

When Jesus sent his followers out on mission trips he gave to them, his authority, in order that they might speak and act on his behalf.

What does it mean to be entrusted with Jesus' authority?

What is required of those who use Jesus' authority?

What happens when Jesus' authority is used?

Jesus' own example teaches us so much.

John 3:34 records a remarkable statement made by John the Baptist about Jesus:

God gives him the Spirit without limit. NLT

When the Holy Spirit came upon Jesus at his baptism, the presence and the power of the Spirit in Jesus' life... had no restrictions.

Do you know why?

Because Jesus' life was sinless.

Because Jesus was completely committed to do the Father's will.

"Not my will, but yours be done" was the posture of Jesus' life.

This is why the Father gave Jesus the Spirit "without limit."

The Father's glory was safe with Jesus.

Luke writes in *5:17: And the power of the Lord was present for him to heal the sick.* Do you realize this is how it was for every miracle done by Jesus.

Jesus had unlimited access through the Holy Spirit to the resources of his Father.

Jesus' example impresses upon us an important principle

The extent to which the authority of Jesus can be used effectively by a follower of his, depends upon their yielded-ness to Jesus.

Jesus would later emphasize to his band of followers *"...apart from me you can do nothing."* John 15:5b. What did he mean when he said "nothing?"

Humans are capable of doing many marvelous things.

So obviously Jesus did not mean we are without ability.

He is talking about something else.

What is that something else?

Let's read the first part of the verse 15.

Jesus said, *"I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit... apart from me you can do nothing."*

According to Jesus, apart from him, we cannot produce fruit.

A few verses earlier Jesus had told his disciples what that **fruit** was.

"...whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father." John 14:12

The "fruit" mentioned in John 15 is the "works" Jesus spoke of in John 14.

The fruit is actions, similar to and greater than, the things Jesus did through the power of the Holy Spirit.

How is this possible?

Illustration – a small tree with branches; a branch cut off

When one's life is connected to Jesus' life, like branches are connected to a vine, the Spirit's life can flow into theirs, like the life of a vine flows into the branches connected to it. This is how "fruit" is produced.

With this understanding, listen again to what Jesus said when he entrusted his disciples with his authority.

Matthew 10:1, 7-8: *He gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness... "As you go, proclaim this message: 'The kingdom of heaven has come near.' Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give."*

Using Jesus' authority is not like wielding magic.

It isn't about saying the right words in the right way. Example in Acts 17:13-16.

It is about living like Jesus lived.

It's about being completely surrendered and available to God.

Only as the Holy Spirit is at home in our lives, can his power in us, do works, similar to and greater than the ones done by Jesus.

This week we are focused on Mark 6:30-56

Aside from the resurrection, this story of Jesus feeding 5000 men (20K with women and children) is the only miracle recorded in all four Gospels. Obviously, the Gospel writers considered it to be hugely significant. We want to find out why. The context is important.

Verse 30 – the disciples have returned from their very first mission trip – v.12. They were eager to tell Jesus about what had happened. Many lives had been changed. But it was proving to be very challenging to tell Jesus about the specifics, because... **verse 31**.

Jesus could see that his band of followers needed a break. So he proposed they go somewhere quiet in order to rest. What happened? **Verse 32-34a**.

The name, the Sea of Galilee, can cause you to think it is a large body of water. Actually, it is quite small - **4 to 7 miles wide and just over 12 miles long**. So when Jesus and the disciples left in a boat, it was not hard for people to guess where they were headed, and to run along the shore, arriving ahead of them.

What happened that day had never happened before! There hadn't been such a great crowd of people, possibly 15-20K, who, without any preparation, had on the spur of the moment, ran to meet Jesus in a remote place.

But the crowd was not alone in being unprepared. So were Jesus' followers.

As the sun began to set, the disciples, realized something needed to be done immediately, in order to avert a potential "situation" – **verse 35-36**. The disciples request was reasonable. But Jesus had other plans – **verse 37a**.

The disciples probably didn't realize that even though the mission trip had ended, their training continued. They responded logically to Jesus' request – **verse 37b**.

It wasn't that they didn't want to feed all those people. They simply didn't have the resources to do so. Jesus responded – **verse 38**.

When they reported back, I'm sure they thought Jesus would do what they had earlier suggested – send everybody home. But he didn't. It's almost like when they told Jesus how little they had, that he responded, "Fantastic! Let's eat."

Jesus didn't explain to them how he planned to feed so many with so little.

He just directed his disciples to have everyone be seated for supper, even though, they knew there wasn't enough food to go around.

But they did as he asked. They had learned to trust him.

verse 40-44.

How does this story connect to the greater story of the Bible?

> All of Jesus' miracles give **glimpses of new creation.**

God's plan is to undo what sin and death ruined.

God's plan is to recreate.

Revelation 21:5: "I am making everything new."

> John the apostle had thought much upon this miracle.

As he wrote his gospel, he added material that Matthew, Mark and Luke hadn't included.

He did so to supplement.

He did so in order to give deeper insight into the person and work of Jesus.

He connected what God had done in the past, to what God was now doing in the present.

John 6:1-4.

As John thought back upon this miracle, he remembered it happened just before the Passover, and he realized that this was not a coincidence.

What Jesus did as he fed that great crowd of people, subtly hinted at, how he was the fulfillment of what the Passover had pointed to.

The Passover sacrifice covered sin.

But the Passover was also a meal that fed.

John 6:14-15.

Within the heart of the Jewish people was a great longing for God's Messiah to come.

They knew Messiah would sit upon the throne of David and rule over the earth.

But they had missed, in the reading of the prophets, that Messiah's coming would be two-pronged. He would come first as the suffering servant (Isaiah 53); who would, once and for all, deal with humanity's sin problem.

And then, at the end of this age, the Messiah would return to the earth, in power, to make right all that was wrong in this world.

Then would begin the time of the new heaven and the new earth.

They, like us, needed to understand the greater story of the Bible.

This is why in my teaching, I repeatedly emphasize this.

This is why we are using the Gospel Project in our Children's Ministry.

The other thing, is that they, like us, could not force God's hand.

With everything, God has **"a right time."** (Galatians 4:4)

When we rest in this truth, it removes anxiety and panic, and replaces it with peace.

God is in control. God knows best. He is never early or late.

John 6:25-29.

They pursued after Jesus for the wrong reasons.

They had completely missed the point of the miracle.

Jesus could multiply five loaves and two fishes and satisfy their physical hunger, because he was the Son of Man, sent to earth by God the Father, to satisfy their spiritual hunger.

John 6:30-33.

The manna given during the desert years, which God had called, (Exodus 16:4),

"bread from heaven," had pointed ahead to Jesus, **"the true bread from heaven."**

The manna had sustained the lives of the Hebrew people for 40 years.

But Jesus, the true bread from heaven, had come to give to the world; life that never ends.

John 6:34

How is the "true bread from heaven" received?

John 6:35-36

Those who'd been fed, knew a miracle had happened; but that miracle had not convinced them to believe in Jesus.

That's why they had asked in verse 30, *"What else can you do?" "Wow us again!"*

John 6:37-40

The same Father who had given manna from heaven to the Hebrew people in the OT time; now gave Jesus to the world.

I earlier said, Jesus lived to do the Father's will. What was that will?

Jesus was clear. God's will was that, "Everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life..."

Right now, each of our lives has an expiry date on it.

We can care for our bodies; eat healthy; exercise; etc., but ultimately, our bodies will die. Jesus, "the bread of life," gives to those who believe in him, a different kind of life, that he describes as being "eternal."

And then...he promises in addition, this...look at the last phrase of verse 40.

"Everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life...and I will raise them up the last day."

This life which Jesus gives to those who believe in him; this life that never ends; this life will ultimately impact these physical bodies that die on us.

As John the apostle, years later, thought on this miracle, he made the highly significant connection between how Jesus fed hungry people, and how Jesus feeds hungry souls. This is how this miracle connects to the greater story of the Bible.

There are four additional ways in which this story connects to our lives. Let me quickly give them to you.

1. Jesus trains and mentors his followers.

Philippians 1:6 says, "...he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."

2 Corinthians 3:18: "...the Lord—who is the Spirit—makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image."

Is this not incredible?

Jesus not only died in our place for our sin, and forgives us when we place our faith in him, but he is also active to change us into his likeness; and to equip us to participate in his mission.

This is why we want to cultivate a teachable spirit.

Until we see Jesus face to face, he is at work in us, transforming, training and equipping.

2. Jesus deliberately places his followers into situations that are beyond them.

Why does he do that?

> Because he wants us to learn that when we come to the end of ourselves, that he is sufficient – 2 Corinthians 12:9;

that when we feel inadequate, he is more than competent – 2 Corinthians 3:5

> Jesus wants his followers who are mission with him to learn to access heaven's resources through his Spirit.

Without the Spirit, and the resources of heaven, the task simply is beyond us.

This impacts not only “why” we pray, but “how” we pray.

Prayer is not the last resort. Jesus wants it to be what we do first.

What did he do at the miracle?

“Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven...”

Jesus would have us learn to always pray and never give up because things look too hopeless, or too complicated; or too far gone, or too costly.

3. Jesus intentionally involves his disciples.

He could have snapped his fingers, or waved his hand... and caused everyone present to have a meal, but he didn't.

Instead, he had the disciples search for what food, if any, was available.

When they brought Jesus what they had found, after he looked to heaven, gave thanks, and multiplied it, he gave it back to the disciples to distribute.

Do you see how he is involving them?

The disciples couldn't stretch the little they'd found.

But Jesus could.

When they placed in his hands what they had, then and only then, was there enough.

Jesus does the same with us today.

He asks us to bring to him what we have - time, ability, resources.

We may think how can we make a difference in the world with this????

But when we give it to him, he makes it to be enough.

4. Jesus provided that great crowd and his own followers with so much food that *“all ate and were satisfied.”*

We all know what satisfied means – no one was still hungry.

Additionally, there were twelve baskets of left-overs.

Do you know why?

The disciples had come with nothing.

Here we see Jesus taking care of them as well.

In this miracle Jesus reveals God to be generous.

This too impacts how we pray; how we live; how we serve.

God is not stingy.

Ephesians 3:20: *God is able to do above and beyond what we ask for.*

Why is that? Because he is generous!

God does not have a permanent scowl on his face, arms closed and ready to say no as soon as we finish asking.

2 Corinthians 1:20: *No matter how many promises God has made, they are “Yes” in Christ.*

God is good; God is generous; God is willing.

Jesus

Welcome into Membership

Passing of the bread and the cup

Prayer of Thanks

Benevolent Offering

Outrageous Grace