

(Adapted from Pastor Drew's sermon on 1/29/23)

Matthew 14:13-21

¹³ Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. ¹⁴ When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion for them and cured their sick.

¹⁵ When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves." ¹⁶ Jesus said to them, "They need not go away; you give them something to eat." ¹⁷ They replied, "We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish." ¹⁸ And he said, "Bring them here to me." ¹⁹ Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and blessed and broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. ²⁰ And all ate and were filled, and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. ²¹ And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

Ephesians 3:20-21

20 Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, **21** to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

▲ **THEME:** "Align your Abilities to Serve the Purposes of God."

▲ DISCUSSION:

Are you a Mathematician, Lawyer, Artist, or Musician? These all require very different abilities. Some of us lean more toward art over science, physical over mental, etc. Some are entrepreneurs and innovative, while others prefer the more traditional occupations. Neither is good nor bad. The point is, when you put your abilities in the hands of Jesus, **God can use that.**

1. One of the most common excuses people give for not engaging in ministry is, "I just don't have anything to offer." This couldn't be further from the truth. You likely have dozens, probably hundreds of untapped, unrecognized, and unused abilities that are lying dormant inside you. What are some abilities that we may take for granted?
2. Read Matthew 14:13-21 together.
3. Reread Matthew 14:16. What would have been different if Jesus would have said, "They need not go away; I will give them something to eat"? When it comes to meeting the needs of others, do you think, "Jesus will do it" or "Jesus has asked me to do it"? What difference does it make either way?
4. Reread Matthew 14:17 together. The disciples respond to Jesus' instruction with, "We have nothing..." With 5 loaves of bread and two fish, how many might they be able to feed? Do you see your abilities as "nothing" or "something" that when in the hands of Jesus can turn into "everything"? Why?
5. Read Ephesians 3:20. Share stories with one another where God has used your abilities to accomplish God's purposes.

▲ SUPER SET

Need help discovering your abilities?

For us to be in the best spiritual SHAPE we can be, we all need to **Align our Abilities** to serve the purposes of God.

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