

Five Loaves and Two Fishes

by Major Ian Thomas

Major Ian Thomas emphasizes the necessity of God's presence in living a miraculous Christian life, as illustrated through the story of the loaves and fishes.

Duration: 41:23

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Mark 6:34, Luke 9:10-17, John 10:11, John 14:6, John 21:17, Ephesians 1:11

Topics: "Miracles"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of living a miraculous quality of life through God's presence. He highlights how the disciples initially knew nothing of this miraculous living until something transformed their lives. The preacher explains that the Christian life is dependent on God's presence and without Him, we can do nothing. The sermon also discusses the story of Jesus feeding the hungry crowd with limited resources, demonstrating that what may seem impossible from a human perspective is possible through God's perspective.

Transcript

If you have a Bible, that's fine. If you eat with both hands, that's okay. We're going to turn to the sixth chapter of Mark's Gospel.

One of the most familiar stories in the Bible, and very delightful. I indicated to those of you who may have been present in the worship hour yesterday morning that there's nothing more boring than being religious, and nothing more exciting than being a Christian. Because the Christian life is essentially miraculous.

Not miraculous in the sense that it needs to be sensational, or spectacular. Because by and large, the sensational and spectacular is seldom miraculous. Man can achieve much of that, and does.

He's a great showman. But what is miraculous simply demands a divine origin. And it's the miraculous in the commonplace, the little things that add up into the mosaic of a divine plan, that demand a divine authorship.

And the Lord Jesus was constantly seeking to introduce his disciples to this quality of living. That quality of life which he declared he had come to introduce us, or better, reintroduce us. For it was for this quality of life that God made us.

A quality of life that is essentially beyond explanation apart from God. For the simple reason that he engineered it in that way. He so engineered man that God is indispensable to a man's humanity.

Man as the creature was designed to be inhabited by God the Creator. And it was in the forfeiture of the divine life that man's life on earth, as man, became something less than miraculous. But spiritual regeneration, that new birth, of which the Lord Jesus spoke when he talked with Nicodemus, is simply calculated to reintroduce us to that quality of life.

Now some of us last evening, in that evening session, began to recognize maybe that the disciples, in the three years that they were with the Lord Jesus, knew nothing of this miraculous quality of living. They were the most discouraging Bible class that anybody could possibly ever have had. But then something transformed their lives.

Now this story concerns these disciples before they made that discovery. But remember it isn't just a Bible story. It's calculated to introduce us to a principle.

A principle to live by. In the sixth chapter of Mark's Gospel and the thirty-fourth verse, the Lord Jesus, when he came out, saw much people and was moved with compassion toward them because they were a sheep not having a shepherd. Their lives appeared so tragically purposeless, aimless.

There was no substance to their being. And he had compassion. They were no different then, of course, to people as they are today.

Because apart from that miracle that puts God back into the man, life cannot but be aimless and purposeless. Having compassion because they were a sheep not having a shepherd. And he began to teach them many things.

I have to use a German Bible very often when I'm preaching in Europe. German being the second language in which it's my privilege to minister. And I like Luther's translation of that particular statement.

He began to teach them many things in the German Bible. It says, And that's marvelously encouraging to me as a preacher. Literally translated, he preached a long sermon.

Wouldn't you say that was encouraging? Amen. And it was long. It just went on and on and on and on.

And so far as the disciples were concerned, on and on. Until finally they were really getting fidgety. And I imagine that Peter nudged John in the ribs and said, don't you think it's time we stopped? And John said, yes, why don't you tell him? And probably Philip turned to Andrew and said, you know, it's getting terribly late.

These folks have got to get home. And Philip said to Andrew, I agree with you, but you tell him. Well, none of them had the courage to tell him.

So finally, as a deputation, they arrived. When the day was now fast spent, verse 35, his disciples came out unto him and said, this is a desert place. The time is far past.

Send them away. In other words, get them off our hands. That they may go into the country, round about into the villages, and buy themselves bread, for they have nothing to eat.

This, you see, to the disciples was impending disaster. Here they've got 5,000 men. And Matthew makes it quite clear that this was in addition to the women and the children.

That was quite a crowd. It was getting dark. They were tired, dusty, hungry.

And there wasn't a chance so far as they could see in eternity that they could do anything about it. And so, in order to avoid the obvious embarrassment that this dilemma threatened, said they to the Lord Jesus, get them off our hands. That's what we like to do with most dilemmas.

But instead, said the Lord Jesus, give you them to eat. Feed them. You don't send hungry people away.

You feed them. And almost sarcastically, they said, shall we go and buy 200 penny worth of bread and give them to eat? Do you imagine, with the little resources that we have at our disposal, scarcely enough to satisfy our own modest needs for the next week or so, you want us to go out and feed this lot? In so many words, said they to the Lord Jesus, forget it. That is a sheer, utter impossibility.

And I'm sure the Lord Jesus agreed. He said, you're absolutely right. It is totally, utterly impossible.

That is to say, from your point of view. But not from my point of view. Because my point of view is God's point of view.

And that's exactly why we're going to do it. What is to you impossible. And I'm going to show you how to do the impossible.

And live miraculously. Now don't get carried away with the mere circumstance of the story that is here recorded for us. The fact that he just fed hungry people with bread is incidental to the principle that he was seeking to introduce them to.

A principle to live by. That means that you and I can enjoy that quality of living that is beyond explanation, apart from God. You see, that is the essential nature of the Christian life.

That's why the Lord Jesus said, John 15, 5, Without me, you can do precisely as much as I, playing the role of man, though creator, can do without my Father. How much is there? Nothing. For, said the Lord Jesus, John 5, 19 and John 5, 30, Without my Father, I can do nothing.

Just precisely as much as we always intended man to be capable of, apart from the indwelling presence of his Creator. Nothing. And you see, when the Lord Jesus came into this world, though never ever less than God, he deliberately chose to behave as though he were never ever more than man.

As opposed to man, who created by him was never intended to be ever anything more than man and who struts across this planet and behaves as though he were never ever less than God. You see, that's the essential difference between the Lord Jesus, who came to be man as he as God created man to be, and man as man became after he fell into sin. He, Christ, never ever less than God, behaved as though he were never ever more than man.

Man, never ever more than man, behaved as though he were never ever less than God. That's why he lived a life that is anything but miraculous. But the Lord Jesus demonstrated the principle that in presenting his body to the Father, he anticipated that his Father, as God in the man, would be the author of every act.

For without, said he, my Father, I can do nothing. For the Father who dwells in me, John 14 10, the Father who dwells in me, God in the man, he does the work. So everything I do, he does.

Everything I say, he says. And everything I am, he is. Look at me and see him.

This was the principle to live by that the Lord Jesus demonstrated in the flesh and blood of his own humanity as God incarnate. And he said, as my Father sent me to live on earth a quality of life for which there would be no possible explanation but my Father as God in me, so send I you to live a quality of life that will be beyond any possible explanation but my presence in you. The only explanation for my life on earth is my Father living in me, and the only explanation then, when you've entered into the good of that for which I came, for the life that you will live on earth, must be my indwelling presence.

For without me you can do nothing. So if what you do and what you are and what you say as a Christian can be explained in terms of you and needs no explanation in terms of Christ, you may have become a Christian, but it's plainly obvious you haven't yet learned how to be the Christian you have become, to live miraculously. See, if you are not living miraculously a quality of life as a Christian that demands the presence of Christ to make it possible, what have you got to offer to the neighbours? Nothing at all.

You knock on their door, invite them to be saved when they've seen in you a quality of life that needs no other explanation but you doing your best. So that neighbour is calculated to say, so what? My hobby is golf, your hobby is religion. I play golf to the best of my ability, you play religion to the best of yours, and by and large I reckon that I play a better game of golf than you play religion.

So you stick to your hobby, I'll stick to mine. Thanks, bye bye. But you see it's precisely for that reason that most churches have to knock on people's doors.

You see if the church, the true fellowship of redeemed sinners invaded by deity, were demonstrating in the home, across the road, amongst your neighbours, in the office, on the playing field, in the university, at the school level, if the born again believer were demonstrating patently that here clothed with the flesh and blood of that forgiven sinner is a quality of life that demands exclusively, God as an explanation, you wouldn't have to go around the streets knocking on people's doors, inviting them to get saved, they'd be lining up, knocking on your doors and asking what it is that makes you tick. But because we've got so little to offer in that quality of life that is demonstrably different, we knock on their doors instead and they're by and large very unimpressed. As of course nobody could have been but unimpressed with the disciples at the time they followed the Lord Jesus.

They were always fighting amongst each other, quarrelling who's going to have the best seat, you know getting mum to go and talk to the Lord Jesus and lobby on their behalf. John wanted fire to come down from heaven and in one mighty atomic blast disintegrate the enemy. What a bunch! Peter who stood, as we saw last evening, between Christ and his cross and when the Lord Jesus gave them that panoramic preview of God's redemptive purpose said forget it, that's not going to happen to you and we're going to make sure it doesn't.

What a bunch to begin with. If there was hope for them, there's hope for you and hope for me. It was such a discouraging Bible class as Jesus had that's kept me preaching for the last 44 years.

It's the only reason why I accepted the invitation to come to this church. I thought you couldn't be worse than that one. Well how did he do it? The miraculous.

Now the fact of the miraculous, the actual activity engaged in, remember not all important, the principle involved. In order to discover the principle involved, turn to the same story but this time it's recorded in the sixth chapter of John's Gospel in closer detail. Sixth of John and verse 5, When Jesus then lifted up his eyes and saw a great company come unto him, he saith to Philip, Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat? And this he said to prove him, for he, the Lord Jesus, knew what he would do.

He knew exactly what he was going to do. And in that he knew exactly what he was going to do, you might have imagined that this question was somewhat superfluous. Says he said to Philip, what are we going to do? When all the time he knew what he was going to do.

It's quite obvious he wasn't seeking counsel, he didn't need advice, he never does. We're always willing to give him advice and mostly we do when we're praying, we call that praying, giving God advice. Expecting him to stand smartly to attention, listen to our demands, and get a reprimand from us next time we talk to him, if he doesn't do exactly what we tell him.

You see God doesn't have to stand to attention smartly and do as we tell him. When you come to God and exercise that fantastic privilege which we call prayer, don't imagine that you're giving God advice or telling him what to do. He doesn't need your advice, nor will he be told by you what to do.

Praying is simply exposing any given situation to the adequacy of the one who shares his life with you on earth by his indwelling Holy Spirit. You bow yourself at that point, you bow yourself out and bow him in and say, I have no preconceived notions, Lord Jesus, as to how you're going to handle this. All I know is you're big enough for the job.

Thanks. If you need a pair of hands, mine are available. If you need my mouth to speak with, that's okay.

And if you want to keep it shut, okay, that's equally okay by me. If you need eyes to see with, ears to hear with, feet as a means of transportation, I want you to know that my body is made available to you at this moment for you to get into action and do what you know is right. And I'm in no hurry.

Do you know how to pray? Commit your way unto the Lord, trust also in him, and the Bible says to pass. In the King James, they've stuck in italics, it in. It shouldn't be there.

But the translators couldn't resist the temptation to put the it in. Because we hate to have something undefined. You must have a goal.

You must have an object. God says, uh-uh. I'll do as I please.

Because I, as God, happen to have that right. What the Bible says there in Psalm 37 and verse 5 is commit your way unto the Lord, trust also in him, give him total right of way, he will bring to pass. Not will bring it to pass.

He, literally translated, is handling it. In the German, er handelt. He's handling it.

He is in action. Not he will bring it to pass, because the moment you put it in, you've got a preconceived notion of what that it ought to be. And if he doesn't do it, then you reprimand him for not answering your prayers.

You know, when the children of Israel finally got out of the wilderness into the land of Canaan, one of the tribes they had to expel were the Itites. Do you remember? So make quite sure there are no its in your

prayer calendar. Just expose it.

Stand right back and say, God, you're perfectly competent to handle that. And then the seventh verse of that 37th Psalm says, rest in the Lord, relax. And do what? Keep knocking on the door and say, hurry, hurry, hurry! No, God says, for one thing, don't shout, I'm not deaf.

And furthermore, I'm living within you, I'm not behind the clouds. So please don't shout at me when you pray. Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for him.

So always tell God when you've told him your need that you're in no hurry. Because he isn't. He never is.

It's only man that's in a hurry. That's why we make such appalling blunders. Give God time.

Give God space. So the Lord Jesus didn't need counsel. He wasn't asking for advice.

You may imagine he asked this question because he wanted to know something about Philip. And you'd be wrong again for a very good reason. The Lord Jesus knew about Philip then just precisely as much as he knows about you now.

Do you know how much that is? Everything. There's not a thought that's been passing through your mind as you've been sitting there looking at me that hasn't already been recorded in heaven one day to be brought up in evidence against you. He knows every single last thought that ever passes through you.

Every motivation. Others may applaud you for what you've done but God knows the motive that prompted you to do it. And so far as he's concerned, it's for the birds.

Because you can't deceive him though you may deceive everybody else and indeed on occasions yourself. He didn't need to know a thing about Philip nor did he need any counsel. Then why ever did he ask this question? For a very simple reason.

He wanted Philip to discover something about himself. What do you think he wanted Philip to discover? He was a disciple, one of the closest devotees of the Lord Jesus who had forsaken everything to hit the trail and join himself to Jesus Christ. What do you think Christ wanted him to know about himself? Well, he wanted Philip to know that he was an utter abysmal failure.

He wanted Philip to discover as a disciple of Jesus Christ that he was a total flop. He wanted him to discover just how bankrupt his quality of life really was as a professing acclaimed disciple of Jesus Christ. And that you see by and large is the first thing that as Christians we have to discover that we're abysmally bankrupt.

The first thing that an unregenerate sinner has to find out is that he's dead. Awake thou that sleepest arise from the dead. Wake up to the fact you're dead.

That's what Ephesians 5.14 says. We call it the awakening of the soul conviction of sin. Awake thou that sleepest arise from the dead.

Wake up to the fact you're dead and you need a resurrection. And there's only one way you can have resurrection and that is claim redemption through the blood of Jesus and then he risen from the dead will reinvade your humanity in the person of the Holy Ghost who by his presence in life will abolish death. So the only options open to the unregenerate are to stay dead or do what? Come alive.

Those are the only two options open to the unregenerate. You and I are born by nature the children of wrath dead in trespasses and sins alienated from the life of God. And when you and I were first confronted with the claims of Jesus Christ we had to exercise the option either to stay in that condition of spiritual death and alienation from God or at his gracious invitation accepting him as redeemer enjoy that spiritual rebirth that by the coming of the Holy Ghost abolishes death and brings life and immortality to light.

So those are the options open to the unregenerate. Stay dead or come alive. But then you see there are two options open to those who are regenerate.

And that is to live as though you were alive or go on though alive living as though you were still dead. And you see Philip was a perfect example of the Christian today like the foolish Galatians who though alive by the Holy Ghost still continues to live as though he was spiritually destitute and bankrupt. And the one thing that the Lord Jesus wanted Philip to find out was that this was the case.

Well Philip as we have seen from the earlier record in Mark 6 together with the others said 200 penny worth of bread is not sufficient for them that every one of them may take a little. So he says because it isn't possible to us it isn't possible to you. Period.

Forget it. Now that's how the carnal mind works. That's not God's point of view that's man's point of view.

If it isn't possible to us it isn't possible to God. So forget it. If we want some new enterprise that we seek to launch but there aren't enough dollars in the bank well that's it.

You get into committee you put the motion and all unanimously say we don't have the money so it's impossible to us therefore it's impossible to God. Forget it. Is that living miraculously? Well of course not.

That's living in self-imposed poverty. You might just as well remain unredeemed save to change your destination from hell to heaven but God didn't send his son into this world simply to change our destination. You don't imagine that God has any enthusiasm about having a heaven filled with redeemed sinners as useless in heaven as they were on earth stacked in bundles of ten and dusted with DDT once a week by a bunch of angels.

Do you think that's what heaven is going to be like? The whole purpose of God in his redemptive purpose is not just to get people out of hell and into heaven but to get God so out of heaven into people that on earth on the way to heaven they'll live a quality of life that is demonstrably miraculous. The quality of life for which man was made as the creature enjoying the presence of his creator. The Lord Jesus might have turned to a man in the crowd and said excuse me so do you believe in God and he would say no I don't I'm an atheist.

Oh you're an atheist. Well the Lord Jesus might well have said that's most interesting I was looking for a man like you. You see we're faced with quite a problem.

We've got 5,000 men plus the women and the kids we don't have too much available by way of feeding them but we wondered whether you had any suggestions because they're hungry. Now what do you think the first question would be that that atheist in the crowd would ask? Well how much money do you have? Wouldn't that be the first question? Well doesn't that sound horribly familiar? What was the difference between Philip as a professing Christian and the atheist in the crowd? He was a practising atheist and a professing atheist. All that mattered to him quite obviously was the material resources available for the immediate situation.

So what was the difference between that atheist a practising atheist and a professing atheist and Philip? What was he concerned about? Money. How much they'd got. Absolutely no difference at all because as far as Philip was concerned the fact that Jesus was there alive actually on hand didn't make the slightest difference to the situation.

If it was impossible to them it was impossible to him. Period. Jesus Christ, so far as Philip was concerned in that situation as other disciples with him might just as well have been dead for all the difference his presence made.

Tell me this. How much difference does it really make that Jesus as God creator is alive in your humanity how much of a difference does it make in the situations with which you're confronted? There was one difference between the atheist and Philip You see the atheist was a practising atheist and a professing atheist Philip was a professing Christian and a practising atheist. That was the only difference.

And you see there are countless professing Christians who say Jesus Christ the Redeemer God co-equal with the Father and the Holy Ghost in the triune Godhead who threw the universes into space he was the one who threw the stars into the far corners of the night he's the one who at this very moment upholds all things by the word of his power and he, God lives in me. Well don't you think that the neighbour should notice a difference in the way you live your life? If the God who set this tiny little planet in space where it is and keeps it there actually lives in you and is at your disposal no matter what happens can there be any single situation that could ever arise in your life for which he as God in you could ever be less than big enough? Well of course not. Well the world ought to recognise the difference between those who enjoy such illimitable resources and those who remain in that bankrupt condition of spiritual death and destitution.

Certainly Philip didn't give any evidence of that fact nor did Andrew. While this conversation was going on you see another little conversation was going on between Andrew and a small boy that insisted on pulling his shirt. I don't know why that small boy pulled Andrew's shirt except that I think Andrew had a very friendly kind of face.

Some people are like that. They're easy to approach. You know the sort of folks I meet? You're not going to get your nose bitten off if you knock on the door.

You don't have to go all around the world before you begin the conversation and bring the subject up. He had a face, I always like to say, like a doormat that had welcome on it. Some people have a face like a notice on the door beware of the dog and they wonder why nobody calls.

Well Andrew turned round to the small boy that pulled his shirt and said what do you want son? And the kid said I'd like that man over there, the master, the preacher, I want him to feed this crowd. And said Andrew so would we. But suddenly son, there's not a chance in a million, tell you that.

Oh yes there is, he said and stuck his handy shirt brought out five loaves and two fishes. Now I'm sure that Andrew wasn't unkind. He said son that's most generous of you, very kind and I'll tell the master I'm sure he'd be deeply impressed at your generosity.

But you know son I don't think it's quite enough. I mean five loaves and two fishes for this crowd. If it had been six loaves and three fishes maybe we could have done something but five loaves and two fishes.

You know son I think your mum had you in mind when she wrapped that up and if I were you I'd wrap yourself around it. But I'll tell you this I promise I'll tell the master I know he'll appreciate your offer. Who was Andrew reckoning with? Christ? No.

The only horizon that Andrew had small boy five loaves two fishes. Forget it. I imagine the boy went away somewhat disappointed but it wasn't long before he was pulling Andrew's shirt again.

You again? Yeah. Well what do you want this time? Do you want that food? No he says still got it. But son I told you that wouldn't be enough.

And I imagine with considerable indignation that boy finally looking straight into Andrew's eyes would say something like this I don't care whether I've got five loaves fifty loaves five hundred loaves or five thousand loaves but since I've been listening to that man take me to him because that's really all that matters. And of course that's all that really does matter. I don't know whether you've ever tried to argue with a small boy but it's a losing battle.

You might as well whistle up a drain pipe. So finally they gave him off his bag Andrew said come on son and he took him and he tapped the Lord Jesus on the arm and he said master don't laugh please there's a small boy here he's got five loaves and he's got two fishes and he wants you to feed this crowd with that. Now I've told him how much you'd appreciate his offer and I've tried to persuade him it isn't enough.

Do you mind please just pat him on the head say thank you and I'll try to get rid of him. And the Lord Jesus said dinner is served. One of his disciples verse 8 of that John 6 Simon Peter's brother saith to him there is a lad here which has five barley loaves and two small fishes but what are they among so many? So far as Andrew was concerned Jesus Christ might just as well have been dead for all the difference his presence made in that situation.

He was limited totally by the human circumstance. Is that how your life has lived as a Christian? The only relevant factors those that are on the nitty gritty level of a man with his feet on the ground. Then you may have become a Christian but you haven't yet learned to be the Christian you have become because the miraculous is the habitat in which the true believer lives with an unshatterable peace that passes all understanding baffles the neighbours because you are as panic proof as Christ himself knowing that in the measure in which you are prepared to bow yourself out and bow him in he for the creator God he is will move into that situation and demonstrate his adequacy.

You see to put it in a nutshell the two options that open to you as a genuinely converted man or woman redeemed in the blood of Jesus indwelt now by Christ through his Holy Spirit the two options that open to you in any given situation no matter what the need threat opportunity responsibility or promise that it may offer the two options open to you are these one that need is your problem or that need is his opportunity and you got to choose between the one or the other it's the difference between walking as a Christian after the flesh that's your problem or walking as a Christian after the spirit it's his opportunity how do you live your life in the situations in the last 24 hours the last 7 days that situation about which you're frightened tomorrow that kept you asleep sleepless last

night what's the principle that governs your life what is the principle you live by the marvelous privilege that he has given to you and to me is this in every given situation to bow yourself out bow him in and say Lord Jesus there was a time when this was my problem but I thank you now I've discovered the principle of being the Christian I say I have become this is no longer my problem although the problem is there of

course it is but it's not my problem it's your opportunity to demonstrate that you're big enough for the job then you learn to live a quality of life that is explicable explicable only in terms of Jesus Christ Jesus took the loaves when he had given thanks he distributed to the disciples and the disciples said then set down likewise of the fishes as much as they were and

everybody was filled everybody was totally satisfied then said the Lord Jesus gather up the fragments that remain that nothing be lost so they gathered them together twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves which remained over and above under them that had eaten then those men when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did said this is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world because there is absolutely no possible explanation for this that has happened but God himself precisely precisely only one possible explanation God himself but how did the Lord Jesus actually do it because this is the principle involved the story is just the context well I suppose the simplest thing to do would be to shrug your shoulders and say he was God it was alright for him he

can't expect us to live that way you're wrong again not that he was not God for God he was God he is God he ever will be but the fantastic thing is this that when the Lord Jesus came into this world though never ever less than God he insisted for every step he took for every word he spoke for every decision that he made to behave as though he were never ever more than man because as the Father sent him he's going to send us he can't send us as God as the Father sent him if the Father sent him as God he can only send us as men as the Father sent him as man so I've got to take a big long look and discover the relationship that existed on earth between Jesus Christ as man and the Father as God then I will know the relationship that must must prevail between myself as man and Jesus Christ as

God so that he then as God can be to me as man what he allowed the Father then as God to be to him as man and that's how you discover what it means to be a Christian because the Christian life derives from a relationship it doesn't derive from conformity to patterns procedures concepts formats precedents the Christian life derives from a disposition on man's part toward Jesus Christ that he evidenced as man in his disposition on earth towards his Father so how did he do it?

Well Peter tells you later on Peter wouldn't have known at this stage because he was as dumb as the rest at this stage of his understanding it took the resurrection to introduce Peter to the principle that finally became reality in his experience on the day of Pentecost for on the day of Pentecost at the command of the Lord Jesus 120 men and women were waiting to enter into the good of that for which the Lord Jesus had died not just to get them out of hell and into heaven but to get the Lord Jesus out of heaven as God into them in the gift of the Holy Spirit through whom on earth they would share his life as by the same Holy Spirit he on earth had shared the life of his Father and this was the revelation of course that completely revolutionized their lives as we shall discover more in

detail in our evening sessions in this closing moment turn to the second chapter of the book of the Acts Acts chapter 2 which is the story of Pentecost that for which the Lord Jesus was born at Christmas died and rose again at Easter that at Pentecost he might come and reinvade that humanity that on the basis of the redemptive act was available for the regenerative purpose of God getting the life of God back into the soul of man which is imperative to the likeness of God in action in the behavior of man the character of man Acts chapter 2 verse 22 you men of Israel hear these words Jesus of Nazareth a man a kind of a man approved of God what are the characteristics of a God approved man what is the kind of man on earth that God in heaven can approve upon whom he can look and say as he did

of the Lord Jesus assuming our flesh and blood good my beloved son in whom I'm well pleased at last again on earth for the first time since Adam fell I've got a real man what are the characteristics of a God approved man well it goes on to tell you this was the fantastic life transforming revolutionary discovery that Peter made Jesus of Nazareth a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs notice very carefully please what it says which God did who did God did well I mean that's what the crowd discovered there was no possible explanation for what had happened but God God did but by whom by him who's him the man approved so what are the characteristics of a man whom God can approve he's simply a man by whom God can get into action so who fed the 5,000 God by him

there's nothing of course that the Lord Jesus did on earth that he could not himself have done as God but he deliberately refused so to do for he assumed our humanity it behoved him it was incumbent upon him in all points to be like unto his brethren to assume our flesh and blood to play that role as creature that he actually purposed when as creator he made man so he placed his humanity body soul spirit mind emotion and will at his father's disposal that he by the Holy Ghost so invading his personality that the totality of the man Christ Jesus was available for the divine activity of his father God so the father who lives in me said the Lord he does the work if you see me feed 5,000 I want you to know who's doing it God by me that's why we're told there in John 6 that when the Lord Jesus

told his disciples to tell the crowd to sit down he took the loaves verse 11 and John chapter 6 and gave thanks what does that mean just said great well no he gave thanks he said thank you to somebody who do you think he thanked if he himself was going to do it as God as indeed he could have done for God he was God he is and God he ever will be but had he done it as God would he have thanked anybody no he could only have thanked himself who did he thank his father his father because he was demonstrating to you and to me that there are only two possible options open to man in any given situation no matter what the need it will either be our problem or God's opportunity so the Lord Jesus taking the five loaves and two fishes lifted up his eyes to heaven and said father thank you very much

father there's a little boy here and it's absolutely fantastic nobody else knew he was there I did from the very beginning he was tucked away in the crowd and I knew exactly what I was going to do and so did you father but isn't it delightful that this little boy father has learned the principle he reckons with me father the way I reckon with you he expects me to be to him what I know father you're going to be to me isn't that fantastic Philip father forget him Andrew dead lost Peter and the rest they might just want to stay at home but this little kid father unknown unsung he knows what it's all about father he's prepared to be to me father what now in the perfection of my humanity I'm prepared to be to you so that I can be to him father what I know you're going to be to me thanks and

then he reckoned with the fact that his father was in business broke the bread and divided the fish who fed the five thousand Bible tells you God by him tell me this wouldn't it have been just as easy for the father as God by the son to have multiplied the two hundred pennies in the bag as it was possible for the father by the son to multiply the five loaves and two fishes don't you think it would have been just as easy and just as possible of course then why did God by the son multiply the five loaves and the two fishes and not the two hundred pennies in the bag because God in his unquestionable sovereignty has deliberately limited himself by the law of faith he has deliberately limited himself by the law of faith that gives to man the moral option that lifts man out of the animal

kingdom and makes man man and God in faithfulness only responds to faith that faith that making God the object of that faith allows God as the object to become the origin of the act the difference the difference

was not in God's ability to multiply five loaves and two fishes more than he could have two hundred pennies in the bag the difference was in the disposition of the individuals concerned the disciple said it isn't possible to us so it isn't possible to him forget it the little boy said it isn't of course possible to me but it is possible to him let's go so where is the difference in quality of life lie in the one whose life we share no in the day that you were redeemed the same person came to occupy your humanity who came to occupy my humanity that's why Paul in the second chapter

of his epistle to the Philippians says work out your own salvation don't lean on me I'm not your crutch it's God who works in you that which is well pleasing in his sight it's God who works in you both to will and to do with his good pleasure and the same God who occupies my humanity is the God who occupies yours in the day that I received Christ as my redeemer he came to live in me and in the day that you received Christ as your redeemer he came to live within you you've got the same quality of life that I have then live it up says Paul more in my absence than in my presence and I've got good news for you if this is the quality of life that you would like and you're redeemed this is the quality of life you already have if you haven't been enjoying it it's simply because you've got the

wrong disposition the same Lord Jesus was available to the little boy as was available to Philip and Andrew and the rest of the disciples but their disposition made it utterly impossible for the Lord Jesus to do anything by them but the little boy's disposition allowed the father through the son to do the miraculous and fulfill his highest expectations because each need will either be our problem or his opportunity to the disciples their problem to the little boy his opportunity and he lives miraculously well that's simple isn't it? well I hope you have some fantastic problems this afternoon I hope you're confronted with all kinds of difficulties I've been redeemed for 20 years 30 years 6 months 5 days but now I realize what it means to be the Krishna I say I have become you're going to

live your life in me and this is the first opportunity this afternoon to bow myself out bow you in and say thanks this is no longer my problem it's your opportunity and I'm going to live miraculously you're in business that's the Christian life did you know that? then you can say to me to live is Christ to me to come alive new birth is Christ he came to live in me his life abolished death so to me to come alive is Christ to me to be alive now is to share the life that he gave me when he abolished death through life so to me to come alive is Christ to me to be alive is Christ but it will take one step at a time so for me to stay alive demonstrably to the world in which I live is Christ to come alive be alive and stay alive Christ Thank you

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