

The Creator in His Fallen Creation

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[0 : 0 0] Father, thank you so much that we, your people, can gather in your church, in your city, in your world, to listen to your word directed to us that comes to us for our good, for the salvation of many, and for the good of this world.

We ask, Father, that the Holy Spirit would open and prepare our hearts for your word to have its role in our lives, to bring the repentance and healing and strengthening and hope that we desperately need.

And we ask this in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Savior. Amen. Please be seated. So I'm going to take a bit of a risk with you and with you watching online.

And sort of a, it's a confession, actually. I know that some of you, maybe many of you, pray for me, and I'm very grateful for that. And I desperately need your prayers because I am a fallen human being.

And I actually, I'll begin to work on my next, the next sermon a week from now. I begin to work on that on tomorrow, tomorrow morning. I'll start to work on it. I work on my sermon a bit every day.

[1 : 1 8] But a week ago Friday, I was sat down to get some work done on my sermon. I'm doing this, and I'm doing this, and I'm doing this. And then, and maybe it's because one of you were praying for me, because I'm not the world's, I'm a guy, which means I'm often not very self-aware, right?

I can often get hangry. Angry because I'm hungry. But I'm trying to work on the sermon. And then I realized I'm not getting anywhere in the sermon. And the reason I'm not getting anywhere with the sermon is that I was so irate.

I was so irate at what the government had done. This is just give me some mercy to declare the Emergency Measures Act. I was so irate.

I could not work on the sermon. And, you know, pray that I never preach out of anger.

That I never compose or design a sermon out of anger or deliver it out of anger. Pray that I never do that, because that would not honor Christ. And I just had to stop. And it took me well over an hour of just wrestling with it in prayer to be able to get to a point where I could just begin to work at things.

[2 : 3 2] Some of you are writers. Some of you are in positions of authority and influence. And it might very well be your vocation to write about what happened and to give counsel about what happened.

And that's good and proper. It's hopefully many of you are in positions in government and business or the press or the media to write about it. But it's not the vocation of the pastor of the church who's going to come up and open the Word of God.

I'm going to give you a lecture on my view about the Emergency Measures Act. It's not my vocation. Christians in good conscience can come to different conclusions and nuances about that.

It's not my role. It isn't my role. So, you know, I struggled with it in prayer for an hour. And I came to a place of peace where I just...

Not that I didn't still have moral judgments, but, you know, anger, for those of you who ever are at all attracted or have a problem with anger, anger is intoxicating. Anger is intoxicating.

[3 : 41] Those of you who don't get angry or get very afraid of it don't know what I'm talking about. Those of you who do, you know how intoxicating it can be.

And so I came to a place of peace and was able to work on my sermon. And I think if you listen to the sermon next week, I don't think anybody would say that it came out of anger. And, you know, I was thinking about that this week because, I mean, there's a variety of biblical texts.

And it wasn't this text that I thought about as I'm trying to wrestle with the whole issue in prayer. But, in fact, if I had of, this is a very profound... The text that we're going to look at today is a very profound resource to help you to, in fact, come to a place of compassion.

Compassion doesn't mean you don't make moral judgments anymore, but compassion is the context within which you make moral judgments and judgments about justice, which is going to actually lead in a direction where there can be real justice and peace at the end of it.

So I'd like to invite you to look at the text again and see how this is, in fact, a very profound text to aid us in compassion. So it's... I'll give you a little bit more context in a moment.

[5 : 00] It's Mark chapter 6. Hopefully you take your own Bibles and you can follow along with me as you look at it. It's Mark chapter 6, verse 30. And I'll give you a bit of context as we go into the text. But the one thing I'd like to tell you about this miracle, because it's the miracle of the feeding of the 5,000, it's the... other than the death and resurrection of Jesus, which is in all four of the Gospels, this is the only other miracle which is recorded in all four of the Gospels, just the resurrection of Jesus and the feeding of the 5,000.

So it obviously made a huge impression on the apostles and the early church, and it got put, recorded in this ancient biography of Jesus. So here's how it begins.

Verse 30. The apostles returned to Jesus and told him all that they had done and taught. And if you just go back sort of the beginning of the... like about 20 verses earlier, Jesus had sent them out to teach and to heal and to deliver.

And so now they've returned. And that's what's happened. Verse 31. And Jesus said to them, Come away by yourselves to a desolate place or a solitary place.

That's another very good way to translate it. And rest a while. For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. And they went away in the boat to a desolate place, a solitary place by themselves.

[6 : 28] Now, this is going to be very important, and it's one of the things which you can't notice in the English, but it's there in the Greek. And if you know the Greek, the original language, you'll understand a little bit about the significance of what's going on.

And up until now, every time there's been mention of a crowd, there's a particular word that was used in the original language, except in one occasion, and this is the second occasion so far.

And the word is hoi polloi. And that, of course, as we know, not many people know that term anymore, but it's a term of dismissiveness used by the elites against ordinary people.

The hoi polloi. What are the hoi polloi? They're just the hoi polloi. Well, that's the word which, all the way through this, when it's talking about the crowds or the many, that's the word they're using, the hoi polloi, the many.

That's the context. And this is going to be very, very, and here, those of you who remember what happened just before this, it's very, very significant. Remember, Mark didn't just sort of give you this little, it's not like he sent you a tweet with no context, and that's the tweet.

[7 : 34] I mean, this would be too long for a tweet. But he just gives you, you know, an Instagram, you know, with five different little pictures, and each one of them has some of this, and it has no context to anything else.

What's just going on before this is the complete opposite, right? Herod has met, and who's invited to Herod's birthday party? Well, the people invited to the Herod's birthday party aren't the hoi polloi.

Who's invited to Herod's birthday party are the leading, and they're all men, only men, and they're the leaders of the military, the nobles, and the rich people.

And probably with included, and that would have been, of course, yeah, I mean, they're the key influencers, the people who matter. So just before this, there's going to be a meal, but the meal is restricted for only men, and only those who are military leaders, nobles, and rich.

Jesus is with the hoi polloi. Jesus is with the hoi polloi. And the difference between the two stories is a very, very interesting thing to meditate upon.

[8 : 36] I'm just going to point out a few point of things about it as we go on, but it's a very interesting thing to meditate upon. How we know what happens to the hoi polloi in the story with Herod.

Herod kills one of the hoi polloi. What does Jesus do when they disrupt his plans? Look at it in verse 33 and verse 34.

Now many, the hoi polloi, saw them going and recognized them, that's Jesus and the disciples, and they ran there on foot from all the town and got there ahead of them.

And when Jesus went to shore, he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. And he began to teach them many things.

Now, once again, the contrast is very important. In the story, you might remember, and if you go back and you read it, Mark records what goes through, you know, they're probably drunk, there's a sensual dance.

[9 : 41] The person who's done the sensual dance is a 12 or 13-year-old girl who's both Herod's stepdaughter and his niece. It's a sensual dance that arouses him and the others. He makes a foolish promise up to half your kingdom.

She asked for the head of John the Baptist. And Mark records what would have gone through Herod in his term of self-awareness. And by his self-awareness, he can't break his oath in front of all these powerful people.

But the fact of the matter is, as we all know, that's not true. Because if Herod's stepdaughter had asked for three of your fortresses, he would still have been drunk, slightly inebriated, but his eyes would have gotten steely, his face would have gotten steely, and he would have said, honey, you better reconsider what you just asked for.

And given that the political leaders of those times were not adverse to murdering family members, she would have probably looked back at her mom, and her mom would have done this.

And she probably would have said, could I go back and ask my mom what I should ask for? But John's part of the hoi polloi, and the powerful people can kill the hoi polloi.

[10 : 57] That is often what life is like in the world. Putin believes he can take over the Ukraine and nobody will stop it. It doesn't matter how many people he kills. He doesn't want to kill a lot.

He just wants the property and the resources and the spiritual significance, and he does. It's the way of the world. It's the way of the world. But Jesus sees the hoi polloi and has compassion on them and teaches them.

Now, this is a compassion story. But what you're going to see is that it's not just a story, but a window, like a true picture of what reality is actually like at the deepest level.

Just before the service here, I use my phone as a timer. That's why I'm looking down. I'm not checking new tweets or anything like that. I'm checking the time. And if you came and it was off, you know, when it turns on, there's a picture of Louise, and Shane was commenting on it.

And if you saw the picture, some pictures, you know, you could take it, and, you know, a police could take the picture, and they'd be able to find the person. But it's just a picture. But some pictures actually communicate who the person is.

[12 : 18] Do you know what I mean? Like, it actually communicates who they are. And if you were to see this picture of my wife, you'd say, that's Louise. That captures Louise. The way she smiles, the way she looks, it just captures her grace and her beauty.

It captures her. And this story isn't just sort of like Santa Claus for kids, but in terms of importance of compassion. And this story captures God, who's created all things and sustains all things, and who alone can redeem the world and will bring in a new heaven and a new earth.

And it reveals that compassion is deeper than violence and hate, just as we long for, that it's deep in the created order and in the future.

Let's see how that works out. And just before I say anything else, before we look at the text, the way it sets this up is it's very interesting that the story, all these little tiny details in the story set up the reality of the miracle.

It sets up the reality of the miracle. So we've already seen it. Like the first way that it's done it is that John and Mark hasn't put the God, like he hasn't sort of said, I'll just throw a whole pile of miracle stories together.

[13 : 46] And then, you know, but no, no, what actually has happened is just before this is the story of Herod killing John the Baptist. And as I shared last week, Herod killing John the Baptist, we know a whole lot of other things about that story.

I shared with you some of the things about what happened in the subsequent months and years and everything like that because one of the most important ancient historians, Josephus, was basically writing just after this and he records a whole pile of things.

Like Herod's an historical person, John the Baptist is an historical person. Read Josephus. Josephus will tell you that Herod has John the Baptist killed. This is a story, a telling of history.

And Mark, if you just look at it, Mark goes right from telling you this historical event to this historical event and there's no change in language. It's still the language of historical reporting. It doesn't go into, oh, by the way, once upon a time or into language of analogy or there once was a time when this happened or anything like that.

It's the same type of historical language which is being used. And it emphasizes that Jesus and the disciples go in a boat. The boat would have carried, I mean, there would have been 13 of them and from what we know of boats at that time, it's probably a boat that would have carried about 15 people and there would have been some room for nets and everything like that but it wouldn't have been in something that would have had like a big pile of bread and fish that could go from here to the wall.

[15 : 05] It wouldn't have had that. It would have just had room for them and for some of their gear and they go to a solitary place and they keep saying they go to a solitary place, a solitary place, a solitary place and it's emphasizing all of these things and it's going to continue on with the rest of the story.

Look how the story goes and in a sense it doubles down on the miracle. Look at verse 35. And when it grew late his disciples came to him and said, this is a desolate place, a solitary place and the hour is now late, probably an hour or so away from sundown.

Send them away to go into the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat. You know, so the, and note one of the things that's going to be important in a moment, when I try to bring some of this home in terms of what it means for us and, but Jesus doesn't rebuke them for saying this.

The disciples are showing compassion. They don't have any food. There's no food here. The people are hungry. The food's run out and it's going to take some time and they're going to probably have to finish the journey in the dark and they're not, it isn't, the story isn't taking place in an orchard or a vineyard or a grain field where people could take food from it and so, once again, there's compassion and they're never rebuked for it by Jesus and look what happens in verse 37.

He answered them, you give them something to eat. Now, it's not a rebuke. It's one of those times when the disciples are thinking, okay, that this is how the story's going to go and all of a sudden Jesus does this like this and it's going in a completely different direction and they said to him, shall we go and buy 200 denarii worth of bread and give it to them to eat?

[16 : 52] Now, 200 denarii is about nine months. If you take Canadian dollars, you take what an average worker would make in Canada, it's nine months worth of wages approximately, just a little bit less, less than nine months.

So, that's a lot of money. I don't know about any of you, but you probably don't have nine months worth of your pay in your pocket. But, I bet we couldn't, maybe I'm wrong, maybe a couple of you have a lot of hundred dollar bills on you.

We probably couldn't take all of the pockets in the room and come up with the equivalent of nine months wages for an average working person. So, the disciples don't have those resources and it's going to take a lot to eat.

They just pick out a number. And verse 38, he said to them, how many loaves do you have? Go and see. And when they found out, they said, five and two fish. Now, I would say that for a group of guys in our day in world, five loaves and two fish, because they weren't loaves like this, they were probably loaves like that, wouldn't feed us.

But, you know, everybody in those age were a lot smaller and they'd be way, way skinnier. And maybe that was enough for them to have their meal so they could worry about breakfast the next day. But it wasn't that much food.

[18 : 00] And so, once again, you see, the story is emphasizing that they don't have any resources to handle this. Okay? I mean, that's separate from the fact that they said, well, even when we had the money, they could have gone on and maybe that's what happened originally.

Like, even if we went to a place and we could buy all the things, we don't have wagons to bring all the bread and fish, like, we just, we don't have, it's just impossible, Jesus, we just don't have the resources. So then, Jesus does something here which is very significant to the miracle.

It, once again, really emphasizes the miracleness of the miracle. Look what happens in verse 39 and 40. he commanded them all to sit down in groups on the green grass so they sat down in groups by hundreds and by fifties.

Now, this is going to be very, very important to the miracle. If you had 5,000 plus people, we don't know that number until the end, but nine months worth of wages tells you that they're estimating, this is a lot of money to feed this group.

This is a very, very big group. But if they're all standing and milling around, that if Jesus did the miracle, people, I mean, the disciples might know, but apart from the disciples, the crowd wouldn't know because they might just think there's a couple of wagons of food back there they can't see very well or there's a big hall of, a couple of boats have come in with lots of fish and they've been cooking, like they can't see.

[19 : 19] But when you have them all sit down and all sit down in order groups and Jesus has done it and now they're looking at Jesus, they're expecting Jesus to do something, there's going to be a very, very clear view.

There's no pile of food. There's no pile of fish. There's nothing. There's only Jesus. There's only Jesus. And what do they see?

Verse 41, taking the five loaves and the two fish he looked up to heaven and said a blessing. A blessing here doesn't mean that he asked God to do a miracle. The blessing is probably a two-fold blessing.

You know, we bless you and praise you God, the Father, creator of all things, sustainer of all things. You alone are God, there is no other. And bless these, your people and your children. But it's not a prayer for God to do a miracle, it's a prayer of blessing, it's a prayer of adoration and praise.

And then he broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples to set before the people. And the disciples, and he divided the two fish among them all.

[20 : 21] And we don't know if the disciples were doing this, rolling their eyes or with anxiety. It gives you no emotional thing going on. But what they do is they do it. And they all ate and were satisfied.

And they took up twelve baskets full of broken pieces and of the fish. And those who ate the loaves were five thousand men. So it would be interesting, you know, if you think about it, how would you want to film this if you were making a movie of it?

So you have this five thousand plus, maybe ten thousand people all watching, quiet, maybe chatting amongst themselves, but quiet when he says the words of blessing. And they would have seen, I don't know, maybe they had some type of bowl or some type of basket or some type of bag and you would have seen Jesus take off a hunk and divide it amongst them all.

And they would have just seen that it's not very much. And you can well imagine, I mean, I probably would look at the faces of the apostles. That's probably what I would film. As they walk first here and to there and I would take off just a tiny little bit and I'd probably be red faced with embarrassment and I give that little bit and a little bit and then another little bit and another little bit and then another little bit and another little bit and then I look down and the bread hasn't decreased and neither is the fish.

And then I give a little bit and a little bit and a little bit and a little bit and the bread and the fish haven't decreased. And then I go back to the beginning and then at some point point in time, there would probably be this joyous, gobsmacked excitement as you give hunks and hunks of bread and fish to the person after person after person, and the bag never diminishes, and the bag never diminishes. And not only does the bag not diminish, the bag is fuller as you go, so that by the end of the whole thing they can gather up 12 baskets full of fish and bread, and everything about the story emphasizes that there is a miracle.

[22 : 26] To be very clear, there is more matter in the universe after the miracle than there was before. There is more matter in the universe after the miracle than there was before. Only God, only God, only God can create out of nothing. Only the true and living God described in the Gospels described in the Old Testament can create matter out of nothing. In fact, one of the reasons, if the conversation was able to turn to it, one of the reasons a Christian should say to their Muslim friends, and as many of us know, many of our Muslim friends are vastly more, I was just in a conversation with a Muslim man just at the end of last, or at the beginning of this week, and gosh, I mean, he's just very devout and very prayerful. Like, he really is probably a vastly better man than I am.

But one of the things we would say to our Muslim friends is, if God himself walks amongst the created world and speaks, why would we need to wait six centuries for him to merely send a prophet?

If God himself, God himself comes and walks amongst his creation and speaks and acts, why on earth would anybody want to wait for a prophet to come later?

Now, obviously some of you are going to say, well, this is completely and utterly impossible, George. It violates every scientific law, to which I'd say it does not violate a single scientific law, not one. It does not violate a single scientific law. It violates a misunderstanding of science, but it doesn't violate science. Well, blah, blah, blah, blah. No, no, no, no, no, no, no. What does the scientific method say? The scientific method and scientific theory always works on the principle that you do the experiment and nothing extraneous comes into it. Like, the first law of thermodynamics is that in a closed system, there's neither, my mother is neither created or destroyed. But that's the whole point of this, is we Christians, this miracle shows we don't live in a closed system.

I mean, the scientific research is based on the idea that we're just, we're going to work, we're only looking at natural causes. That's what we're going to look at. We're going to look at natural causes and natural processes, and we're going to see how things naturally react.

[25 : 03] And what this is saying is that it doesn't say, I mean, the second the bread is created, it can be eaten. The second the bread begins, is created, it begins to get dry at whatever rate bread gets dry in that type of environment. And if the bread is left on the ground, the bread will get merged with the ground, and eventually it will go moldy. All of the scientific law is completely and utterly practiced, but all that happened is that God himself has walked amongst, and he's created more matter. The second the matter comes into the world, it acts according to it. I mean, I've shared with you this analogy before, but it's a very important analogy to help you understand it.

I mean, money works in very, very obvious ways, you know. I mean, one of the problems, I mean, one of the problems is, for those of you who maybe, you know, you check the money at the end of the service, and you do your bank balances, it can't just be within a dollar. Like, it has to be correct to the penny. I mean, that's just how, that's how numbers work. Like, you can't have one person say, oh, you know, I got, you know, \$400, I got \$350. That's close enough. No, it's not close enough, because that's not the way money works, right? And so, you know, money just works. You know, I have a 20, and you add a 20, you add a 20, it gets you sick, it gets you three \$20 bills, that's \$60. That's how it works. And so, imagine, you know, that I had far more financial resources than I have, and one of my children wants to buy a house, and they can't buy a house because they don't have the financial resources or the credit rating, et cetera, et cetera, to do it. So, my wife and I decide that we will, I mean, all the money will, in a sense, come from them, but we will, in effect, become a co-signer on the mortgage. And we say to our son, or we say to our daughter, that part of the condition of that, by the way, is that, you know, the bank account that you have the mortgage on, that we have a sign and authority that too, right? And then one day, and money works, just by money works, they're making X number of dollars, and X number of dollars, you know, works on the mortgage, and it works on the fractions, and the percentages, and all of that, and that's just how it works, and we can see by looking at that and another thing that our son or daughter is in some type of financial distress. And so, one day, Louise and I, we talk about it, and we decide that we just want to bless our kids, so we put \$10,000 extra in the bank account.

Well, has that violated the rules of math? No. Has it violated the way money works? No. That extra \$10,000 is now in there. All of the other equations all just instantly change, right?

And that's exactly what's going on here. In fact, if you could help the first point, here's the thing which is going on in the story, okay? Especially, I'm going to say it, and then I'll explain why I put it in this way. And I'm just going to add, up there, it doesn't say strong hand. I realized afterwards I should add that, because it's actually even better.

The strong hand of love that made the world is the same strong hand of love that sustains the world, is the same strong hand of love that was nailed to the cross to redeem his fallen world, and is the same strong hand of love that will beckon and welcome his redeemed children into the new heaven and the new earth.

[28 : 17] I mean, that's what you're seeing when you look at this, because it's going to be the same hands that breaks the bread and distributes it. It's the same hands that will be nailed to the cross. Very same hands.

And by God, the creator of all things, because only God can make something matter out of nothing, only God can do that. What we are actually seeing. Remember I said that this story, you know how Shane looked at the picture of Louise and said, that's a good picture of Louise, like that captures Louise.

And what this story is telling us is this story captures God, and it captures the deeper, deepest reality. The world came into being not as an accident, not as a tragedy, and not because the gods wanted slaves, or because God needed somebody to praise him.

It was God's strong hand of love that created the world. And I know there is famine in the world, and there's hunger in the world, and we all know that those things are wrong, and that the world is broken.

And that's a different part of the story as to how the world became broken, but it wasn't broken by God, it was broken by human beings, and continues to be broken by human beings. But the fact of the matter is, is that whenever we eat, and whenever there's a good harvest, and whenever we have the clean rivers, and the rain, and all of that type of stuff, what you are actually seeing is the strong hand of love sustaining all things.

[29 : 54] The same strong hand of love that created all things is the same strong hand that sustains all things, and provides for us today the coffee, and the tea, and the milk, and the cereal, and the bacon, and the eggs, and the veggie bacon that we ate today.

And it's the same strong hand of love that is nailed to the cross. And it will be that same strong hand of love that if we die before he returns, those who are redeemed in Jesus will close their eyes in the sleep of death, and wake in the new heaven and the new earth to the same strong hand of love, waving in welcome, and beckoning you in.

You see, compassion is deep. It is deeper the violence of an invasion of Ukraine, the persecution of Christians in Nigeria, the persecution of Christians in many other groups in China.

Our basic intuition that that looks strong but is ultimately doomed is shown to be true, a true intuition in light of the gospel.

True and living God has compassion on the hoi polloi and gives them the dignity of feeding them and caring for them. In fact, that's actually one of the things which is so important about this story.

[31 : 47] See, I think many people will look at something like this and say, well, George, I mean, that's really a nice story. But if you were to know my story, you would know that I am always the left out.

I am always the forgotten. I am always the butt of jokes. I am always the ignored. I am always the lonely. I am always the one who does not matter.

One of the things which is so wonderful is what does this whole story focus on? Apart from Christ, it focuses on the hoi polloi, the people who don't matter. And all I can say is that Jesus looks at you and he says, you matter to me.

You matter to me. And this good news that George is just talking about, that good news is for you. Your days have been the forgotten.

I mean, that might not end on this earth, but I can tell you that from all eternity you matter to me and you will matter into eternity with me. And for us, just a couple of points in closing in terms of what it means for us to hear this story and to receive it.

[33 : 10] If you could put up the next point, that would be great. We're to receive the good news about the person, work, and promises of the Lord Jesus Christ. And as we receive it, and as it becomes a deeper part of who we are, as it becomes clearer and clearer what Jesus, who he is, and the significance of the fact that you see, if you think about it, it's only if the creator of all things, only the creator of all things could die for the whole creation, could die for the rich and the poor, the gay and the straight, the black and the white, the Asian, the people from India, from all the different cultures, people living in feudal times and pagan times and remote tribes and powerful people and unpowerful people and handicapped people and people with spectacular physical and mental abilities.

It's only the creator of all that could die for all. And it's only the creator of all who knows all that his death for all could be for all of who you are.

That by the time you go from this story to the cross and then the resurrection, you realize that Jesus has done it all. and that all we can do is begin to live out of the truth of what he has done for us.

Not live to attain something from him but to live out of the truth of his compassion for you. The truth that he looks at George and says, George, I am not weighing your merits.

I never weighed them for a moment. I mean, George, how could I weigh your merits? Didn't you just tell everybody how irate you were a week ago that you couldn't even function? You should be so glad that I do not count your merits because, George, you would, you'd be up a creek, you know, the type of creek you go up without a paddle.

[35 : 08] That would be you, George. But no, I've done it all. I'm calling you to live out of what I have done and what I have promised. And so receive the good news about the person and work and promises of the Lord Jesus Christ and be formed.

and his compassion for the hoi polloi. We are to be formed by Christ, not by Herod. The world will try to form us into Herod.

But as the gospel becomes more real, it should lead us to have a great compassion for the hoi polloi and not just the hoi polloi for our own city, but the hoi polloi in Guatemala.

Hoi polloi, the forgotten refugees and the forgotten wars. And then one final thing, if you could put up the final point.

There's a profound question in this text and a profound thing that takes place in this text. And, you know, often it's when we think about it, we see it and go, oh yeah, but you see, part of what the gospel does and the Bible does in forming us is it forms us without us necessarily realizing it.

[36 : 16] But in a sense, this question is given to us all the time. We see a need, like I see a need. We're hoping to bring John Owen as an intern and part of what we want to do is try to reboot our ministry to the university and we can look at the university and say we would love to begin to have a ministry once again to university students once they really open up and not just Ottawa, you down the road for Carlton.

And you know, at the other hand, where we meet on a Sunday morning, we could also say, and maybe he at some point in time said, we need to have a heart for all the embassies or we need to have a heart for all of the new Canadians and all of the poor and those afflicted and in danger of gang violence or maybe he's calling us to have a heart for the arts and entertainment and bar world or maybe he's calling us to have a heart for Parliament Hill and all the civil servants which will eventually return at least occasionally to the office.

And we can look at it and say, we don't have the resources to do any of that. And Jesus said, yeah, that's what the story's about.

You don't. You don't have the resources. You never, you're never going to have the resources.

Like in a sense, stop thinking about your resources. I mean, we have to pass budgets and I'm not saying we should pass a \$10 million budget. That would be called presumption. But you see, you do not have the resources to feed the hoi polloi, but you can trust and do what the one who can feed the hoi polloi tells you to do.

[37 : 58] See, isn't that what's going on in the story? The disciples don't have the resources to feed the hoi polloi. What does Jesus ask them to do? Take what I've given you and just start giving it out.

And the disciples had nothing to do whatsoever with the miracle. It was all God. It was all Christ. It was all his grace. It's always only his grace. All things come of you and of your own have I given you and there is no other way to live the Christian life.

All things come of you and of your own have I given you. And that's the means of grace. You trust him at his word and you take those small steps of faith, maybe with faith, which is this, the distance between my finger and my thumb.

You know, but taking a thing off of Nightbird who died over the last week, some of you know who I'm referring to and if you've seen that thing in America's Got Talent, I'm sort of playing with what she said when afterward she said she only had a 2% chance of survival but she says with this big smile 2% is not nothing and I wish you all knew how wonderful it was.

And all I can tell you is if you have faith this much, that much faith is in nothing and I wish I could only tell you how wonderful it is. It's the difference between heaven and hell.

[39 : 18] It's the difference between being used by God and not. Your faith can be this small but it's wonderful. Please stand.

Let's bow our heads in prayer. And if there's anyone here or any who are watching, if you feel a bit of a pressure that maybe you're not quite sure but you know it's directed towards Christ, I can tell you that what it is is if you've never actually just acknowledged that you want to belong to Christ then that's Jesus calling you.

And all I can say is there's no better time than just to turn to him in prayer and say, Jesus, I want you to be my Savior and my Lord and I thank you that you will never let me go. And you know how terrible and crummy I am at keeping my commitments.

I just give myself into your hands. Never let me go. There's no better time than today to pray that. And there's no better time for us to recommit to that. Not that we have to become Christians over and over again but every one of us needs to recommit and say, yeah, I've had an angry week or I've had a self-indulgent week or I've had a greedy week or I've had an envious week and I am so glad I can come and be in your presence, God, and receive grace from you again because I need it again and again and again.

And I need to know my weakness and I need to know I need to be formed in compassion. I need to be formed in compassion. So let's pray.

[40 : 59] Father, thank you for Jesus. Thank you that God, the Son of God, came and walked among and amid his fallen creation. Thank you that he is truly Emmanuel. He was truly Emmanuel, God with us.

That he came, Father, and revealed at the depths of your compassion and love and care for us. That he died for us as our Savior. That he is the one who is our hope of glory.

That he alone is the one who has done everything that has to be done to make us right with you and fit us for heaven. And Father, we ask that these stories and Jesus and who he is, that they would become more and more real to our hearts so that they would form us.

Father, we don't want to be people of anger. We do want to be people of compassion. We want to be people whose compassion doesn't overwhelm their justice or their truth or the sense of right and wrong.

But Father, we want to approach these things out of compassion and out of being just resting in you. And Father, we ask that your Holy Spirit would move and work in us as individuals and us as a congregation that that would be true of us.

[42 : 02] And Father, help us to be attentive to how you would have us minister to the hoi ploi of the world for your great glory, trusting that you would provide the resources as we step out in faith.

And we ask all these things in the name of Jesus and all God's people said, Amen.