

How to Do the Impossible

by Major Ian Thomas

The Christian life is an impossible life that is explicable only in terms of Jesus Christ, and it requires learning to reckon with Him moment by moment, day by day.

Duration: 1:13:14

Scripture: Mark 6:34

Topics: "Dependence On God", "Faith"

Description

Major Ian Thomas emphasizes that the Christian life is inherently impossible without God's intervention, using the miracle of feeding the 5,000 as a demonstration of how Jesus operated in total dependence on the Father. He illustrates that both Philip and Andrew struggled to see beyond their limited resources, while a small boy's faith in Jesus made the impossible possible. Thomas challenges believers to recognize their spiritual bankruptcy and to rely on Christ for every situation, asserting that true Christian living is marked by a life that is inexplicable apart from God. He concludes by encouraging the congregation to walk in faith, trusting that with God, all things are possible.

Transcript

Now if you'll turn with me tonight to the sixth chapter of the Gospel of Mark. And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep, not having a shepherd. And he began to teach them many things.

And when the day was now fast bent, his disciples came unto him and said, this is a desert place, and now the time is far past. Send them away, that they may go into the country round about and into the villages, and buy themselves bread, for they have nothing to eat. The Lord Jesus Christ had been teaching this great company.

We're told there were 5,000 men, apart from women and children. And if meetings in those days were anything like meetings in these days, and there were 5,000 men apart from the women, it was a big meeting. And he'd been teaching them, it says, many things.

That's always a great encouragement to me. I'm, when in the continent of Europe, constantly preaching in German and using a German Bible, and in the German Bible it says, that means he preached a long, long sermon. Now isn't that encouraging? Oh, I hang on to that verse, I almost have it framed in my room.

But as this long, long sermon was getting to an end, and evening was coming, folk were tired and dusty and sticky and hungry. And if we take three simple sentences from the 35th and the 36th verse, this is what the disciples said to the Lord Jesus. This is a desert place.

Send them away, for they have nothing to eat. And that, to the disciples, seemed to be the only logical answer to the situation. They were tired and hungry, and it was quite obvious that the situation was going to become increasingly embarrassing.

Therefore, the only thing to do was to get them, at all costs, as quickly as possible, off their hands. Send them away, for this is a desert place, and they have nothing to eat. That seemed reasonable.

But in the 37th verse, the Lord Jesus answered and said unto them, Give ye them to eat. You don't send hungry people away, you feed them. But they say unto him, Shall we go and buy 200 penny worth of bread and give them to eat? All we have is 200 pence, and that is barely adequate, let alone for the needs of this great multitude.

Said to the disciples, to the Lord Jesus Christ, This is impossible. It can't be done. And in so many words, the Lord Jesus Christ said exactly.

That is precisely why we're going to feed them. I'm going to show you how to do the impossible. And that's our theme for tonight.

How to do the impossible. In other words, how to live the Christian life. Because as I pointed out last evening, the Christian life is essentially an impossible life.

If there is any truth in what we have already discovered, we recognize that the life of a Christian is the life of the Lord Jesus re-impacted by the Holy Spirit to a forgiven sinner, being lived by him through that forgiven sinner. Therefore the life of a Christian, if it is the genuine Christian life, can and must only be explicable in terms of Jesus Christ. And if your life as a professing Christian is explicable in terms of you, apart from God, it means that no matter how long you have been converted, you have not yet begun to enjoy the Christian life.

If the way you behave and the way you react to situations and circumstances and responsibilities and temptations and problems, if your reaction in these circumstances is as explicable in terms as you as the reactions of your unconverted neighbors in similar circumstances would be explicable in terms of them, would you please tell me what the difference is between your life as a Christian and their life as those who are not Christians. There can be no difference. And therefore there can be no logical reason why you should seek to persuade your neighbors to become Christians, because their lives are explicable in terms of them and your life is explicable in terms of you and Jesus Christ is an entirely unimportant factor.

You see, it is only when you and I have begun to live the kind of life manifestly before the world that is absolutely inexplicable, except in terms of God, only then have we any valid reason for expecting other men and women and boys and girls to put their trust in Jesus Christ and claim the spiritual regeneration imparts divine life to the forgiven sinner that we claim to have enjoyed. Do you see the sense of that? It is precisely because the world around us sees so little in our lives of what is supernatural, of what is inexplicable in terms of man, that they are totally unimpressed and totally uninterested. Our lives are too samish, they're too colorless, they're too commonplace to attract the slightest interest or concern or arouse the slightest curiosity.

The Christian life, if it is genuine, is always an impossible life. That is not to say it is always a sensational life, it seldom is, but it is always impossible apart from God. And the Lord Jesus says to his disciples now, I'm going to show you how to live impossibly.

And he chose this particular incident for the first demonstration. And in order to see how he did it, we need now to turn to John's gospel in chapter 6, as we shall later need to turn to the gospel of Matthew and chapter 14. But for the moment, John 6 and verse 5. And by your leave, I'm going to divest myself of this impediment.

I can normally only preach for about an hour with my jacket on. With my jacket off, anything up to two hours. I might add that tonight is the first time that I've been able to stand in this pulpit with a temperature of less than a hundred.

I preached it down from 101 to 99 last night, and if I'd gone on for another quarter of an hour, I'm pretty certain it would have been normal. But I'm thankful to God that we're right back on the dotted line again. And I trust it'll remain so.

So, John 6 and verse 5. When Jesus then lifted up his eyes and saw a great company come unto him, he said unto Philip, When shall we buy bread that these may eat? And this he said to prove him, for he himself knew what he would do. This he said to prove him. Now it is quite certain that when the Lord Jesus Christ asked Philip this question, he wasn't seeking advice.

He wasn't seeking counsel. He didn't want to know whether Philip had any ideas as to how they could get themselves out of this unfortunate predicament, for he himself knew what he would do. And that's something that we need to lay hold upon.

The Lord Jesus knew what he would do, and I want you to know this, the Lord Jesus always knows at any time what he will do. He is never taken at a loss. He is never overwhelmed by unexpected circumstances.

He is never overtaken unawares by events. He is the eternal, I am the God who knows the end from the beginning, and the Lord of all history. He's never nonplussed, and that is why if you and I are living his life, which is the birthright of every redeemed sinner, or better to put it this way, if we are allowing him to live his life through us, you and I become as panic-proof as Jesus Christ himself was panic-proof.

Are you panic-proof, or are you an incurable fuckpot, always going off at the deep end, always flustered when anything goes wrong, always worried? Listen, if you haven't yet become panic-proof, you haven't begun to live the Christian life. Because the Christian's privilege is to allow the Lord Jesus to monopolize his whole human personality and be in him in any circumstances panic-proof. He's never flustered.

He's never stumped, never at a loss. Have you been panic-proof since you got up this morning? Are you quite sure? Were you panic-proof all the morning? Even with the kids around your feet? Are you sure? I say, were you panic-proof at the office? You were? Do you think the office boy would agree with you? Or your typist? Are you quite sure? I'm going to ask you on Monday night whether you were panic-proof over the weekend. Christ didn't need any advice.

But I'll tell you something else. He didn't need to know anything about Philip. This he said to prove him.

Don't misunderstand that. The Lord Jesus Christ did not ask Philip that question so that he could judge by what Philip said what Philip's condition was. The Lord Jesus Christ was fully cognizant of Philip's spiritual

condition.

He didn't need to know anything about Philip because he knew everything there was to know about Philip. And I want you to know this, that the Lord Jesus Christ knows every single thing there is to know about you. There's not a single question that he needs to ask you in order to become informed about you.

He knows you like a book. Then why did he ask the question? This he said to prove him. He did not ask this question that he might come to know something about Philip, but he did ask this question that Philip might come to know something about himself.

Because there was a whole lot that Philip needed to discover about himself. You see, Philip was an apostle. He was one of the big names.

He was one of the big noises. But if there was one thing necessary for Philip more than another, it was this. Philip needed, as an apostle, to discover the sheer bankruptcy of his own spiritual experience.

Philip needed to know on what a pathetically low level he was living his life. This he said to prove him. This he said in order that Philip might be exposed in all his bankruptcy to himself.

Because, you see, before ever God can begin to do anything with us, we have to discover that we need what he can do for us. Nobody was ever redeemed through the shed blood of Christ until convicted of the Holy Spirit. He became cognizant of his need of the redemptive activity of the Christ who died for him.

Until he knows the sinfulness of what he's done, he'll see no relevance whatever in what Christ did. And that is equally true of the Christian. Until you and I become cognizant by the witness of the Holy Spirit of how totally, completely bankrupt we are, we shall never see any relevance in what Christ is in us.

This he said to prove him. And Philip's answer? Two hundred penny worth of bread is not sufficient for them that every one may take a little. That was his answer.

When the Lord Jesus said, well, Philip, what are your suggestions? He said, two hundred pennies. No go. Impossible.

All right. What was Philip reckoning with? Christ? Or two hundred pennies? Tell me this. Presented with this situation, did the fact that Jesus Christ was there make the slightest difference to Philip's calculations? None.

So far as Philip was concerned, Jesus Christ might just as well have been dead. All that mattered so far as Philip was concerned was that there were five thousand men, plus the women and the children, and that all they had in the money bag was two hundred pence. And whether Jesus Christ was alive or dead, or whether God was alive or dead, that is precisely how spiritually bankrupt Philip the Apostle was.

How bankrupt are you? How poverty stricken are you? Who have you been reckoning with throughout today? We don't even need to go back tomorrow. We don't need to go back to the day before tomorrow. I beg your pardon, yesterday.

Oh no. Who did you reckon with throughout today? I'm quite convinced that it would be most fascinating if we could somehow see today all the different, the multitudinous and different vicissitudes, trials, temptations, problems, situations that must have arisen in the lives of so many people that are gathered here tonight. And it would be extremely fascinating if somehow, panoramically, we could see portrayed

before us every single situation that has arisen today with which you and I as individuals have been faced, and with whom or with what we reckoned.

And I want to tell you with this. I want to tell you this. That in every situation, in every temptation, in every problem, in every responsibility, in every vicissitude, in every problem that arose today, in which you reckoned with something other than Christ, you were demonstrating your spiritual destitution.

You say you're a Christian. A Christian is somebody who is enjoying the indwelling presence and overwhelming adequacy of the Risen Son of God. A Christian who is living the Christian life, enjoying the Christian life, appropriating his resources.

A Christian is a forgiven sinner who reckons with Christ 24 hours a day, in every situation as it arises, and proves constantly his overwhelming adequacy for every situation, no matter what it may be. Who have you been reckoning with today? Well, Jesus Christ, although Philip was an apostle, and although he had forsaken all to follow him, and was one of his most devoted servants, Philip was living a life pathetically, pathetically possible. Supposing you'd asked the local butcher to come, who had never heard of Jesus Christ, and said to him, look here, look at this crowd.

What would you do if you had to feed them? First thing he'd ask was this, how much money you got in the bag? 200 pence. All right, Philip's life was no, no quite different from the unconverted butcher around the corner. Bring the godless blaspheming publicans from down the street and say to him, here are 5,000 men plus their women and children.

How much money you got in the bag? So, so far as Philip was concerned, apart from the fact that he had the reputation of being an apostle, that he was called Philip, and was known to be one of the followers of Jesus Christ, you could have detached Jesus Christ from him, and it would not have made the, that is the cold, bare fact. And that, my Christian friends, may be the hard, cold, cruel fact about your life too. That's why you've never cut any ice with the neighbours next door.

Because as yet you've never learned to face any situation in any other way than the unconverted, godless, blaspheming public down the road. You've never learned to reckon with Christ any more than Philip has. He hadn't learned to live impossibly.

But one of his disciples, verse 8, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, came to the Lord Jesus and said unto him, there is a lad here which has five barley loaves and two small fishes, but what are they among so many? What are they among so many? Well, as events turned out, what were they among so many? Would you tell me that? In the event, what were the five loaves and two fishes? Enough with Jesus Christ. But what were the five loaves and the two fishes to Andrew? Laughably inadequate. For Andrew came to the Lord Jesus with an apology on his lips.

He came to the Lord Jesus and he simply said, Master, I'm sorry to bother you. You're busy, I know, and you're tired. We all are.

But this small boy insists on pulling my shirt. He's been badgering me until I'm tired to bring him to you with these five loaves and two fishes. And believe it or not, he expects you to feed this crowd with these five loaves and two fishes.

Now, Master, I tried to dissuade him. I told him how stupid it was. I told him to eat it up himself.

I told him that he was, it was just about his size and he ought to wrap himself round it and not bother you. But he kept at me. So here he is.

But what are they among so many? Would you tell me this? What was Andrew reckoning with? Was he living impossibly? No, he was just living on the basis of five loaves and two fishes, lest Jesus Christ. And so far as Andrew was concerned, Jesus Christ might just as well have been dead. For all Jesus Christ made the slightest difference in the light of these circumstances.

Now, I don't just want you to examine Philip's heart or Andrew's heart. I want you to examine your own heart. I want you to be cruelly honest with yourself tonight.

Just exactly how far are you reckoning with Jesus Christ? Just exactly how far? Don't kid yourself. Don't pull wool over your eyes. Don't put on a sanctimonious looking expression.

Just be brutally honest with yourself. Just exactly how far are you, moment by moment, day by day, reckoning with Christ? In the multitudinous situations, problems and vicissitudes and opportunities and responsibilities that present themselves to you. Philip and Andrew weren't the only ones.

I've got a sneaking respect for Andrew. He did at least bring the boy to Jesus. And even, maybe not just because he brought him to the Lord Jesus, although that was Andrew's reputation.

There's no sermon recorded that he preached. There's no miracle recorded that he brought about. But it is recorded that he brought people and things to Jesus Christ, which is at least a good thing to do.

But I think probably more so because the boy went to him. And there's always a good reason why a boy goes to anybody. I think Andrew had that kind of face.

He had a face like a doormat. One of those doormats that says welcome. And for all his spiritual bankruptcy, at least he was approachable.

Maybe he smiled at the boy as he went through the crowd. But something said to that small boy's heart, I could talk to that man, he won't bite my nose off. Which is more than he can say about some people.

Some folk have got a face like a warning on the gate, beware of the dog. But not only Andrew, not only Philip, but every single one of the disciples, every single one of the apostles, were in the same state of abject spiritual poverty. Now this could be demonstrated all the way through the Gospels, again and again and again.

They had never learned to reckon with Christ. And yet to reckon with Christ is the first baby principle of divine action. You learn to reckon with him for your redemption as you put your whole trust as a convicted sinner upon his finished work upon the cross.

You reckon with his atoning death you reckon with the adequacy of his shed blood to cleanse your heart and reconcile you to a holy God. That is the first baby step of reckoning with Christ. But if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his son, much more being reconciled we shall be saved by his life.

He had to be what he was to do what he did that we might have what he is and be what the Christian life is. The life that he lived then lived now by him in us. And if I have once learned to reckon with Christ for my redemption because he died, that is only the prelude.

It is that which precipitates the process whereby breath by breath, moment by moment, step by step, incident by incident, situation by situation, I reckon with what he is in me as I once learned to reckon with what he did for me. This is baby principle. This is the very beginning of the Christian life to learn to reckon with Christ.

Never once to dare to assume any situation, assume any responsibility, assume any, any, any responsibility at any time, in any situation, without exposing it to the adequacy of the Christ who has taken up residence within your humanity and in the light of his overwhelming adequacy you step back and say, thank you Lord, thank you. This situation is no longer my situation, it is yours to whom I have exposed it because you have become my life. All that you are, I have, and all that I have because of what you are is more than enough.

I'm as panic-proof as God himself because God himself lives in me. That's the Christian life. Did you know that? Or don't you believe that God lives in you? Know you not that your body is the temple of the living God? Paul writing to the Ephesians, that you may be a habitation of God through the Spirit? Then why don't you begin to live as though God lived within you? Why don't you begin to act in every human situation as though your body was a habitation of the eternal creator God who through the universes into space God inhabits you? Did you ever read this? Isaiah 55 verse 15.

Isaiah 55 verse 15. I beg your pardon, Isaiah 57 verse 15. For thus saith the high and lofty one that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy, I dwell in the high and holy place, listen to this, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive, to quicken, to give life to the spirit of the humble and to revive the heart of the contrite one.

Imagine it! The God who inhabits eternity inhabits us. Isn't it time you were panic-proof? Well what did the Lord Jesus do? Verse 11. Having told them to tell the men to sit down, Jesus took the loaves, verse 11, and when he had given thanks he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down, and likewise of the fishes, as much as they would.

And when they were filled, I like that, when they were filled, they had as much as they would, and when they were filled. In other words they had as much as they wanted to be filled. And it's amazing what a difference there is in the quantity that will fill people.

Ever seen a small boy eating? Give him the chance and he'll have as much as he would until he's filled. And then you see a little later on you'll see a young girl maybe in her late teens, early twenties, and she's very very watchful about her figure, and she comes along like a young hen, she pecks as much as she would, you could hardly cover a sixpence with it, and she says she's filled. There are the stuffers and the peckers, and that's true of every meeting.

You'll find that there are those who come to a meeting and they've good, solid, healthy spiritual appetite for the things that count, and you can discharge your soul, and they'll keep on taking and God bless them, they're hardly ever filled. But then there are the peckers. They're filled in about five minutes.

They want to go home then. And when they were filled, he said unto his disciples, gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost. I want you just to notice this too, verse 13.

Therefore they gathered them together and they filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves which remained over and above unto them that had eaten. I want you to notice in particular that

they filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, little tiny barley loaves. The twelve baskets of fragments came from the five barley loaves.

Let that sink into your minds, because there are some very, very clever people who'll tell you that this is what happened, that when the rest of the crowd saw a small boy set a good example and opened his own little packed lunch and say, I'm prepared to share it with the rest, they were all stricken in conscience and they all stuck their hands down their own shirts where they'd been hiding their own little packed lunch, and they took out all, they all took out their little packed lunch, and before long everybody had a packed lunch, and everybody had enough to spare, and everything in the garden was lunch. Now isn't that sweet? That's called scholarship. And if you go along like that, you'll get a PhD in no time.

Well let the babies play with their toys. They filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves. Yes, have you noticed how the Lord Jesus did it? Oh I know he took the five loaves and the two fishes, and they were multiplied, but in verses 11, 12, and 13, have you seen the key? Of course if you went here last evening, maybe you wouldn't notice it, unless God graciously has revealed this to you before, as well he may.

When the Lord Jesus Christ came into this world, did he come to be God, or did he come to be man? He didn't come to be God. He came to be man. He is God.

He was in the beginning with God and was God, and by him all things were made, and without him was not anything made that was made. The Lord Jesus, and after his thirty-three years on earth, he returned to share again with the Father the glory that he had with the Father before ever the world was. But I want you to bear in mind always that Jesus Christ did not come into this world to be God, nor to behave as God.

He came into this world to be man, and to behave as man. As agreed between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit before ever the world was, the Lord Jesus Christ said, as my Father has sent me into the world, so send I you. If the Father sent the Lord Jesus Christ into the world to be God, then the Lord Jesus Christ has sent us into the world to be God.

The Father sent the Lord Jesus Christ into the world to be man, but man as God intended man to be, and behaving as God intended man to behave. And the Lord Jesus Christ sends you and he sends me into the world to be man, but man as God intended man to be, and man behaving as God intended man to behave. And if man is to behave as God intended man to behave, what is necessary? Total dependence, unrelenting dependence upon the God whose presence in man alone enables man to behave as man.

And Jesus Christ came into the world to be all that man through sin had ceased to be. He came to behave as man was intended by God to behave. So how's he gonna feed the five thousand? Look in verse eleven.

The Lord Jesus took the load, and when he had given, thanked. Now don't read that quickly and think that all that the Lord Jesus did was to say, let's say, grace. That isn't what happened.

The Lord Jesus took the loaves and the fishes, and he exposed the whole situation to the Father. For the Lord Jesus declares, John 14 10, the Father that dwelleth in me, to whom as perfect man I have yielded my humanity completely, the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the work. It is my office as man to be, it is my Father's office as God to act.

Therefore the responsibility for feeding these five thousand men plus the women and the children is not my responsibility, even as God. Because I'm not behaving as God. Because I cannot behave as both God

and man at one and the same time.

Because to behave as man I must be totally dependent upon God. The Lord Jesus took the loaves and the fishes, and he exposed the whole situation to the Father. For the Lord Jesus declares, John 14 10, the Father that dwelleth in me, to whom as perfect man I have yielded my humanity completely, the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the work.

It is my office as man to be, it is my Father's office as God to act. Therefore the responsibility for feeding these five thousand men plus the women and the children is not my responsibility, even as God. Because I'm not behaving as God.

Because I cannot behave as both God and man at one and the same time. Because to behave as man I must be totally dependent upon God. And my Father has sent me into the world to be man.

Therefore I am totally dependent upon my Father, to whom I have yielded my whole body, soul, spirit, through the eternal Spirit. Now this is a very beautiful demonstration. For you see the Lord Jesus Christ is adopting an attitude towards the Father, which the small boy had adopted towards the Lord Jesus.

He knew what he would do. The Lord Jesus knew that small boy long ever before Andrew got to know him. That always thrills me.

Because long ever before some boy or man or woman has been made public, long ever before anybody saw any promise in them whatever, Jesus Christ knows them. There may be some boy, girl or man or woman in this building tonight and nobody's ever seen any promise in you, but Jesus Christ knows you. He knows you as well as he knew that small boy.

You see because to Philip the 200 pence were important, Jesus Christ was totally unimportant. And because to Andrew the five loaves and the two fishes were important, Jesus Christ was totally unimportant. But the small boy, when Andrew said to him, it's not enough sonny, it's not enough, the small boy looked defiantly in his face and he said I don't care.

He says I don't mind whether it's five loaves or fifty loaves or five hundred loaves or five thousand loaves. To me the only thing that matters is that much. You see because to that small boy Jesus Christ was important, the five loaves and the two fishes became totally unimportant.

He was simply saying to his own little heart, five thousand men plus women and children, five loaves and two fishes, Jesus Christ. It's all that matters. And the Lord Jesus Christ, to the small boy, five loaves and two fishes, looked up into his father's face, said father, five thousand men.

When he gave thanks he simply affirmed positively his attitude as perfect man of total dependence upon the father. Now this may come almost as a shock to you, and I trust you won't misunderstand me. Who fed the five thousand? Who fed the five thousand? The father, through the son.

Jesus said the father that dwelleth in me he doeth the works. It would have been a million times easier for the Lord Jesus Christ as God to have fed the five thousand. The one who created all things could have fed the five thousand and the women and children beside with a word, as he calls the things that were not to become the things that are with a word.

But when in Philippians chapter two it says this, he humbled himself and became of no reputation. He was found in passion as a man. It meant that the Lord Jesus Christ was prepared for your sake and mine to empty himself utterly of his divine prerogative and become in the presence of his father simply perfect man.

And Philippians chapter two verse five says this, let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus. You are to adopt this attitude towards the Lord Jesus that he as perfect man adopted towards the father, one of total absolute dependence. This is how the Lord Jesus always operated as man.

To digress for one moment by way of illustration, if you turn to the eleventh chapter of John's gospel, John 11, Lazarus is dead, John 11 39, Jesus said take ye away the stone, Martha the sister of him that was dead saith unto him, Lord by this time he stinketh, he's been dead four days, it's impossible. Who was Martha reckoning with, a corpse or Jesus Christ? She was reckoning with a corpse. Jesus saith unto her, said I not unto thee that thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God.

Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid and Jesus lifted up his eyes and this is what he said, father he's dead, been dead father four days, he stinketh, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. I knew that thou hearest me always, but because of the people which stand by said that they may believe that thou hast sent me. I'm simply father publicly for their sakes affirming my dependence upon you because you sent me to be man.

The fact that he's dead father, the fact that he stinks father makes no difference at all because you're the one that matters. Come forth, he that was dead came forth. I say who raised Lazarus from the dead? Who raised Lazarus from the dead? The father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works, the father through the son.

We're going to examine this probably on Monday evening in closer more closer detail but I must refer you to one verse before we proceed. John 5 verse 19. John 5 19.

Then answered Jesus and said unto them verily verily I say unto you the son can do how much? How much? Nothing. Can't he even feed five thousand? No. Do you mean he can't raise Lazarus from the dead? No.

Who said he can't? He did. Himself. Why can't he do anything? Isn't he God? Yes.

But he's not behaving as God. He's behaving as man. And how much can man do legitimately without God? Nothing.

Nothing. Nothing. And Jesus Christ happened to be behaving as God intended man to behave.

That's why he was born a human being. For he had to be what he was to do what he did. Verse 30.

I Jesus Christ the creative deity the one who was in the beginning with God and was God. I nothing. I can of mine own self do nothing.

How then did he do everything? The father that dwelleth in me he doeth the worst. As perfect man he was totally available for the father to behave. For the father to act.

So that he could say he that seeth me seeth him that sent me. When Philip said show us the father and sufficeth us the Lord Jesus Christ said have I been loathsome so long time with you? And hast thou not

known me Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the father. Everything I say my father says.

Everything I do my father does. Everything I am my father is. My sole office as perfect man is to be completely unrelentingly available for my father to be and to act in me.

That's manhood. And redemption is towards perfect manhood. Well that's how the Lord Jesus fed the 5,000.

How much did the disciples learn by this demonstration? Would you turn back to Mark 6 Mark chapter 6 and we'll see how much the disciples learned. They learned nothing. Never learned a thing.

They were just as dull wicked and stupid and bankrupt at the end of demonstration as they were at the beginning. Isn't that incredible? Verse 44 of Mark 6. They that did eat of the loaves were about 5,000 men. And straightway he constrained his disciples to get into the ship and to go to the other side before unto Bethsaida while he sent away the people.

And when he had sent them away he departed into a mountain to pray and when was come the ship was in the midst of the land and he alone ship was in the midst of the sea and he alone on the land and he saw them toiling and roaring for the wind was contrary unto him. What happened? The disciples came to the Lord Jesus at the beginning and said send them away get them off our hands. Jesus Christ said no we'll not get them off our hands we'll instead of that we read here that he got them off his hands.

They came and said get the crowd off our hands. Jesus Christ said no we'll keep the crowd. But he got his disciples off his hands.

He sent them away. Why do you think he got them off his hands? Verse 52 tells you. For they considered not the miracle of the loaves for their heart was hardened.

They considered not the miracle of the loaves their heart was hardened. In spite of the fact that they were eyewitnesses in the presence of the Lord Jesus of what he accomplished by his own perfect attitude towards the father they learned absolutely nothing. It never never rang a bell.

Their hearts were hardened. Apostles, Peter, James, John, Philip, Andrew. Apostles.

The big names. Big names with hard hearts. God knows how the church of Jesus Christ today is filled with big names and hard hearts.

Who never learn a thing. Never. No matter how vividly God may demonstrate the principles of divine action they pig-headedly go on their own way cherishing their own man-made reputations and they learn nothing.

There comes a time when God gets them off his hands. Puts them in a little boat and makes quite sure there's a big storm. Some of you folk wonder why there's a storm.

Well it's been specially prepared for it. But the only way some people learn. He had to begin all over again.

And this is where we're going to close. In Matthew 14. Same story.

Matthew 14 verse 21. And they that had eaten were about five thousand men beside women and children. And straightway Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship and to go before him unto the other side

while he sent the multitude away.

But the ship was now in the midst of the sea. Verse 24. Tossed with the waves the wind contrary.

There they were with their backs bent perspiring. Night had fallen. They couldn't see their destination.

The waves beating into the little ship. Some bailing out the water. Almost having lost hope ever of gaining their destination.

Everything threatening to overwhelm them. Every wave threatening to swamp them. Verse 25.

And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them doing what? The impossible. Walking on the sea. A man can't walk on the sea.

That's impossible. Yes you see but he was trying to teach them how to do the impossible. He walked on the sea.

And demonstrated this glorious fact that everything that threatened to be over their heads was already under his feet. Do you know that? What is it that has threatened to be over your head as a Christian? What is it that threatens to swamp your little boat? What is it that you've been afraid of? What is it that's been chasing you? What is it that's almost the last straw? You nearly didn't come tonight. You can hardly face it.

I want you to know this that nothing that ever threatened to be over your head was ever anything but under his feet. How did he walk on the water? The Lord Jesus said the Father that dwelleth in me he doeth the work. So simple.

Do you know how he walked on the water? How do you walk? I know how I walk. One step at a time. Do you know how he walked? One step at a time.

How did he walk on the water? Trusting the Father one step at a time. Maintaining that attitude, that mental attitude to the Father one step at a time that you and I are to maintain towards him. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.

So for every step he took on the water he simply said thank you Father. Thank you Father. Thank you Father.

Thank you. Simple wasn't it? That's how to walk on the water. And when the disciples verse 26 saw him walking on the sea they were troubled saying it's a spirit it's a ghost.

Nobody's a ghost ever walked on the water. And they cried out for fear. Poor miserable specimens.

Big names hard hearts. Verse 27 straightway Jesus spake unto them saying be of good cheer it is I be not afraid. Literally what the Lord Jesus Christ said was this I am stop being frightened.

I am stop being frightened. And when the Lord Jesus Christ says to you I am would you tell me this is there anything more you need? Is there really in any circumstance anything more you need to know than the Lord Jesus saying to your heart I am. In whom dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

And in whom you're complete. And he says all that I am you have. Stop being frightened.

For he that cometh to God must first believe that God is and that God is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. In other words all the illimitable resources of deity are available to those who are available to all the illimitable resources. That's the Christian life.

The Lord Jesus was perfect man. And he knew that all the illimitable resources of the father were available to that man who was completely available to all the illimitable resources of the father. And Jesus Christ said and now Jesus Christ says if my father sent me I'm going to send you.

And all that I am. Stop being frightened. Stop being frightened.

In other words quit the panic. Stop fussing. Don't go off the handle.

Verse 28. And Peter answered him and said Lord if it be thou. In other words if you are bid me come unto thee on the water.

In other words if you are if this is true and if all that you are I have. If all that you are is available to all those who are available to all that you are. Then put under my feet what I'm unto you on the water.

And the Lord Jesus said fine. That's all I've been waiting for. Verse 29.

And when Peter was come down out of the ship he did the impossible. He walked on the water to go to Jesus and he discovered that by relating the situation to Christ by maintaining towards the Lord Jesus the same attitude that the Lord Jesus in his perfect manhood maintained towards the father. Everything that was under Christ's feet was under his feet for every step.

And one step at a time. And only one step at a time. And he walked.

Thank you Lord this is terrific. Until halfway there a very rude naughty wave smacked him on the side of the face. And with a cold slap of water suddenly he he woke up as it were to the the situation and instead of relating it to Jesus Christ he began again to relate it to himself because he suddenly became once more aware of the howl of the wind and he saw the mountainous waves and he began to cry out for fear and say I can't do this this is impossible.

And he was quite right. It was impossible for Peter. And he went down for a ducking.

You see it's one step at a time. God never relieves you of the moral responsibility of being constantly and relentlessly dependent. And you can take 10 steps in an attitude of total dependence and you are just as competent to take the 11th step in independence and you will be thrown back upon your own bankrupt.

And when he went down for ducking and he cried out for fear the Lord Jesus reached out his hand immediately recaptured his attention and he said O thou of little faith wherefore didst thou doubt it's so easy to do the impossible. And when they were come into the ship walking together the wind sea then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him saying of a truth thou art the son of God. I say if you forget everything else tonight would you remember those two simple expressions in the midst of the storm the Lord Jesus said I am stop being frightened and they learned to say thou art and the wind sea storm was over.

This is the Christian life. This is what the Bible talks about when it speaks of walking in the spirit or living by faith. It simply means this that for every step you take and for every new situation into which every new step takes you the Lord Jesus always will say to your heart if you are a Christian I am.

In all my adequacy for this new situation into which this new step has taken you I am stop being frightened and faith looks up into his face and you take the next step and that takes you into some new situation and for that new situation the Lord Jesus says I am and you look up into his face and say that's all that that's all right I am he says thou art he says and you walk on through time not knowing it you step out of time into eternity and you change of suiting and change of geographical location and you don't get toothache. Now isn't that amazing? I want you to know this that there will be absolutely no difference in the quality of life that you enjoy in eternity and the life that you enjoy now if you are enjoying the Christian life because the life that is ours which eternal is the life of Christ. I'm not waiting for the resurrection I'm enjoying it when I was born again God raised me from the dead it's true that he's going to change my suit of clothes this mortal will put on immortality this corruptible will put on incorruption but that's incidental that's incidental that's only the house I've already got the life that's Christ I'm not going to wait till I get to heaven before I enjoy what he is for to me to live in Christ one step at a time.

So go home with your eyes on Christ for every step you take and learn to reckon with him and reckoning with him at last you'll be panic-proof and you'll be more than conqueror and you'll reign in life and you will have learned to live impossibly.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/32/SID32239.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/major-ian-thomas/how-to-do-the-impossible/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net