

4Ws The Gospel of John: So That You May Know The Miracle Worker

John 6:1-24

Dgroup's Curriculum: Leader's Copy

WORSHIP

Consider reading **Psalm 68:1-17** together, taking turns reading a verse at a time, or reading responsively with the leader reading a verse and the group responding with the next verse. You can discuss the Psalms you read and share what they mean to you.

WELCOME

Questions. Have you ever had an experience where you were afraid that you didn't have what it takes, but discovered that God was able to take your 'little bit' and make it enough? Have you ever felt unable to help, but discovered that your help was exactly what was needed? Tell us the story.

WORD

Discussion Questions:

1. We said in the message that Jesus knew that He would feed the crowd, but He asked Philip for advice about what to do. Why did Jesus ask Philip for advice? What does this mean to our lives today?

Answer:

Let them discuss this. (Read John 6:5-6.) Jesus did indeed ask Philip for advice even though Jesus already had a plan in mind for how to meet the need of feeding the people. In the strictest sense of the word Jesus was not really asking for advice as much as he was testing Philip to see how he would respond. Jesus wanted Philip to be able to see the size of his own faith, and He wanted him to be able to see the depths of his relationship with Jesus. Philip didn't pass the test because he couldn't think of a way that Jesus and his followers could possibly feed the crowd that had gathered on that hillside. Admittedly, it was a huge crowd, but even with the possibility of a miracle, Philip couldn't conceive of a way to give everyone even a bite of food. Philip did what we probably would have done; he looked at the financial resources the Followers of Jesus had at hand and decided that there simply wasn't enough money. He did venture that if he had a chance to go back to work for six months or so they would at least have a start on a fund that could feed the group, but then added that six month's wages would not even provide a mouthful. We can't blame Philip for not thinking outside the box, but he looked at the situation practically when he really didn't need to, and in fact SHOULDN'T have been thinking practically. Jesus was standing right there and had supernatural power to meet the need, but it seems that Philip forgot that. God is looking at our lives as well and 'testing' us in the same way. He wants each of us to be able to see the size of our own faith, and the strength of our relationship with Jesus. It would be wise to be alert, or at least aware of the fact that God may be testing us anytime He points out a need to us, especially if it is a large need. It's possible that God already has a plan for meeting that need, but He wants to draw us in to teach us a lesson about faith and relationship with God.

2. We said in the message that Philip looked AWAY from Jesus and TOWARD the crowd, and Andrew looked AWAY from Jesus and TOWARD the lunch. How did this affect their faith and the answer that they gave Jesus? What does this mean for our lives today?

Answer:

Let them discuss this. (Read John 6:7-9.) Once again, both Philip and Andrew are responding to this 'test' from Jesus. Jesus was standing right there, but they didn't take that into account when they made their evaluation about how best to meet the need of feeding the people. Philip saw how BIG the crowd was, but failed to see how POWERFUL Jesus was. Andrew saw how SMALL the lunch was, but also failed to see how POWERFUL Jesus was. Neither the size of the crowd nor the size of the lunch posed a problem for Jesus and both Philip and Andrew should have known that. This is a lesson for all of us. We are often faced with impossible situations that cause us to give up on any idea of being effective or meeting the need. This happens when we turn our attention to the large size of the need or the small size of the provision, but fail to take into account the POWER and PRESENCE of Jesus in the situation. It's a good idea to do the math, of course, but we have to make sure that we're factoring Jesus into the equation when we make the decision to get involved or just keep our seats. Let's learn to move into situations fully confident that God can do the impossible.

3. We mentioned two equations that compare THE NEED with MY RESOURCES. What were those two equations and what do they mean?

Answer:

Let them discuss this. (Read John 6:10-13.) The two equations were:

THE NEED + MY RESOURCES + NOTHING = NOTHING, and

THE NEED + MY RESOURCES + JESUS = EVERYTHING.

Life really is that simple. We need to remember that God always pays for what He orders and His capacity never runs out. This is what we mean when we say that we can't do things in our own strength. The need will always be too great when we rely on ourselves and the provision will always be too small when we depend on our own resources. We need to ask God to help us to understand how capable He is, and how He delights to show up and show off in our lives. We miss out on so much when we fail to let God be God in our lives, and this passage in John has much to say to that. Jesus was already planning to feed this huge group of people and He already knew that, and He already knew that He would use the boy's small lunch to get it done. It would have been awesome if Philip had said, "The crowd is huge, but YOU are here, so I'm sure we can feed them." It would have been awesome if Andrew had said, "This lunch is pitifully small, but YOU are here, so I'm sure that it will be enough to feed this crowd." Let's become the kind of people who are willing to factor God into our equations and EXPECT that He will take our small resources and use them to do amazing things as we learn to live by faith.

4. We said in the message that the Followers were 'willing' to take Jesus into their boat. Why were they unwilling at first, and what difference did it make for them when Jesus got in the boat? What are the parallels in our lives today?

Answer:

Let them discuss this. (Read John 6:20-21.) They were unwilling to let Him into the boat at first because they were afraid of Him. Admittedly, He had come walking on top of the water, and it was a startling thing to see, but we have to wonder why they didn't say to each other, "Hey, how many people do we know who can walk on water?" If they had thought it through and

remembered that Jesus had just fed more than 10,000 people, they might have realized that there weren't several options when it came to identifying the one walking on the water. They should have KNOWN that it was Jesus and streamlined the process of getting Him into the boat. They went through unnecessary fear and even panic as they processed what was happening. They could have been GLAD to see Jesus instead of being AFRIAD of Him. We sometimes grow fearful, especially during those times when we forget that Jesus is always nearby. When the Followers finally realized it was Jesus and were willing to let Him in the boat, their troubles were really at an end. The same is true in our lives. Our boats are small and the wind is powerful and the waves are big. It may seem at any moment that the boat will capsize, but only when we forget that Jesus is nearby. If we could only be willing to let Him into the boat we may find that He doesn't always solve all our problems immediately, but we can be sure that there is nothing sweeter than having Him nearby when the storm is raging. Encourage the group to think this through and help them to identify those places in our lives where we are refusing to let Jesus in, and then help them to understand that letting Him in may not solve all our problems, but it IS the key to peace in the storm.

5. We said in the message that the Followers failed the test that Jesus gave them, but Jesus continued to be patient with them. What does 'failing' mean in this context, and how do we know that Jesus was patient? How does this apply to our lives?

Answer:

Let them discuss this. (Read John 6:20-21 again.) Jesus wanted the Followers to work with Him to feed the crowd, and He wanted them to be trusting rather than afraid when He approached them on the water. They failed both tests and potentially disappointed Jesus in the process. We know that Jesus was patient, because, in the case of the meal He allowed them to help Him pass out that massive amount of food. In the case of the boat, He told them not be afraid and got into the boat with them instead of just walking on by. Jesus could have let them know how disappointed He was in them, but if He WAS disappointed, He didn't show it. God knows that we are made of dust and He knows that He has sent us out as sheep into the midst of wolves, and God is patient with us even when we don't deserve it. He uses us even when we haven't earned it. He loves us even when we are unlovable. Remind the group that Jesus hasn't changed; He is the same yesterday, today and forever. Of course, we don't want to knowingly and willingly take advantage of His patience, but we must learn to cling to the fact that He isn't finished with us yet and that He will continue to use us even though we don't deserve it. We may have failed in the past, but Jesus never fails, so when we fall down we need to pick ourselves up, dust ourselves off and get going again. That's the best way to bring glory to God, and it's also good for those to whom we minister. Let's go!

WORK

We have been talking this week about those times when things seem impossible, and how important it is to trust God in the midst of the mess. It may be that some of us have given up on sharing the Good News with other people. We may think that the Good News is good, but it isn't very powerful, and we may think that because so many of the people we know have made it clear that they want nothing to do with God, Salvation or Eternal Life. At times like that we need to remember the lesson from this passage. God is able to do the impossible, and He's able to do amazing things with little or no resources from us. The only limiting factor is our unwillingness to include Him as we share the Good News with others. So, let's let this week be the week when we step out by faith and trust God to reach into the lives of those we love. Let's trust God to add His power to the already powerful message of the Gospel and let's share it with others with passion in our hearts and authority in our voices. Remind the group that Romans 1 says that the Gospel IS the power of God; it doesn't say that the Gospel HAS power, it says that the Gospel IS power. It's time to begin believing that and acting as though we do.

Those of us who lead should remember that there is no better way to motivate others to share the gospel than to set an example for them. Speak to others about Jesus when you have the opportunity and set an example of lifestyle evangelism for the members of your group. They will be much more likely to follow your example than they will be to simply do what you tell them to do. Ask the group to discuss this and then ask them to think through the list of people you have been praying for each week. Discuss how we can be more aggressively involved in sharing the good news with these folks for whom God has burdened us. We will pray for these people tonight and each night we're together until they come to Life Group, or come to Christ through some other means. Have each couple or individual share the name of one couple/person to pray for and then ask one of the other people in the group to pray for them.

Close your time together in prayer

WEEKLY PRAYER POINTS

I. Thanksgiving

- Worship God for who He is, what He has done, and what He will do in our lives

II. Country and the World

- Repentance and Salvation

III. Church

- That CCF Singapore Members would honor and love God and make disciples
- Core, Pastors, Leaders, and Families
- Ministries and Churches worldwide

IV. CCF Singapore Facilities

- CCF Singapore Center
- Equipments

V. Personal Concerns

- Deeper intimate relationship with God
- Righteous living
- Salvation of family and friends