

Bumper:

Good morning Southside Church!

(Corona virus comment?)

Today we are in **week three of our series** entitled: **“Table Manners.”**

This is our Lenten series which is the 40 days leading up to Easter!

We will **conclude this series in three weeks** with **Jesus at the final table eating with His disciples** before His death!

We will experience this on **Good Friday on April 10th**.

Mark the Date, **April 10th – 12th** this is Easter weekend.

April the 10th we will have the **“Table to the Cross”** experience.

This experience **will chronical the final day of Jesus’ life** leading **to the cross!**

But today we want to **hone in on another meal Jesus attended** in the gospel of Luke.

The **first two weeks** we found **Jesus at a table** where He had some rather interesting encounters.

However today **Jesus isn't at a table** he is **eating in an open field**.

This meal can be found in **Luke chapter 9** and it is significant because it **demonstrates what God wants to do through His followers.**

Context

Jesus' disciples had **just reassembled after being sent out** in groups of two -

To preach the kingdom of God and heal the sick.

We see this in - **Luke 9:6 (NIV) ⁶So they set out and went from village to village, preaching the gospel and healing people everywhere.**

Because of this word spread across the land about all of the miracles that were happening and it was creating quite a stir.

So much so that **King Herod** (Israel's current king who had aligned with Rome) heard about it and **was perplexed.**

Word on the street was that John the Baptist, whom Herod had killed, **may have risen from the dead.**

Others were saying **Elijah the prophet had returned** and others **proclaiming prophets from long ago** had come **back to life.**

Supernatural things were happening and people were **trying to explain it!**

You see when God shows up - miraculous things happen and it creates conversation!

How would you like to be a part of a miracle that would stir up some conversation?

We have been **praying for miracles at Southside Church.**

During the month of March we are having prayer gatherings on Tuesday nights.

The past two Tuesdays have been amazing!

We are **planning to do this** for the **rest of March!**

Join us!

Tuesday night's here at our Courthouse Road location.

Spatially aware praying for miracles!

We're are in the Loft upstairs, we are **praying for God** to do some **miraculous things through Southside Church!**

I think it would be great to **start some conversations** and **get people perplexed!**

This is what **happened with the disciples**, they were **creating conversations** and making people **perplexed.**

When they reassembled reporting their work to Jesus said "lets go on a retreat."

So they **pulled away to a remote place** but people found out where they were and followed them.

You see when God moves people want to follow.

Is there anyone here that **wants to be a part of a move from God!**

Anyone here that **want to be a part of a miracle in someone's life?**

If you do, you really need to pay attention to what happens next.

The crowd followed, they **listened to Jesus all day long!**

Jesus **spoke and healed people** and the **day flew by!**

Then the disciples began to notice something that launched a **sequence of events that reveals how we can be a part of a miracle.**

You want to **be a part of a miracle**, anyone, do **you want to participate with Jesus and be a part of the miraculous?**

Look at this passage with me and let's **see the ingredients** needed to become a part of a miracle!

Luke 9:12 (NIV) ¹²Late in the afternoon the Twelve came to him and said, "Send the crowd away so they can go to the surrounding villages and countryside and find food and lodging, because we are in a remote place here."

Do you see what just happened here?

The disciples saw a need!

Jesus was **spending time dealing with the spiritual needs!**

The crowd gathered because they wanted **true healing and perspective on life.**

And as the day wore on the **disciples noticed there was another growing need.**

A physical need!

The **hour was late** and the **people were getting hungry!**

If you **study all of the miracles in the Bible** do you know **what the common denominators** would be with most miracles?

Some might say **prayer!**

As important as prayer is, **there are miracles in the Bible that are recorded where no one prayed!**

Some might say **faith!**

And I would say, **faith is important however there are miracles recorded in the Bible where people lacked faith.**

But did you know there is one thing that is common with every miracle in the Bible.....

A Problem!

That is right, you must have a **problem to be a candidate for a miracle!**

Problems.....is there anyone here today who has a **hurt**, a **need**, a crisis or better said a **problem?**

If you have problems then you are a candidate for a miracle!

We don't like problems. **We try to avoid problems. We shelter ourselves and our children from problems.**

In fact **when we have a problem**, they begin to wonder, where is God?

Maybe He has left the building?

In fact, many of **us believe God isn't near** when we **have a problem.**

This is the furthest thing from the truth!

You have to **have a problem for God to do a miracle**, and **when we have problems God is with us!**

Many times we believe that **if we follow Jesus** we will have a **problem-free life**.

Not True!

In fact, Jesus later on says to His disciples:

John 16:33 (NIV) ³³ "..... In this world you will have trouble.

Translation, you will have problems, but Jesus doesn't end there he says....

But take heart! I have overcome the world."

Following Jesus **doesn't get rid of our problems**.

Does anyone here today have problems?

If you do I have good news for you!

- If you have a **small problem** you are a candidate for a **small miracle**

- If you have a **medium size problem** you are a candidate for a **medium size miracle**
- If you have a **big problem** then you are a candidate for a **big miracle!**

Problems **are not always bad**, sometimes **they are an opportunity for God to show up!**

Problems are **platforms for God to demonstrate** His power!

Look at the word PROBLEMS. Problems are....

P= predictors- the way we react to the problem can predict its outcome.

R= reminders- it's a reminder that we can't live life alone we need God.

O= opportunities- for us to grow and have Christ increase our faith!

Do you realize that every medical advancement that we have today was a result of going after a problem?

B= blessings- Think of the growth we have received by facing problems and being victorious over them?

L= lessons- every problem that I have faced has taught me something. Your problem could become your best tutor.

E= everywhere- problems are everywhere, you will not escape them yet with Christ you will have a partner to face them.

M= messages- just like the warning lights in your car problems can give us warning that something needs to be fixed.

Illustration:

When you have a **warning light come on in your car** the wrong thing to do would be to **unplug your dash board lights**.

The right thing to do is find out **WHY the light came on and WHAT it is trying to say to you**.

S= solvable- the good news is every problem you face is solvable with Christ

The question is, **will you bring your problem to Him?**

This is what disciples did, **they came to Jesus and said “the crowd is hungry”** their problem **became His problem.**

Jesus **this is a remote place**, the people are hungry, **we have a problem.**

When **we see a need we are positioned for a miracle**, but that is not all.

There is more....

Sometimes the need is only sensed by a few.

Notice in this passage **who found the problem?**

The disciples!

It wasn't the **crowd that noticed the hour was late**, it wasn't the **crowd identifying the need for food.**

No it was the disciples!

Aren't you glad **miracles don't require a majority!**

The **disciples didn't stop the sermon** and **point out the need to the crowd** for a miracle.

You see miracles

- Don't require a vote
- Don't require a committee to study the problem

It simply **took a few noticing the need** and bringing it to Jesus.

Miracles are not found in the multitudes

It starts when **two or three begin to identify needs!**

Every **great revival** and **life renewal** started with a few!

In fact, I would say **it starts with you!**

Do you see a need? If so, then **what are you doing with that need!**

You see:

- God sees you

- God knows you
- God hears you
- God is with you

If you **claim to be a Christ follower** then you are **His disciples!**

When you see a need around you, **you don't have to form a committee.....**

- Or a think tank
- Or get permission from a pastor
- Or get a majority before taking action

All you have to **do is identify the need and bring it to Jesus!**

I can't tell you how many **times as a pastor I have people bring needs to me they think "the church" ought to be meeting.**

I wish I had a dollar for every person who came to me over the years and said to me, **"Pastor – you know what I think we should be doing."**

Translation ---what they are sometimes saying is, **pastor here is what I think YOU should do or what our church should do!**

I have learned to say **what Jesus said to His disciples** in this encounter!

Luke 9:13¹³ He replied, "You give them something to eat."

This is what Jesus said, **you** do something about it.

The reality is **we can think of a lot of things for other people to do to solve problems!**

What are you **willing to do to solve the problems you see around us?**

I believe that if:

- **Sleeping** people would **wake up**
- **Luke warm** people would **fire up**
- **Disgruntled** people would **cheer up**
- **Estranged** people would **make up**
- **Discouraged** people would **cheer up**

- **Gossiping** people would **shut up**
- **Dry bones** in the church would **shake up**
- **Non-givers** would **pay up**
- And if **true believers** would **PRAY up!**

Then we would see **need after need met** and **Miracles would be happening right here** and we could start a **firestorm of conversations in our area!**

Let's get back to our ingredients:

When there is a need sensed by a few – and each one understands their part!

Here is where miracles break down.

The disciples brought the need to Jesus with a **recommendation to send the crowds away!**

Jesus turns the tables and **says you need to feed the people!**

They are stunned because **they don't have enough food to meet the need!**

Luke 9:"¹³ They answered, "We have only five loaves of bread and two fish--unless we go and buy food for all this crowd."¹⁴ (About five thousand men were there.)

I can't help but **believe that in this moment** they are **looking for Jesus to bail them out.**

How many times **do we approach Jesus with issues,** often **issues we created** and expect **Him to solve them without us lifting a finger?**

What Jesus is looking for is partners in miracles.

Jesus is saying - **you do your part and I'll do my part.**

We will **walk together and miracles** will happen.

It is an **IF THEN** proposition.

Are you struggling with an addiction?

IF you are willing to pay the price, **admit you have a problem** and take the steps of recovery **THEN** I will set you free!

You want your **kids to know right from wrong?**

IF you will become what you want your kids to become **THEN** I will help you understand that “**more is caught than taught!**”

You want the **sick cared for?**

IF you will be my hands and feet **THEN** I will care for them through you!

IF you remain in ME THEN I will remain in you....Jesus said! (John 15)

You want your **relationships restored?**

IF you will take the first step in reconciliation **THEN** I will help with the restoration!

No miracle happened without a **problem and a partner!**

Aren't you glad that...

- **Michael Angelo** didn't say **I don't do ceilings**
- **Noah** didn't say **I don't do boats**
- **Moses** didn't say **I don't do water crossings.**
- **John** I don't **do baptisms**
- **Mary** didn't say **I don't do virgin births**
- **Peter** didn't say **I don't do Gentiles**
- **Paul** didn't say **I don't do letters**
- **Jesus** didn't say **I don't do crosses**

When we ask God to **do something in our lives** then we **must be willing to do our part!**

Back to the ingredients:

When there is a need sensed by a few and each one understands their part and gives their all!

This is a critical ingredient! **We have to give our all!**

We are **so fortunate that this miraculous meal** was so significant that **all four gospel** writers in the New Testament (**Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John**) wrote about it.

In **Mark's Gospel** we see Jesus ask the disciples, "**what do you have?**" and then **sends the twelve into the crowd to take an inventory.**

In the **gospel of John** we see that the five loaves and two fish **was a boy's lunch he had brought with him.**

Jesus will always ask us **what have,** and the **most frustrating part** will be that **we will never have enough.**

In fact, the **disciples wouldn't have had any food** if it wasn't for the **boy in the crowd!**

Have you ever stopped to **consider this encounter from the little boy's perspective?**

He **had no idea** that morning when **his mother packed his lunch that he would be used by God** to feed a multitude!

Today many of us have **no clue that we are poised** to be involved in an **absolute mind blowing miracle!**

When **Jesus asked the disciples,** as indicated in Mark's account of this story, "**what do you have,**" we need to remember.

God doesn't ask us to take an inventory of what we have to frustrate us!

NO!

I believe **God wants us to be aware of our shortcomings** so we **will know who should get the credit** when the **miracle happens!**

This little **boy was the only one prepared** to eat that day.

When the disciples did the **inventory and discovered his lunch**, I'm sure it created quite the scene.

If I were that little boy and I **began to realize the disciples were going to confiscate my meal** I would have been upset!

I get upset **when my wife steals a French fry off my plate**, could you imagine this scene?

Two things for us to remember here!

- It is hard to **care for others when your needs** are met. – The boy's needs were met!

- It **didn't** make sense giving up what little he had to meet a need that big.

It doesn't make sense when Jesus asks us **to take a personal inventory** and once we know to **surrender what little we have for others?**

But we are **not talking about the world's economy** we are **taking about the Kingdom of God economy.**

We must be willing to **give all we have** so others will be filled.

Did you know the key to getting fed is ensuring others are fed!

It doesn't make sense to **give my tithe before I pay my other bills!**

It doesn't make sense to **use my gifts in service for Jesus for free** when **can get paid to use them in the world!**

But **when we all do our part and give our all** - then **Jesus can perform multiplying miracles that impact the masses!**

THINK ABOUT IT!

WHEN THERE IS A NEED SENSED BY A FEW AND EACH ONE UNDERSTANDS THEIR PART AND GIVES THEIR ALL REGARDLESS OF THE ODDS!

You want to participate in the miraculous then partner with God bring Him your problems and be willing to give your all no matter what!

Miracles don't make sense!

How many miracles have we missed because we want them to make sense?

If it wasn't for people who were willing to live like this then we wouldn't be here today.

Think about the group back in 1954 who said, "Let's start a church on the Southside of Richmond and started prayer gatherings in a barbershop?"

People who believe in miracles!

What kind of people in that barbershop said, **let's step out in faith and build a church building on Concord Avenue?**

People who believe in miracles!

Who are the people on **Concord Avenue** that said, **“our mission to reach people is so big let's not stop here, let's relocate to Cogbill Road** and build a bigger church so we can impact more people for Jesus?

People who believe in miracles!

What kind of people **outgrew their Cogbill road facility** and said, let's **do it again and buys property in a pop up auction** on the corner of 288 and Courthouse Road.

People who believe in miracles!

That is what happened here at Southside Church!

People, who knew God could do it, **experienced 12 days of miraculous events** leading up to the **purchase of this property!**

Then in one of the Sunday services announced **“hey let’s start building our new church on the new property”** even though we don’t have a buyer for the property we have?

People who believe in miracles!

It is **miracle believing people who:**

- start a school that becomes Guardian Christian Academy
- start ministries like the XZone and Footsteps Counseling Center,
- launch multiple campuses,
- merge with other churches,
- buys 250 acres believing for a future harvest.
- Builds a sports complex for the community to use as an outreach tool.

I say let’s not stop!

Let’s be a **people who keep giving what little we have to a BIG God who does BIG things!**

You might be wondering, where is the feast.....it’s coming, its coming.....

Luke 9:14-17 But he said to his disciples, "Have them sit down in groups of about fifty each." ¹⁵ The disciples did so, and everybody sat down. ¹⁶ 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. ¹⁷ They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over.

I don't believe Jesus wants this to be the last time He empowered His disciples to be a part of the miraculous.

I believe Jesus wants to keep performing miracles today, right here through us!

The question is, will we be the disciples today who will recognize and believe that?

WHEN THERE IS A NEED SENSED BY A FEW AND EACH ONE UNDERSTANDS THEIR PART AND GIVES THEIR ALL REGARDLESS OF THE ODDS....IF YES!

THEN MIRACLES CAN HAPPEN!

... I believe Jesus wants to work a miracle through you!

I believe **people all around our campuses** will be **perplexed and not be able to stop talking about it.**

I believe **crowds would gather** to get in on the **feast created by a people who believe God for miracles!**

You want to be a part of the miracle?

Then become a disciple who believes that:

WHEN THERE IS A NEED SENSED BY A FEW AND EACH ONE UNDERSTANDS THEIR PART AND GIVES THEIR ALL REGARDLESS OF THE ODDS THEN MIRICLES CAN HAPPEN!

Let's pray!

Response time!