

Welcome all of our campuses and those of you watching online to Christ Fellowship, My name is Carlos and I am one of the pastors – and today we are starting a sermon series called “Miracles:Exposed” where we will look at some of the miracles of Jesus in the book of John.

Right off the bat I have something to share and celebrate with you – a little bit over a month ago, we received a call from the Florida Baptist Children’s home on a Friday, and just 3 days later became parents again and to our 2nd girl, Kara Grace Lollett (PICTURE).

The way God worked this out was nothing short of divine - the details of how everything unfolded were amazing and I’m going to share a couple of them with you so you can get a picture of the providential God we serve:

Many of you know that the adoption process can be cumbersome, expensive, and difficult, but God began to line up this situation from the beginning of the year. It all started when God moved in our hearts to give sacrificially during the Christmas offering – Cassie and I felt like God was calling us to give, and the struggle is that if we gave that money, we would lose resources to be able to adopt a child, and to continue to save up for some of the dreams we have as a family. But we gave, and the very next day...one of our friends gives us a call, telling us that she had been sensing God move in her heart to give us money to adopt our 2nd child – and she handed us a check for 75% of the amount we gave the day before! Amazing right?

Now don’t hear me say that if you give to church you’re going to get money back, God doesn’t promise that and it is a false hope and doctrine – but he does provide for our needs and gives good gifts to his children.

He didn’t stop there – just a week before we received the call, we get an email from our accountant letting us know that we were about to receive an adoption tax refund from our first adoption that hadn’t gone through the year before. Wild!

Even the plane tickets that we had to change in order to pick up Kara were covered in full the very next week. How unbelievable is this? All of that combined, covered the cost of the adoption in full.

It was a miracle. Or was it?

His provision was divine – the timing was perfect!, it was incredible!!! It was the undeniable hand of God!!! But was it a miracle?

No. It was his providential hand, but it was not a miracle like the ones we read about in the New Testament, the one we are about to learn about today.

Over the past two weeks we’ve learned that a miracle, strictly speaking, is an event that breaks the laws of nature, and it displays his power as well as bear witness to himself.

So a miracle is not, wow Jay-Z got Beyonce to marry him – that’s extraordinary – and it gives a lot of men hope – I’m jk – we’ve watered down miracles to mean anything extraordinary that happens in life – but what we realize as we dig into the life of Jesus, is that miracles defied the laws of nature and that their purpose has massive implications in our lives.

And today as we continue our study in the book of John we are going to learn one of Jesus’ greatest miracles and understand how it affects our lives.

We’re in John Chapter 6 – starting in verse 1:

Some time after this, Jesus crossed to the far shore of the Sea of Galilee (that is, the Sea of Tiberias), 2 and a great crowd of people followed him because they saw the signs he had performed by healing the sick.

So, why this great crowd gathered?

Jesus is gaining popularity among people because they have seen his fantastic display of power in healing the sick. We learned in chapter 5 Jesus healed man who had been lame for 38 years! The word is spreading, Jesus could perhaps give you the miracle that you’ve been wanting –

You ever hear people trying to get a crowd by saying that? Come get your miracle... and so they are following him not because they want to obey him, but because they desire the benefits of his power. They want the miracle more than the maker. They want God for what He does instead of who he is.

3 Then Jesus went up on a mountainside and sat down with his disciples.4 The Jewish Passover Festival was near. 5 When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, “Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?” (I’m sure Phillip was like, why is the creator of the universe asking me this question?) 6 He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do.

Jesus is discipling Philip by testing him.

Psalm 66:10 : For you, God, tested us;? you refined us like silver.

God will test us at times to refine us, to continue to the process of discipleship, of spiritual growth in our lives.

Watch how Philip responds, and see if you can relate. Jesus asked “Where shall we buy bread for these people?

7 Philip answered him, “It would take more than half a year’s wages[a]to buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!”

The first thought in his mind... “We don’t have the money! This costs too much!” We’re talking about Phillip who’s walked with Jesus for 2 years...this is how he responds...

Jesus we don’t have enough BREAD!!!

I wonder, how many times do we do the same exact thing? The moment we are overwhelmed, when we look at our circumstances and our situation – and instead of going to the SOURCE, we rely on ourselves.

We can become overwhelmed with what we DON'T HAVE. We don't have enough money, we're don't have enough intelligence, we don't know the right people, we don't have insurance, we don't have enough education, we don't know enough bible. God wants to disciple Phillip by helping him renew his mind, by changing his mentality. And he wants you to not conform to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind! He wants to change our mindset from "I DON'T HAVE WHAT I NEED" to "JESUS HAS EVERYTHING I NEED".

8 Another of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, spoke up,⁹ "Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?"

10 Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." There was plenty of grass in that place, and they sat down (about five thousand men were there). (Theologians estimate that with women and children, there are easily 15k there)

I used to work in the restaurant business for a couple of years, I was waiter, bartender, and then along with our family, a restaurant manager. You know that feeling you get when you have a birthday party get together at a restaurant, and someone says "why don't we all go celebrate at this place?" and it's 30 people sitting at the table. Externally you're excited to hang out and celebrate the party, internally you're like "I'm hungry and this is going to take 2 hours." That's for 30 people, kitchens, staff, chefs, cooks, everyone working as hard as they can to be able to serve 30 people. Here's the SCOPE of Jesus power...

11 Jesus then took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed to those who were seated as much as they wanted. He did the same with the fish.

Imagine the POWER... Andrew brings the lunchbox of the kid he gives him loaves of bread and fish – and Jesus creates fish that have never SWAM in the ocean. The disciples are giving all of this food away, and can you imagine what they're thinking? "Where did these fish come from? Nobody caught them, or sold them, or bought them, they just appeared out of Jesus' hand. Look! This fish has eyes, did it ever use these fins? Imagine seeing thousands of loaves of bread... Jesus creates bread that hadn't been wheat...

This is our God. He was fully God and fully human. This is his power – his hands can create fish and bread out of thin air. His word can speak rivers and valleys into existence, in his breath he can calm a storm, and he has the authority and power to deliver you from your situation, or give you the strength to get through it!

Do you trust in his power? Or are you operating on your own strength?

What can we learn from this miracle?

1. Rely on God's power instead of your personal ability

This was a great lesson for Phillip and for us today as well. When we face difficult situations, we have a choice – we can look at ourselves, at what we can do, and try to muster up enough discipline and resources to try and solve an issue, or we can place the responsibility in the able hands of a POWERFUL GOD.

The life of the Christian has the promise of power. When the Holy Spirit came after Jesus ascended into heaven, there was a promise of power to live out the Christian life. So that we can cling to the cross and face the challenges that will come at us, so that we can have the power to overcome the sin that can trap each of us, so that we can have the boldness to live on mission and accomplish the great commission that he set out for us.

Maybe some of you are discouraged, your anxious, and you're relying on yourself and living a powerless Christian life. Where does your strength come from?

The moment when you remember the power of his provision is when your anxiety stops. That's why he reminds us to seek first the kingdom of heaven, and everything else will be added unto you.

In Phillipians 4 he tells us to "not worry about anything, but in EVERYTHING – by prayer and supplication let your requests be made known to God..."

Jesus wants you to go to him, for everything.

And he is more concerned about your spiritual destiny than your physical condition...

Skip down to verse 14 – in verse 12 they ate until they were full, they even had leftovers...

14 After the people saw the sign Jesus performed, they began to say, "Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world." 15 Jesus, knowing that they intended to come and make him king by force, withdrew again to a mountain by himself.

The crowd is amazed...their hunger has been momentarily satisfied in full. Their external circumstances have been resolved – Jesus had the power to fix their physical hunger – but look at verse 14...

After the people saw the sign... What do signs do? They point people somewhere...

STORY OF SIGN – Hialeah street signs...

What is this sign pointing us to? What is this display of power pointing us to?

The people in front of him thought this miracle was pointing them to Jesus becoming a political messiah. They wanted to make him king by force. Jesus for president! Imagine what he could do with healthcare! They looked first at their physical condition rather than their spiritual one.

Why?

We more often than not think that the way to find satisfaction in this life is by changing our external circumstances.

Culture tells us “You have the power within you to change your life” – the answers lie inside, to change your outside. I can get up here and start trying to motivate you to change your life. You can be financially disciplined enough to achieve the dreams for your house, you can become the person that you’ve wanted to be if you set goals and follow through. These can be good things, but not when they take the place the ultimate issue.

Jesus says the opposite – the fundamental problem is not outside of you, it’s inside of you! It’s called sin. It’s a disease that plagues the human race, and you need something from the outside, to fundamentally change your inside. The promise of the gospel is greater than just having a cool family, with a future that’s financially free, and a safe life that is healthy and wealthy. Jesus lived a perfect life, died a brutal death on a cross, and rose again on the third day so that you could be healed of this disease called sin, so that you would experience what it means to be a child of God, so you would be forgiven, and so that your destiny will be different, and as we are going to learn in this passage, he came, so that you may live fully satisfied.

The origin of the problems in our lives are not out there somewhere – they are inside. In this specific instance the crowd wanted him to become King so that Jesus could liberate them from the second hand oppression from Rome. Their king was Herod, a puppet of the Roman government – and here were 5000 men, plus their women and children, they could take control of the city and use Jesus’ power to liberate them. But Jesus knew what they needed. They didn’t need to be liberated from Rome, they needed to be liberated from their sin!

The crowd – still didn’t understand.

Verse 26

“...Very truly I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw the signs I performed but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. (You’re here because of

what I did for you materially, but not really for who I am). You want my hand but you don't want to see my face. You want my power, but not me.

Some of you may be here because we have an amazing kids ministry – and that's cool, maybe you thought the music rocked, or you love the fact this church loves on the city and our schools, but those things are not the main thing, they are pointing to something greater – someone greater, Jesus - and he wants you to see him for who He is today. SO WHO IS HE? He's about to tell em...

He provides more than an awesome experience, than a great ministry, he provides himself so that you may be fully satisfied!

32 Jesus said to them, "Very truly I tell you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. 33 For the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

How many of you like bread?

I wish I could say I don't like bread. I grew up in Venezuela going to the local bakery with my dad and mom at about 5 pm in the afternoon – and we'd wait for the bakers to bring out the most amazing, crusty, and soft baguette goodness you ever had. In fact I have one here from my local bakery down in us 1 called "French Bakery". And I'm just going to take a small bite – and you can put some prosciutto, a little manchego, and voila!

Anything that's good, points to the goodness of Jesus. He provided manna to the people of Israel back in the book of Exodus. They were in the wilderness, he had freed them from Egypt, and they were complaining – in the same way, that now when the bread of heaven comes down, people complain!

They ask Jesus, Moses gave us manna, what are you going to do?

When you're reading this, you're waiting for a slap somebody until I realize that I'm the same way.

He's telling the crowd, do you think it was Moses who gave you the manna back in the old testament? No, it was God who gave it – and it is now I who is giving it. What God did through the prophet Moses was great, but I am greater than he. I am not just a prophet, I am the one who is creating the bread today – I am giving you a picture of what I am going to do for your soul, not just for your belly.

One of the things I love about this statement is that it helps us understand that the entire scripture is about Jesus – and the incidents such as the manna in the desert had a plan and a purpose for the time, but it also points to the true manna, that won't only satisfy us for a night, but forever.

John 5

39 You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me, 40 yet you refuse to come to me to have life.

This Bible is about Jesus.

He says to the crowd, the manna, was really pointing to me. In fact:

John 6:35

35 Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.

What do we need to do?

2. Rest in God's provision

Watch this – if you're a Christian, this is his promise for you.

He gave us manna in the old testament to provide for our physical need – then he

Jesus comes down to be our manna for every day – and in Revelation chapter 2

To the one who is victorious, I will give some of the hidden manna.

The hidden manna is Jesus – he becomes our portion, forever, so that we can be sustained and satisfied in all of eternity. We have this hope in Christ! But on this earth, we are tempted, and we look to other things to satisfy our soul right?

What is it that you think would satisfy the cravings of your soul? What is that thing that you received it, you think it'd make everything so much better?

Growing up in Venezuela I remember we'd always stop by the shop and get a lottery ticket. It was custom, we weren't poor, but we'd play the lotto. This past week I read a story about Jack Whittaker (PICTURE), have you heard of him?

Jack was perhaps the wealthiest man ever to win a lottery jackpot. When he won the \$315 million powerball jackpot in 2002 he was already worth \$17 million. But like so many others before him, he couldn't buy out the issues of his heart.

He experience a string of personal tragedies, family members who died because of drug overdose, he began drinking, he was careless with his money, and by 2007, he was alleged to be broke. At the height of his demise, he told reporters weeping "I wish I'd torn that ticket up".

Jack got what he wanted – and it didn't satisfy his hunger.

Jesus comes down from heaven to show you that he is better than what you wanted.

He is a loving God, so instead of giving you what you want, he gives you what you need.

And what you need is a savior that change you from the inside out and give you everlasting life and satisfaction.

John 6:51

51 I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.”

Here’s what Jesus shows his disciples and followers through the miracle of the feeding of the 5000.

He’s not only the giver of bread, he’s going to lay his life down to become the bread for sinners who believe. He is the food that we need – if you’re here and you’re spiritually hungry, you don’t need the benefits of Jesus, you need a relationship with him. You need the true bread.

You’re a believer, God is showing you, stop going to different bakeries and trying to satisfy your spiritual hunger with other breads, have me, the true bread, and be satisfied. Jesus shows us that he is better than what we ever wanted...

Jesus displayed his power to point to his provision.

Isaiah 55:1-3, 6-8

“Come, all you who are thirsty,? come to the waters;?and you who have no money,? come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk? without money and without cost.?2 Why spend money on what is not bread,? and your labor on what does not satisfy??Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good,? and you will delight in the richest of fare.?3 Give ear and come to me;? listen, that you may live.?I will make an everlasting covenant with you,? my faithful love promised to David.

Seek the Lord while he may be found;? call on him while he is near.?7 Let the wicked forsake their ways? and the unrighteous their thoughts.?Let them turn to the Lord, and he will have mercy on them,? and to our God, for he will freely pardon.

8 “For my thoughts are not your thoughts,? neither are your ways my ways,”?declares the Lord.

John 20:31

31 But these are written that you may believe[b] that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.