

"Think outside the box"

You know as a church we like to go for special days out, in fact in a few weeks time we're going to have a picnic. Which should be great fun but I will talk about that a little more in a few minutes.

I heard this story about this man who wanted to impress his mum, so he took her to Caesar's Palace in Las Vegas for dinner. When they arrived they got the menu. The man said to his mum, 'look mum they have twin lobster for \$45.00, why don't you order that I know you like lobster?' Well his mum looked at him with sceptical eyes, shook her head and said, 'how do I know they are really twins?'

When it comes to food us humans just love eating even though we don't know exactly what it is we're eating. There are even some strange people in this world who eat bones. But with fast food places offering 'value meals' for a couple of pounds a time, you think your getting a bargain but the truth of the matter is, when you get your meal there is hardly anything there, and you still feel hungry after eating.

But if I were to buy a happy meal and bring it to church and said I want to share this everyone here, **do you think everyone would be filled after their share?** No. Today we're going to look at how Jesus can use a very small amount of food to fill everyone and still have some leftover.

Matthew 14:12 "The disciples returned to Jesus from their ministry tour and told him all they had done and what they had taught." Matthew 13:13 "Then Jesus said, "Let's get away from the crowds for a while and rest." Matthew 14:13 "There were so many people coming and going that Jesus and his apostles didn't even have time to eat. So they left by boat for a quieter spot."

You see there are times when it's OK to have some time out. It's OK to have some quiet time either on our own or just with the people we love to be with. Because we all need to rest from our busy lifestyles and recharge our batteries. But as we're about to read, sometimes we need to wait for our time out.

Matthew 14:13 "But many people saw them leaving, and ran ahead along the shore and met them as they landed." Matthew 14:14 "A huge crowd was there as they stepped from the boat. Jesus felt sorry for them because they were like sheep without a shepherd."

Now I want you to notice something here, Jesus wanted to rest, but when he saw the people, he loved them so much that he forgot all about being tired. Now we all have times when we get tired and maybe when you guys are at school and you get tired with school work, you think **oh I'm too tired to do anything else.**

But if a friend came up to you and said, '**can I talk with you about something?**' it's amazing how all of a sudden you don't feel so tired anymore. I'm sure we've all had times when we are so tired all we think about is getting to our beds and then all of a sudden someone comes along and says, '**hey do you fancy going out tonight? Or can I come to your house for a while?**'

And again God gives us the energy and strength to do that and after a few moments we don't feel tired anymore. Or even if you have had a really busy day and you can't wait to get to bed, the minute you finally get to bed you find you're not tired anymore.

Matthew 14:14 "So Jesus sat down with his disciples and began to teach the people many things." Matthew 14:15+16 "Late in the afternoon his disciples came to him and said, "It is getting late. Send the crowds away so they can go to the nearby farms and villages and buy themselves some food." But Jesus said, "You feed them."

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Have you ever been asked to do something you think you can never do? Maybe at school you have been given a test and you think 'I can't pass this test'. Or maybe your teacher or your parents give you a task to do and you think 'I just can't do that'. But when you just go for it, you find that you can pass the test and you can do the task that you have asked to do.

You see Jesus may ask us to do something that we think we can't do but we need to think outside the box. The disciples couldn't think outside the box when it came to feeding all these people.

John 6:5 "With what?" Philip asked. "It would take a small fortune to buy food for all of these people!" Matthew 14:17 "How much food do you have?" Jesus asked. John 6:8+9 "Then Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, spoke up. There's a young boy here with five barley loaves and two fish. But what good is that with this huge crowd?" Matthew 14:18 "Tell the boy to bring me the loaves and fish," Jesus said. John 6:10 "Then he said to them, "Have the people to sit down in groups of about fifty each."

Can you imagine what the disciples are thinking right now? They might be thinking OK Jesus we believe that your God's Son, we believe that you can do great things because your God but this, feeding all these people with five loaves of bread and two fish, even God Himself can't do anything with so little.

Oh they believed in God but the God they believed in had limitations. He could create the universe just with a word, but you can't feed all these people with so little. He can free His people from Egyptian slavery but He can't do anything with so little.

When are we going to realise the words of the Psalmist in Psalm 89:13 "How powerful you are! How great is your strength!" When are we going to realize the words of Jesus when He says in Luke 18:27 "Jesus answered, "What is humanly impossible is possible for God."

Listen guys, the God that your parents come to worship every week doesn't fit in a box. The God whom Funmi and Hosea are teaching you about every week doesn't fit in a box. He is as big as you believe He is. The minute you don't believe that God can help you in any situation, that's when you put Him in a box and put restrictions on Him. The disciples were thinking inside a box; don't make the same mistake because our God can do anything we ask Him to do if it's according to His will.

James 1:6+7 "But when you pray, you must believe and not doubt at all. Whoever doubts is like a wave in the sea that is driven and blown about by the wind. If you are like that, unable to make up your mind and undecided in all you do, you must not think that you will receive anything from the Lord."

Listen guys don't blame God for not helping you with your exams if you don't believe He isn't capable of helping you. Don't blame God for not helping you when you're being bullied if you don't believe He is capable of helping you in the first place.

Don't blame for not helping you or your family out with their problems if you don't believe that He is capable of helping you anyway. James calls it being double minded. And that's what the disciples struggled with; they put Jesus' abilities in a box and believed He could only do so much.

But Jesus is about to prove to them just how big their God is in John 6:11 "Taking the five loaves and two fish and looking up to heaven, Jesus gave thanks and broke them. Then he gave them to the disciples to pass out to all the people."

Now everyone in this room should know what to do before they eat their meals.

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I heard a story about this little boy who was invited over to his friends for dinner. When they all sat down at the table and started eating the little boys said to them, 'you know you guys are just like my dog, you just dig straight in.'

Jesus took the loaves and fish and looked up to heaven and gave thanks. Christians should be giving thanks before every meal we eat, even if that means when we're all alone or in a hurry. John 6:12+13 "And they all ate until they were full." Now gather the leftovers, so that nothing is wasted". Jesus told his disciples. The disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over."

You see God is big enough to create the universe but He's also big enough to take a few loaves of bread and a couple of fish and feed the multitudes. They ate and they were full and they even had some leftover for the disciples.

Now I mentioned our upcoming church picnic earlier and I don't know about you guys but I really enjoy going on a picnic. Well, look at this picture of a picnic basket and let's use our imaginations and think of things that might be inside if we we're going to have a picnic.

Let's see, there would surely be sandwiches, crisps, biscuits, and some soft drinks. Now I think with all that food and drink in our basket we should have a pretty nice picnic, don't you? If we had all of the things we mentioned, do you think there would be enough food for our group of children? What if everyone in our church came to our picnic, would there be enough food in our basket for the whole church?

What if everyone in Great Barr came to our picnic, would there be enough food to feed the whole town? No way! You couldn't feed the whole town with just this little basket of food. Can you imagine feeding a whole town of people with one little picnic basket full of food? We probably couldn't imagine this happening but that's because we put God back inside our box.

But we need to stop thinking like that because with Jesus, anything is possible! And as we have already seen there isn't a box big enough in this world to contain God. 2 Chronicles 2:6 "Yet no one can really build a temple for God, because even all the vastness of heaven cannot contain him. How then can I build a temple that would be anything more than a place to burn incense to God?"

Loved ones our God doesn't belong in a box where we just take him out when it's convenient for us or when we're in trouble. Let me encourage you to free God from your worldly limitations. Let me challenge you to open up the box and set the God of the Bible free.

Do you know what will happen if you don't? Nothing. Do you know what will happen if you do? Everything beyond your wildest imaginations. And then not only if you believe in the God of the Bible but you will also help others see God through your faith in Him.

John 6:14 "When the people saw this miraculous sign, they exclaimed, "Surely, he is the Prophet we have been expecting!" John 6:15 "Jesus saw that they were ready to take him and make him king, so he went away into the mountains to be alone".

So the people saw and believed and wanted to make Jesus king, but that's another sermon for another day. And so Jesus worked hard this day and He finally went to get that much needed time out on His own.

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I guess most of us have seen the film *Oliver Twist* and there's a famous scene when they are all in the dining hall and *Oliver* plucks up the courage to ask for more and of course the head man goes absolutely nuts at him for asking for more.

But do you know something loves ones? When we finally let God out of our box, I guarantee you that when we ask for more, He is more than willing not just to give more, but much more.

Matthew 7:9-11 “Would any of you who are fathers give your son a stone when he asks for bread? Or would you give him a snake when he asks for a fish? As bad as you are, you know how to give good things to your children. How much more, then, will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him!”

When you think that you are too small or that you don't have much to offer, remember the story of the little boy with the loaves and fish. Small becomes big and little becomes much when placed in the hands of God!

Let's start thinking outside the box. Let's free God from the small box we keep Him in, in our minds.