

Week of January 15-21

IMPOSSIBLY POSSIBLE

Scripture Reading: Read Matthew chapter 14

In today's reading, two miraculous stories are recorded: the feeding of the 5000 and Jesus walking on the water. Rather than focus on one or the other in today's devotional, we're going to double our blessing and touch briefly on both.

The feeding of the 5000 is probably familiar material to many. It is the only miracle that is recorded in all four gospels. Obviously, it made quite an impact on the gospel writers as Jesus took five loaves and two fish and multiplied them to meet the hunger of somewhere in the vicinity of 15,000-20,000 people (*the 5,000 were just the men gathered there and did not include the additional number of women and children!*) Jesus, the bread of life, provides life-giving sustenance to the crowds.

The events leading up to the feeding, however, sometime get overlooked in the miracle itself. As the day wore on, Jesus' disciples wanted to send the crowds away to get some food. Instead, Jesus tells them to feed the crowds. Talk about a ridiculous idea! All that is available is a boy with a lunch basket (*What a story he had to tell when he got home!*) From the human perspective, it was an impossibility. From the divine perspective, it was an opportunity for a miracle.

In the second miracle story, Jesus comes walking on the water to meet his disciples who are out in the boat battling the wind and waves. They're not used to seeing people walk on water. In fact, they have never seen anyone walk on water and they are terrified. Jesus seeks to assure them that he is not a ghost but their master. Peter, in response, requests permission of Jesus to come out to him. I'm not sure what possessed Peter to ask to walk on water but he did. Peter defied the laws of nature and made his way across the lake to Jesus...until he became more aware of the wind than of Jesus. In unbelief, he began to sink and called out to Jesus for help. Jesus reached out his hand, brought him back on top of the water, gently rebuked him and then they climbed back into the boat. Now, we may fault Peter for his failure to keep his eyes on Jesus but at least he was willing to get out of the boat where the other disciples did not!

What do these two miracle stories have in common? Jesus stretches the disciples' faith so they may fully trust him and follow his kingship. He also challenges them to look past what they could see with physical eyes and to trust him with what clearly was an impossible task: feeding the multitudes and walking on water.

These two stories speak to us the same way. Jesus is Lord of creation, the one through whom all things came into being. Through him the laws of nature were formed and through him they can be suspended to accomplish his purposes. We are called to trust and obey when he calls us to action, especially when the task seems impossible. What we have in our hand may not feel like it's enough but in the hand of the master, it's always enough to meet the need. The King makes things impossibly possible!

Action Step: For the next week, listen for God's call to you to do the impossible & obey

Prayer Focus: For courage to step out in faith when God does call

Take-a-way: *Impossibilities are just opportunities for God to be the hero.*