

I only had little Chrissy, but I was like, I know I'm going to live forever. There's no big thing in living a long life, because we're going to live forever. What does it matter if you live long or short here, relatively speaking? I want to make a difference.

If you're out here on this Tuesday night prayer meeting, God wants you to make a difference. He wants to use you to feed the multitudes, and to see change made. Most people accept what is.

Few people, God puts faith in their heart, and they're open to him, and they see what could be instead of what is. Instead of cursing the darkness, they want to light a candle. They want to see God do something in their life.

Brothers and sisters, why did he save you, and you're still here on earth? You're not in heaven. Brooklyn is not heaven. You know that, right? DeKalb Avenue is definitely not heaven.

So why are we here? We're here for a purpose. But what's the purpose? Obviously not to make a living, and just have children, and raise families, and do all of that. And that is a wonderful calling, and that's so important.

But obviously there's a world lying in darkness, and we're the light of the world. We're the salt of the earth. And the Lord believed enough in us to plant us here, to make a difference.

Not just as church planters. Every one of us, make a difference. In other words, have that kind of life that when you die, you're missed.

A lot of people, they're died. They're not missed, because they never were difference for people. They never left that aroma of Christ.

They never brought grace and kindness. When I die, I want to be missed. Don't you want to be missed by somebody? Rather than just, you know, sitting in your house, watching television, and keeping in that little comfort zone of yours or mine.

I want to just tell you these three or four things. They're brief. They're simple.

There's one story that all the synoptic gospels mention, Matthew, Mark, and Luke. And that's the feeding of the multitude by Jesus. Loaves and fishes fed huge amounts of people.

Why is this mentioned so often in the Bible? Not only that, but like in Matthew, there's two records of him feeding the multitudes. And there's details on how many loaves and fishes and how much was left over. And it's mentioned over and over like, why would you mention that? Especially in light of the fact that that never was used again in the history of the church to provide food for starving people.

The Lord prayed for sick people. The apostles prayed for sick people. The Lord taught the word of God.

The disciples taught the word of God. But nowhere ever in the book of Acts do we find, give us some loaves and some fishes and we're going to do our thing now because there's a famine in Palestine. In fact, when there was a famine in Palestine, Paul went around raising money from other churches and said, let's get our money so we can help the starving saints in Palestine.

There's a famine. There's a shortage of food. So why would the Bible tell us over and over about this story? When the Bible never tells us anyone else tried to do it again, just like no one walked on water.

These were signs that Christ was Messiah. These were signs of his divinity, but there's lessons in here that apply to all of us if you want to make a difference. That's where the fulfillment is.

That's the joy, the deepest joy I've ever had in my life after finding Christ. I thank God for the wife he gave me, my children, my grandchildren, but the deepest fulfillment is to lay down in bed at night no matter how tired you are and know that you made a difference. Something you said, some prayer you prayed, something you did made a difference in somebody's life.

Come on, don't you want that in your life? And it can happen. It's not about you as you're going to see. It's about the Lord and understanding how he works.

Let's look at this one account in Matthew of the feeding of the second feeding. Jesus called, he had been healing people, ministering this huge crowd of people. Jesus called his disciples to him and said, I have compassion for these people.

They have already been with me three days and have nothing to eat. I do not want to send them away hungry or they may collapse on the way. His disciples answered, where could we get enough bread in this remote place to feed such a crowd? That's a very logical question.

How many loaves do you have? Jesus asked. Seven they replied and a few small little pescado, little fish. He told the crowd to sit down on the ground.

Then he took the seven loaves and the fish and when he had given thanks or blessed it, he broke them and he gave them to the disciples, not to the people. He gave it to the disciples and they in turn to the people. They all ate and were satisfied.

Afterward, the disciples picked up seven basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over and the number of those who ate was four thousand beside women and children. And this is the second account. The first crowd was even more and the first crowd, how many remember how many loaves, how many fishes? Five loaves and two fish.

So this is a parable. This is a metaphor of how ministry works. Not talking about going to church on Sunday, not talking about trying to obey some laws.

I want to talk to you now here so we can pray seriously for ourselves that God would do something new in this church. In us. In us, starting with the speaker.

Something new so that this year is more of a difference in people's lives in 2012 than any other year we've ever had. I'm not so much interested in receiving God's blessings. I need that.

I want to be a blessing. Because the more you are a blessing, the more God pours it in. A lot of us can't take much from God because we're like the Dead Sea.

Nothing goes out. We're wrapped up in our own little world and nothing's going out and we're saying, oh Lord, I need you for what? Just for yourself, nothing goes out to anybody. You don't care about anybody else.

So let's analyze this. The first thing that's absolute necessity for ministry we see in our Lord is that although he was facing the cross soon And although he was hated by the religious leaders and although secretly they were already plotting his death When he violated the sabbath to them and their ritual and their Formalism and their traditions. They already started plotting to kill him.

So here's a man with a hit with a contract out on him Who's facing the cross is the son of the living God Misunderstood by his disciples Got all kinds of pressure on him But he's the only one who looks at the people and knows their situation and cares for them Instead of focusing about him. Well, I gotta teach I gotta you know, I gotta heal people But if they only knew what i'm going through and where i'm at, that's the way we think But it's the Lord not the disciples the disciples then come to him and say Lord These people are so hungry and they're going to faint on the way. It's the Lord So the first thing we need from God is a heart of compassion To see people and feel what they're going through.

Do I get an amen here for that? Without that there is no ministry. You're just a mechanical christian You just we parrot phrases and it's all about us we're the center not even God We're the center when God becomes the center He immediately redirects your your attention to the people around you and what they're going through and you begin to weep over them and care about them And it's not even you it's God putting that in you And that's what we need because without that you can't minister when you don't care about people Right, I would go up against anything to protect one of my children or my wife or my grandchildren or one of you who? I love so much. Why you don't have to tell me that you don't have to psych me into that somebody gonna harm levi Someone's gonna harm my my grandson tommy in chicago.

Are you kidding? I'm gonna spring to his defense I'm gonna do anything make any sacrifice why it's in mi corazón. It's in my heart Unless it's in our heart. We're gonna see people walk by us and they're just just nothing.

They're just people So the first thing we got to ask God to do is God help me to see people the way you see them And help me to feel what you feel now. Listen, it's costly It'll keep you up at night it'll make you have to go the extra mile But if you want to make a difference it's not on your terms it has to be on God's terms Christ's not following us. We have to follow him So the first thing we need is God help me to see people and be concerned And nobody can teach you that only the holy spirit's going to reproduce the heart of God so that we care about people Right now tonight the person who's behind you could be battling with suicide And they need a word of encouragement unless God puts it in your heart you just I got to get home People are like a problem all ministry begins with compassion Paul said I travail like a mother giving birth till christ be formed in you Why was he travailing like a mother giving birth? Because he loved them so much if you don't love them you just like like a preacher if I don't love the audience I'm, just making noise.

I'm, just showing off some sermon. It's just a waste of time Ah, but if God puts love in my heart for you, then i'll get through to you So christ here we see has compassion on the people. He sees need And we need the holy spirit to come and do that But if you surrender to the lord tonight and you ask him put you don't think god will put that in your heart We got too much churchianity.

We need more christianity. We need we need the kind of Of heart that only god can give us and it begins with me. I need it the most I need it the most because i've been doing this long enough.

I can get us just put me in a corner I'll get a sermon out of something. But what's a sermon? What's a mechanical sermon going to do to help anybody? No, it's got to start in here Immediately Upon saying that he felt for the people and he truly felt he wasn't saying it for effect This will always happen to you The disciples bring up a problem Wherever god gives you a burden to do something. There will always be a problem Don't say I thought no, it's the problem just you welcome the problem because it's going to always

be there and what was their problem With thousands of people and we're in a remote place.

Where in the world would we get food? Where could we get food? The moment the lord gives us opportunity and he gives us a burden satan or someone or your own mind will present a problem There is always a problem. All i've ever known in my life is problems That's all that's all life is about is problems. Come on Don't look at me like i'm strange How many of you had a few problems lift your hand up if you had a few problem? Whenever god puts something in your heart to do for him, there's going to be a problem What do you think satan is going to cheer you on he's going to try to put up a problem Or our insecurity is going to raise a problem And here's what the problem always will come down to in terms of us The disciples Raised the problem and then they said We don't have what it takes to feed the people That's simple.

Is it logical? Yes. Is it true? Yes Is it right? No, it's wrong Lord's about to do something He feels compassion A problem is raised, but god is a problem solving god christ solves problems Employees and pastors and and worship leaders and whatever good strong christians who live around america If they're not problem free what makes them great is they solve problems Their faith has been built by facing problem after problem and they've seen god come through so many times that the next problem They don't even care about it. It's like it's a problem And their question was we don't have what's needed and that's what we all face We don't have the money Sometimes you're a pastor.

You don't have the money Or in your own life i'd like to do that, but I don't have the talent. I don't have the speaking ability I don't have the maturity. I don't know enough of the bible.

I don't have what it takes To meet the need that the lord has shown me the lord had shown them the need They raised the problem like always And the problem resolved upon this point. We are insufficient to meet the challenge And they're perfectly right But they're wrong things can be right and wrong. They can be true but false at the same time in god's eyes Maybe you're here tonight and that's your problem The lord wants to work in through your life, but you keep coming up with the same old tired excuse The excuse is this I don't have enough blank Just fill in the blank I'm too old.

I'm too young i'm inexperienced I've never done that before whatever it is. There's always a problem of insufficiency whenever the lord is going to use somebody Administrate if you study the bible, come on You all know your bibles the first thing Moses said when god told him to go to pharaoh and be the deliverer. What did he say? I can't talk I can't talk to somebody else god's always calling people.

Who am I they say? They have to be broken down to the place where they go here I am Here's where it now comes to are you ready? Are you with me? The lord has to give you compassion. You have to feel what people are going through There will always be a problem And the problem resolves down to insufficiency Our mind tells us satan tells us even sometimes people tell us You can't do that And then the lord says the main question Don't tell me what you don't have What do you have The lord's not interested in what you don't have I'm asking all of you The lord is saying to you what do you have whatever you have give it to me Listen, we got Some loaves a few little pescado some fish It's nothing I'm, not asking you what you don't have What do you have give it to me? What iq do you have give it to him? What mouth do you have give it to him? What body do you have give him your body? What heart do you have give him your heart? Do you have two arms give him two arms? I only have one give him the one arm This is where the miracle happens in ministry Is when you stop talking about what you don't have and you give god what you have Even though it seems like it's not enough. Come on.

Let's say amen to that. Let's say amen So the lord says i'm not interested what you don't have how would what we don't have be Applicable to this whole question. It's not germane to the subject what you don't have What do you have? Jim cimbalò, who are you? What do you have? Well, i'm i'm, you know, i'm no polished speaker.

All right. I'm not interested what you don't have. What do you have? Do you have a mouth? Do you have whatever? Give it to me All miracles begin by giving what you have to jesus Where did the miracle happen? In his hands something happened in his hands one last little lesson This is mentioned in in all the accounts of this He blessed it And then he broke it.

Why did he break it? Let's look at the physical Situation he blessed it. He thanked god for it Asked his blessing on it and then he broke it. So it'd be smaller pieces and somehow in the breaking is where the miracle happened Because he kept breaking and it just kept breaking And he's handing it out and he's still breaking But but what is he breaking? He just keeps breaking And the broken pieces are handed back to the disciples And they feed the multitude jesus never gave anybody anything What does that tell me two things whatever god blesses he breaks If he's going to bless your life if you give him what you have He's going to break it and that We know what that means we're all so full of ourselves We're too proud You didn't say amen to that but god forgive them.

They know not what they do We're all too proud we're all too self-sufficient We all think we know everything we all thought we've had experiences with god instead of being like little children just depending on god We we have a tendency to strut. That's the truth And god has to if he's going to feed us to the people Whatever he blesses he breaks study the whole of church History study the whole of the bible Every person that god uses he had to break them Jonah had to be broken Jeremiah had to be broken Everyone had to be moses had to be broken Talk about joseph, how about joseph talk about broken? How about smashed and broken? And then god uses them in miraculous ways So you gotta have enough faith to say god I not only want to see what you see feel what you feel Save me from what I don't have save me from that complex. I have about what I don't have I don't see how I could do this or say this or do anything or be used, you know God the gifts of the holy spirit are are open right now tonight to probably hundreds and hundreds of people in this filled church They're open to just someone who will stop making excuses and just say i'm not much but here I am Here I am The greatest evangelist of the 19th century d.l. moody Basically had a speech impediment couldn't speak right one more people to the lord anyone in that hundred year period with no microphones and no None of the technological advances that we know And someone saw him when he was working with children He started just working with children in chicago and someone had heard about there's this guy called.

Mr Moody never got ordained never became a minister ordained Shook the world never got ordained a man heard about him and said I went to downtown Where he worked with the poor children the kids that were abandoned and moody had rented got found a way to rent a building You know, this is what people do when when god is with them. They just start doing stuff They just start doing stuff. You don't organize it.

They just do it And the guy said I walked in And I saw this squat younger man Sitting in the front reading Holding a african-american child on his knee And he was reading the bible the story of the prodigal son But he couldn't convey the story to the boy because he couldn't read well enough to make it clear He couldn't read Started out not being able to read properly But he was the one who said I heard a preacher say That the world is yet to see what god will do to somebody who's fully devoted and consecrates himself I'm not much and god raised them up to show us that it's not by might nor by power nor by iq But it's by

god's spirit. Can we all say amen to that? Whatever he blesses he breaks And he keeps breaking Some of the men and women I admire the most that i've met over the years I've heard their private stories that you don't know. Oh such breaking such breaking That's how god uses sorrow he uses trouble To get us so dependent on him that we're just like oh jesus help me through another day And then god says oh good now I can use you And then he handed the food To the disciples and said you feed the people Where'd the food really come from jesus, but who fed the people My friend warren weirsby said something to me two years ago that i've been pondering I mentioned to him again on the phone last week He said to me jim.

Most people don't understand That if god's going to do anything if the holy spirit's going to do something on the earth He can only do it through god's people You know, we pray holy spirit move Come and move Well, who's he going to move through He's not moving through angels. That's nowhere in the bible No, he's just going to move he can do all things Yeah, but if christ is the head and we're the body the head gives the directions who carries out the orders the body It's us And all we have to do is say not what I don't have What I do have lord. I want to give to you Could you close your eyes with me? And All ministry begins by getting a heart transplant so you start feeling for people You start seeing what they're going through it starts to bother you It's not from you It's god working in your heart And then you don't look at the problems.

You don't look At the obvious difficulties, which will always be there and you don't focus on what you don't have you just say god I see the need and what little I have what little I am. I give it to you now bless me and break me And use me to make a difference in people's lives Some of you probably going to end up on the mission field so be it some have left already others will follow if you're here tonight and say pastor That's what I want more than anything else I want to make a difference. I want god To take what little I want to surrender what I am to god, whatever I have Whatever little I have what it doesn't matter what it is.

If you put it in god's hands, that's where the miracle happens It's not what you have. It's what he does when you give him what you are Just come out of your seat and stand here Just god. I want a breakthrough in 2012 I want to make a difference when I die.

I want people to miss me because i've been leaving Just feeding spiritual feeding programs everywhere I go Father we thank you for your word tonight to us And now we pray that everyone who has not been baptized but who puts their faith in you will go lord to that lobby That we can help them get started on the right foot and obedience to you and their walk with you And now get us all home safely lord And we just pray that we will be used tonight tomorrow Keep us wide open to the promptings of your spirit and the compassion of your love As we walk among the people of new york city We ask this all in christ's name and everyone said Amen, let's give god one hand clap of praise. Come on. Let's my sweat thing

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