



- Please open your Bibles to Luke chapter 9.
- Introduction – Mission Impossible
- Last week, we studied a “mission impossible” of sorts.

- Read Luke 9:1-17
- Pray

- v. 1-9 – How many of us would sign up for this mission impossible?
 - Allowed to take nothing along
 - An apparent “mission impossible” amid the jealousy and murderous hand of Herod
- Why did Christ demand such rigorous restrictions?
 - The same Jesus Christ in whom the disciples had seen all power and complete authority is the very One who is now empowering them for their mission.
 - v. 1-2 – Jesus gave them power and authority and sent them out.
 - The central theme of this journey is that all real power for true Christian ministry comes from Jesus Christ alone, and not from us.
- We see the success of their mission in the responses of Herod and of the people (v. 7-11).
 - Even though they walked in apparent weakness, the power of Christ gave them supernatural strength.
 - The power of Christ at work within us, however, is ever and always more than enough to fulfill all that God asks.

-- Big Idea: For all that God asks, He gives all that Christ is, and that's more than enough.

That was the first part of this message, and it was preached primarily from verses 1-9. This morning, we are going to continue that same message by looking at the remaining verses in our chosen text, v. 10-17.

But before we do, we are blessed to recall, once again, something very important about the Gospel of Luke, and we learn it in the book's prologue as Luke describes his own writing. In the third verse of the first chapter, Luke, who was an uncommonly intelligent and eloquent man ... writes, "*Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus.*" Thus, in introducing his Gospel, we hear Luke drawing special attention to the fact that it is "*an orderly account.*"

In other words, Luke really wants us to know that nothing in his Gospel has been placed where it is by accident. Rather, by the inspiration of Holy Spirit, the accounts within the book occur in the order that they do for a specific reason. And that reason often has much more to do with teaching purposes than anything else.

A few weeks ago, we saw this orderliness at work in Luke 8:4-21, where three quite different passages all worked together to ask one crucial question—"Are you listening?" Once again, between this week and last, we are encountering three more seemingly unrelated passages that all work together very effectively to make one point. First was the account of Christ sending His disciples on this "Mission Impossible." Second is the section about Herod, which amplifies this Mission Impossible.

And the third passage, which will be our primary focus for this morning, serves to provide an inspired illustration as to how this "mission impossible" becomes "mission accomplished." It is the feeding of the 5000, and as the Holy Spirit has inspired Luke to arrange these three accounts in his Gospel, they work together wonderfully to impart the big idea that was introduced last week and will consider again today. Do you remember it? It goes like this: ***For all that God asks, He gives all that Christ is, and that's more than enough.***

In essence, this pivotal principle of Christian living that was introduced in verses 1-9 is now powerfully illustrated in verses 10-17. Thus, as we progressed through the text last week, so we will do again today. That is, we will look at this well-known miracle of Christ through the prism of the three components of our main point. First, let us consider these verses according to the phrase...

1.) “For all that God asks...”

Picture the situation with me if you will: Beginning in verse 10, we read that the disciples had just returned from this long and undoubtedly strenuous evangelistic “mission impossible,” and they are stoked! In verse 10, we find them eager to share with Jesus all of the amazing miraculous things that had happened. Yet, as they draw away in search of a private place, enormous crowds find them, follow them, and ultimately shatter their solitude. But Jesus is not upset. In fact, in verse 11, we see Him welcoming them, healing them, and teaching them about the kingdom of God.

Think about this crowd for a moment. In verse 14, we read that there were about 5000 men there. Notice: That is just the men. We are not told how many women and children were present, but surely there would have been thousands of them as well. In fact, many scholars estimate that, including everyone present that day, the size of this crowd could have easily been well over 10,000 people strong.

Now, while that still remains a big crowd today, that kind of crowd would have been nearly uncontrollable in New Testament times. Jesus had no loud speakers; He had no microphone. There was no convention center... no stadium... no arena. They didn't even have fast food restaurants. Rather, what we have here is thousands and thousands of people, without any conveniences, hurrying out into the middle of nowhere to catch a glimpse of Jesus Christ.

Thus, this massive multitude is now at least somewhat stranded in the wilderness... and the hour is drawing very late... and the thousands people who had hastily chased down Jesus becoming hungry and irritable because, in their haste to see Jesus, they had forgotten to bring anything to eat.

Indeed, by verse 12, it has now become late afternoon, and the disciples are starting to stress out. Managing a gigantic crowd is one thing, but controlling a hungry mob is another thing altogether. Therefore, the disciples plead with Jesus to send the people away before the scene gets really ugly.

But then, in response, Jesus commands yet another apparent “mission impossible.” In other words, in verse 13, we are given another startling picture of all that God asks. First it was the evangelistic journey on which they were allowed to take nothing—nothing, that is, except for the power of Christ. And now, pointing to thousands upon thousands of hungry people without any food, Jesus says to his disciples, “*You give them something to eat.*”

Can you hear their responses now?

Disciples: “Oh, yeah... good one, Jesus... (Laughter)...”

Jesus: “*You give them something to eat.*”

Disciples: “Wait a minute, you were serious about that?”

Jesus: “*You give them something to eat.*”

Disciples: “Who? ... Me? ... What?! ... How!”

Jesus: “*You give them something to eat.*”

So the question arises: Why does Jesus say it this way? I mean, why doesn't He just skip verse 13, where He gives this seemingly impossible command, and just skip ahead to verse 14, where He begins giving them directions and multiplying the food? Well, in response to that question, let me ask you another question...

Do you know what I think is the one key word in this entire passage? Perhaps you are tempted to give the typical Sunday School answer and say, “Jesus.” Or perhaps your guess is a prominent word, such as “give” or “eat” or “bread” or “fish.” But I don't think the key word in this text is any of those. In fact, the answer will probably surprise you. The key word in this passage may very well be a simple third-person plural pronoun found in verse 10, where Luke writes, “*When the apostles returned, they reported to Jesus what they had done.*” And the key word in question here is the second occurrence of the word “they” as found in this verse, and I highlight this word because the best understanding of the verses that follow seems to emerge when we focus on it.

With that in mind, read verse 10 with me again, and as we do pay special attention to that key word “they.” It says, “*When the apostles returned, they reported to Jesus what **they** had done*” ... “*what **they** had done.*” Surely, the disciples were telling Him about the demons that had been driven out, and as they did, they seem to have been telling the tale emphasizing what *they* had done. As they told of the many people who were miraculously healed, they seem to have been highlighting what great miracles *they* had been performing. And as they discussed the preaching of the Gospel, they seem to have been boasting in the disciples that *they* had won.

Remember, Jesus had sent them out with nothing at all except His great power, and remember that He did that in order to emphasize the fact that all victory and glory in ministry belong to Him alone. And yet, the disciples’ reports of their journey seem to reveal the fact that they had missed this point. Whereas they should have been testifying about His great power, it seems that they returned boasting in their own glory instead. Whereas they should have been extolling the astounding sufficiency of Christ, it appears as though they were expressing the glory of own strength instead. They were talking about all *they* had done.

And here is the best part. Jesus appears to call them on it. In this passage, we see Him once again diminishing human glory and reminding them that all real power to please God comes from Him and through Him alone. In this context, notice carefully what happens in verse 13. When the disciples plead with Jesus to send the people away, He looks at them and says, “*You give them something to eat.*”

You know, if I were making my own paraphrase of Scripture, such as the Message translation, there are two words that I would be really tempted to insert at the beginning of this verse—two words that would really summarize what Jesus appears to be saying to the disciples here. Now, while I would never ever actually attempt to add anything to Scripture, I do think the following two words would help bring out the meaning of verse 13 to modern readers: “Okay, Hotshot...” In that case, verse 13 might say something like, “Okay, Hotshot, you give them something to eat.”

With that in mind, notice in verse 13 what the disciples do in response. They say, “*We have only five loaves of bread and two fish-- unless we go and buy food for all this crowd.*” There are at least different ways to read this... (read with different voice inflections). For my part, that second option seems to fit the context very well. And reading it that way, we hear the disciples attempting to tackle this humanly impossible mission by their own human power.

Imagine that! Imagine attempting to buy food for 5000 men and their families in the middle of the wilderness in the first century. Even today, with Sam’s Club and Costco, it would be extremely difficult to buy that much food on the spot. But these disciples didn’t have Sam’s. They didn’t have Costco. They didn’t even have a convenience store where they could get everyone a stick of gum.

Now, while we cannot know how serious the disciples were about this suggestion to buy food, what we do know is that, in making that suggestion, they were proposing a natural solution to a supernatural problem. What else is very clear is the fact that, when Jesus commands His disciples to give the crowd something to eat, He is, at the same time, giving them an urgent reminder that they simply cannot accomplish what He asks without His power. He is reminding them that *for all that God asks, He gives all that Christ is...*”

That thought brings up an important point of application, which is this: We must **give God all our trust**. With that said, let me ask you: By whose power are we trying to live? When we look at the things that God desires you to do... and when we see the ways in which He calls you to serve... and when we hear about the holiness in which He wants us to walk... are you trusting Him to see you through, or does the whole endeavor ever seem to be one gigantic “mission impossible?”

Well, please know this from our text today. By your own strength, it is impossible. Or, as Jesus puts it in John 15:5, “*Apart from me you can do nothing.*” But hear this as well: The power of Christ is more than able. As 2 Peter 1:3 declares, “*His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness.*” Thus, we see once again that *for all that God asks...*

2.) He gives all that Christ is.

Examining this passage in light of this second part of our main point, reveals that God supplies all that is needed in order to do what He desires through the perfect provision of Jesus Christ. In particular, we see God supplying all that is needed through all that Christ is in verses 14-17, where Jesus grants His disciples all the power they need to complete all that He commands. In verse 14, He gives His instructions. In verse 16, He blesses what little they had. And, in verses 16-17, He provides for the people and satisfies their hunger.

As we carefully consider verses 13 and 16, it becomes quickly obvious that the disciples, in and of themselves, really do not have much to offer here. They have only five small loaves of bread and two measly fish, which might have provided a little bit of food for nine or ten people, but not nine or ten *thousand*. But, you see, what they brought isn't really what matters. What really matters here is the One to whom they will offer what little they have. What really matters is the presence and power of Christ. What really matters is all that Christ is.

Indeed, because of who Christ is, the disciples could have come with just one fish and two loaves... or even with no food at all... and with however little they brought, Jesus could easily have fed 5,000 or 500,000, or even 5,000,000. You see, what really matters on this day—as the disciples are stuck in the wilderness, surrounded by thousands of hungry people, with nothing but five loaves and two fish—what really makes a difference on this day is that Jesus takes in His holy hands what little they had and blesses it according to His matchless power.

And in the light of His glorious might, this “mission impossible” proves to be more than possible. In the presence of His power, the unachievable is believable... the unattainable available... and the unimaginable is manageable indeed! And in the sight of His strength, the formidable is feasible... the daunting is doable... and the “too-good-be true” is available to all who believe. For His grace is sufficient... His power is perfect... and for all that God asks, He gives all that Christ is.

The disciples only needed to give unto Jesus all that they had, regardless how small it was, and, by the power of His all-powerful blessing, what little they had was far more than enough.

Given these truths from God's Word, another important point of application becomes clear, which is this: We are called to **give God all we've got**.

With that said, let me ask you: What are you holding back from worship and service to God? And why are you keeping it for yourself? Is it your gifts or talents? Is it your time? Is it your finances? As this text makes plain, God is not constrained by the greatness of our gifts, the excellence of our abilities, or the size of our offerings. He cares only that we give Him all we have, no matter how little. He cares only that we offer Him all that we are, no matter how weak we may feel. If we will only give our utmost—little though it may seem—entirely into the hands of Christ, He will take care of the rest.

Let us never forget, we worship a God who spoke mightily through the meekness of Moses, who was afraid to speak... We know a King who needed only a puny teenager and a simple slingshot to slay the giant, Goliath... And we serve a Savior who radically transformed the world through twelve remarkably unremarkable men. Let us always remember that we love the Lord who can feed thousands upon thousands with five little loaves and two tiny fish... and not only that, but He does it all with an abundance to spare. Through all that Christ is, we are graced by a God who is delighted to multiply our meager means and use them to bring great glory to His great name. Because for all that God asks, He gives all that Christ is, and—just as we said last week, so we say again today with joy...

3.) And that's more than enough.

This message is the essence of this passage, is it not? That which could not be done by human will, human invention, or any sort of human power is not only accomplished by our Lord, Jesus Christ, but His power provides abundantly more than could be asked for or even imagined.

Please read with me beginning in verse 16. Luke writes:

Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke them. Then he gave them to the disciples to set before the

people. They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over.

There were twelve baskets left over. Thousands of hungry people were miraculously fed, and, yet, there were twelve baskets of abundance... one for each disciple, so that each one held in his very hands the very product of the power of Christ. One basket of abundance for each of these twelve men who had said yes to Jesus' "mission impossible"... who had gone out to share the Good News with nothing in tow and, yet, somehow returned with massive crowds anxious to meet the Jesus they proclaimed. And as these twelve men filled their twelve baskets with the pieces left over, all glory and majesty and fame for the success were due to Jesus Christ alone, because that which they simply could not do by themselves was done miraculously through them by Him who alone is worthy.

Their "impossible" mission was more than possible through Christ, and they learned on that day the eternal truth that Paul boldly declares in Philippians 4:13, where He writes, "*I can do everything through him who gives me strength.*" In other words, we might say, "For all that God asks, He gives all that Christ is, and that is ever and always more than enough."

Knowing this, we absolutely must hear this third and final point of application this morning, which is this: Let us be sure always to **give God all the glory.**

Let me ask you: Who gets glory in your life? When something goes well, to whom do you give the credit? When you have success, who gets the praise? In other words, which is more common for you: Looking for ways to get praise for yourself, or looking for opportunities to give glory to God? Do you live to make His name known, or to bring glory to our own? Whose honor are you really seeking?

Similarly, as a church we had better be hyper vigilant that God, and God alone, always gets all the glory for every good thing we are and every good thing we accomplish together. When the pews are filled on a Sunday morning, all of us ought to know and confess that the reason for our success is because God is here, not because we are. In the same way, when people come forward to receive Jesus

as Lord, we best realize that it happens because God has saved them and not because we have.

Please don't get me wrong here, God absolutely uses us and all of our gifts and abilities, and He is pleased to do so. However, He uses us by His power and He blesses us for His glory, never our own. Therefore, if we could ever be satisfied to give glory to anyone but God alone, then we really do not know God at all.

In conclusion, then, we have this wonderful mantra by which we can better learn to live the Christian life for the glory of God. Will you please say it with me once again? For all that God asks, He gives all that Christ is, and that's more than enough.

Moreover, in response to this tremendous truth, there are three things that we must give to our great God. First, let us give Him all our trust. Second, let us give Him everything we are and all that we've got. And third, let us ever and always give Him all the glory, for He alone is worthy.