

Good morning. My name is Jeff Torrans and I am the city director for International Student ministries Canada here in Kamloops. ISMC is the mission organization I work for that has staff in over 30 campuses across Canada. ISMC is who I work for, Focus Club is what we do. Hands up if you have ever heard about or helped out with Focus club?

I believe that God is doing a new thing with Focus Club. In addition to sending out missionaries into the mission fields of the world, God has also made it possible for thousands of students from over 80 countries to come to Kamloops in a reverse missions kind of deal. I am a world-wide missionary without ever having to leave my own city. That is the kind of thing that only God can do.

It's a great privilege to be here and thank you for your support.

"You give them something..."

I want you to repeat these four words with me – ready?

"You give them something..."

Those four words are found in Matthew chapter 14. Matthew 14 is really a great chapter in the Bible. It is an emotional roller coaster for Jesus and the disciples. It really is storytelling at its best.

We have an evil villain plagued by peer pressure to commit unspeakable crimes. We have desperate hungry crowds and the miracle of walking on water. It is this specific miracle that seems to stick in people's minds when they think about Jesus. In any God movie walking on water is almost a prerequisite scene. When YouTube first came out some of the most popular videos were of ordinary people training themselves to walk on water called in a sport called apparently, "liquid mountaineering."

Similarly, the feeding of the 5000 is a famous story as well. It takes place in all 4 gospel accounts – Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. And it is here I wish to begin.

In the story of the feeding of the 5000, Jesus had been teaching a large crowd and was healing the sick all day long.

I don't know about your experience but that had to be akin to an emergency room doctor pulling a 12-hour shift after working the previous 6 days straight. One need after another can start to drag us down. Kids realize this and try to outlast their parents when asking for their toy of the month or video game of the week requests. At the very least it was a day filled with the needs and requests of help from the disenfranchised of the time.

Anyway, they had been working with the crowd all day long. And it was evening, just before it got really dark.

They had been there all day and the disciples are hungry, the people are hungry, they're out in the middle of nowhere. We got to eat before everyone starts to get really hangry! Just imagine a wedding reception where the caterer is 2 or 3 hours late! Talk about Bridezilla then!

And it is here Jesus does something interesting and unique. It says in verse 16, "Jesus replied, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat."

There's our 4 words – say them with me – You give them something!

In my mind that sounds like this – “You know what? You’re right, disciples. Everyone is getting really hungry. I have an idea. Why don’t you come up with some food and feed all of us?”

Have you seen an individual or two walking the meridian on Summit and Columbia holding a cardboard sign asking for donations? Have you ever felt, like I have, the nudge, the need to give them 5 bucks out your window? Or the guy sitting in front of Dollarama with the same kind of needs.

My son Joe and I saw a guy who needed help and Joe was so concerned he just couldn’t stop talking about and thinking about this guy asking for help as we walked throughout the store. I asked him what do you wish to do about it? Can we buy him some bottled water? It’s not pop its healthy and everyone needs water and we can probably afford that he says to me. Again and again (wearing me down). So that’s what we did.

We often get a feeling when you sense that someone has a need and there’s something in you that takes notice. Your heart goes out to that group or that person. As you are sensing the need, you feel a nudge (just like Joe did), and you hear God saying, “You’re right, they do have a need. You meet it! You meet it! Be my witness and an ambassador of love and meet that need!

But I am older, more jaded, more sophisticated and probably much less merciful than my children. More often than not instead of answering that nudge, that call, I will tell myself, “Nah, I’ll just pray for them or for the right person to come along and fill that need. Someone closer to them with a better relationship and more suited to help them. I don’t have what it takes, the time or the skills. Isn’t there gov’t services for this kind of thing? Isn’t this why I pay taxes?” That is what I think far too often.

The Bible says, whoever knows the good he ought to be doing and doesn’t do it, sins. So there is a public confession of sin for you.

But the disciples were no better! They do the same thing in this passage, they make up excuses, they appeal to reality.

Remember the story - 15 As evening approached, the disciples came to him (Jesus) and said, “This is a remote place, and it’s already getting late. Send the crowds away, so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food.”

16 Jesus replied, “They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat.”

Matthew 14:17 says, “17 “We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish,” they answered.”

Too many times I find myself replying to the needs of another by saying “I have here only a small wage and limited time. All I have here only is a lousy cup of coffee and this individual clearly needs more than that. All I have is a desire to get away from here as quick as I can. Hey, I am not prepared or equipped to meet these people’s needs. You’ve got the wrong guy.”

The disciples are saying, you got the wrong guys – you are the guy Jesus! Remember water to wine????

You give them something

This was Jesus’s way of inviting the disciples to join with him in helping meet the needs of a desperate community. That’s the nudge!

And to take it one step further its an illustration of his desire to invite us to help meet the needs of a sinful world.

When you meet a need, Jesus meets with you.

Is that like God helps those who help themselves? Not at all. Because the saying, God helps those who help themselves is not true.

It is like this though - If we do what we know how to do, Jesus will do the rest. But Jesus has to invite us first. We have to be aware of the nudge!

Thanks be to God that Jesus is inviting you and me to meet the needs we see around us. This is what it means to surrender, and to give our lives to Christ, and to sacrifice our wills and purpose and pleasure for the things of God. To meet the needs around us is never convenient.

It's like when your kids first bring up the topic of human sexuality. You're never ready for it in that moment.

To meet the needs of those around us It is never timely. It is never cheap. It is often thankless. Yet it is the Christian's calling. "You're right, Jesus says, "they do have a need. You meet it! You meet it!

There's a Casting Crowns song where the lyrics go,

"I woke up this morning
Saw a world full of trouble now, thought
How'd we ever get so far down, and
How's it ever gonna turn around
So I turned my eyes to Heaven
I thought, "God, why don't You do something?"
Well, I just couldn't bear the thought of
People living in poverty
Children sold into slavery
The thought disgusted me
So, I shook my fist at Heaven
Said, "God, why don't You do something?"
He said, "I did, yeah, I created you"

Bring what you have to Jesus and see what he can do with it. When you meet a need, Jesus meets you.

The feeding of the 5000 teaches us a lesson. The disciples see the size of the need and the smallness of the human resources available. After all, it was just 7 items of food. They and we must learn to see as Jesus sees, and recognize the size of the need and the greatness of God's resources available.

Psalm 50. "I have no need...

¹⁰for every animal of the forest is mine,
and the cattle on a thousand hills.

¹¹I know every bird in the mountains,
and the insects in the fields are mine.

¹²If I were hungry I would not tell you,
for the world is mine, and all that is in it.

He is inviting you to meet the needs of a hurting world. You see His church; this church, is plan A for God. And there is no plan B. My mom told me a story about a time when my uncle and aunt were fighting about who is going to do the big pile of dishes that had been sitting in the sink for a week. My aunt (a storehouse of brilliant wisdom – as all women are), said there is just you and me in this house, who else do you think is going to come and do the job? It's either you or me.

Jesus has unwavering faith in himself and in you. Unwavering faith is the assurance that God has the ability to meet and overcome any needs that may exist. Often through you.

“You give them something...” and I will save the masses!!!!!!!!!!

What can you give? What will you give? If surrender is hard for you what might your reasons be for that?

When you meet a need, Jesus meets you – that is how Matthew 14 ends essentially. The disciples and Jesus had just finished meeting the needs of the people together! When he meets his disciples in the boat walking on the water to prove exactly who he is.

And they respond appropriately by worshipping him as God in the flesh.

Matthew 14 verse 33 - “Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.”

When you meet a need, Jesus meets you and we are always changed for the better when Jesus meets with us!!!!

Story of Mark Tong – gave him Focus Club – food friendship and an introduction to faith. What did Jesus do when we met that need? He saved his soul for all eternity!