

***Uncommon Faith – Unlimited Results***  
John 6:1-13

This is a true story of childlike faith with extraordinary results. It is the story of a miracle, an act of God intended to meet a specific need but done in response to the faith of a little boy. This little boy's faith touched the lives of thousands of people the day this event happened in history, but his story is still being told centuries later. Yet, we don't even know the little boy's name! Here is his story:

[Read John 6:1-13, preferably from a contemporary translation.]

Everybody likes a good, clean movie. A story of that includes adventure, mystery, unexpected twists and turns and characters that overcome impossible obstacles. All the better when the story is true and includes an act of God that catches everyone by surprise. This is such a story . . . and it is true!

Any good filmmaker will tell you that every movie has the same basic components: a storyline that includes location, a cast of characters and a plot with an unexpected ending. Because this is a true story let's pretend we are watching a documentary of a real, historical event. Like any good documentary, details will come out that make the story come alive.

This miracle, sometimes referred to as "The Feeding of the Five Thousand", is the only miracle performed by Jesus that occurs in all four Gospels. None of the many other miracles Jesus performed has this distinction. Obviously, God wanted us to pay special attention to this story. Let's find out why.

## **I. The Location**

To reach the location where this event took place, we'll take a journey of about 6,000 miles from the central United States. Our destination is the little village of Tabgha, north of Tiberias, Nazareth and Cana of Galilee, and just southwest of Capernaum and Bethsaida, hometown of Peter. It is the Spring of the year and the weather would have been warm and balmy. We know this because of the reference to the Passover in verse 4.

Next to this village is a large field that slopes gently down toward the northwestern shore of the Sea of Galilee. In the Springtime this field would have been a lush green with new growth. This freshwater lake, the largest source of fresh water in Israel, is 600 feet below sea level and has had many names, such as the Sea of Tiberius and Lake Gennesaret. It is even referred to in the Bible as "the abyss." At 430' deep, to ancient cultures it might as well have been bottomless.

(Remember that the next time you read about Jesus' apostles being out on this lake at night in a storm.)

Visitors to Tabgha today may enter the “Church of Multiplication” named after the events in this story. Begun in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century and completed over 100 years later, the entryway to the church features a beautiful mosaic floor depicting a basket with loaves of bread and fish. Some historians believe this church was begun by Beatrice, the mother of Constantine. Imagine standing beside this ancient church and looking out over this huge green field and down to the beautiful waters of the Sea of Galilee. It is a magnificent location for our story.

## II. Cast of Characters

The Scripture lists for us all the cast members, but we should take a little closer look because each character plays an important role in the story.

First, there is the “crowd” mentioned in verse 2 as a great multitude. John is more specific in verse 10, stating there were about 5,000 “men”. In that day only the men were counted. If we add women and children, however, we easily reach a conservative estimate of 20,000 people in the crowd. The field we have described could easily accommodate such a crowd. The Bible gives us the motive for their following Jesus. Verse 2 states, *“a great multitude followed him because they saw His signs which He performed on those who were diseased.”*

The word translated “sign” or “miracle” in the New Testament comes from the Greek word “*say-MY-uh*”. It literally means an act of God used as a sign to authenticate the deity of Christ. Jesus never did tricks and often turned down the Pharisees because all they wanted to see was some form of magic. These were real miracles, supernatural works of God in which people were literally healed, delivered and even raised from the dead. In every instance, however, even though people experienced great physical and spiritual healing, the point of the miracle was never the act of healing as much as it was to prove that Jesus was Who He said He was – God in the flesh. The Bible says that the common people got it; the religious crowd never did.

There were sick people looking for healing and friends of the sick who helped them get near Jesus. There were widows and orphans, homeless, jobless, old and young, the lonely and afraid, guys out of work and women and kids who were victims of what we call today “*domestic violence*”. There were adults and children alike who bore the emotional scars of sexual abuse. There were the religious smug and content and those who were desperate to know God. There might have been some who thought they had life by the tail and others who thought they never got anything but the worst life had to offer.

Are you getting the picture? You can find a crowd like this today at any airport, football game, political rally or, yep, even at a local church on Sunday morning. These are just everyday folks who need Jesus. Some know it, some don't. But trust me . . . *nobody* in the crowd knew what was coming in this story.

What comfort we may take from these Scriptures:

*"God is in heaven and does whatever He pleases."* - Psalm 115:3 / 135:6

*"His ways are higher than our ways and His thoughts higher than our thoughts."* - Isaiah 55:8-9

*"I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord . . . to give you a future and a hope."* -Jeremiah 29:11

*"Eye has not seen, ear has not heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man what God has prepared for them that love Him . . . "* - I Corinthians 2:9

*"And He is able to do exceedingly, abundantly above all we ask or think . . . "* Ephesians 3:20

Put yourself in the crowd and enjoy the ride!

The second group of characters in the story is the apostles. This word is distinctive and not the same as the word *"disciples."* An apostle was one of the original twelve chosen by Jesus to be trained to carry a distinct message through a distinct role in the early church. Later, Matthias and Paul would be added to this group. The word *"disciple"* simply means *a learner*. Therefore, all the apostles were disciples, but not all the disciples were apostles. Got it? True, sometimes the words are used interchangeably and that is a little confusing.

Who were these twelve guys? As many as seven were fishermen by trade and training, Matthew was a traitor to Israel as a tax collector. Simon the Zealot was a trained assassin. There were two sets of brothers. Others might have been related. It is likely that only Matthew, Judas and possibly Philip had any serious education. The others did what all little boys did at an early age: they quit school to work and help the family. They were prone to mistakes, bad judgments, bad attitudes and lapses of faith. The point is there were no religious scholars among them until Paul came along. They were common, ordinary working folk whom Jesus in His sovereignty chose for an extraordinary mission. There are no apostles today, but every follower of Christ is chosen to become an extraordinary channel of God's power to the people around us.

Philip is the next cast member we examine. Philip has the only Greek name which means *"lover of horses."* We know very little about him, but he had a calculating mind and Jesus knew that. When Jesus told Philip to feed the crowd Philip had already done the math. In verse 8 Philip responds, *"Two hundred denarii would not be enough . . . "* Translation: **8 months wages** would

not be enough to feed this crowd. Keep this in mind. At the end of the story this is going to come back to bite Philip in a life-lesson sort of way.

Andrew is mentioned next. His name means “manly.” There are four lists of the apostles in the New Testament in Matthew, Mark, Luke and Acts and they all contain the same three groups of four men. Peter is always listed first and his brother Andrew is always in the first group of four. Andrew and his brother Peter lived together, according to Mark 1:29. Like Peter he was a fisherman by trade, but he was very much unlike Peter in many ways. He was a man of great faith. He had been a disciple of John the Baptist. Every time his name occurs in the Scripture outside of these lists, Andrew is always bringing someone to meet Jesus. He must have had a winsome personality. He liked to make friends. He sought people out so he could tell them about Jesus. He was no doubt a strong man physically, but he was very humble and kept his eye on the ball, the real mission in life. That is why his role is central in this story.

Next, we come to the little boy whose name is never mentioned. He is anonymous, yet he has been talked about for over 2,000 years. Let’s give him a good Jewish name. We’ll call him Irving. In New Jersey his descendants would later pronounce it “*Oheeveng*.” We know nothing about him other than the fact that he brought his lunch to this event. So, let’s imagine he is about 8 years old. Maybe his dad is dead, a common occurrence in those days, and his mom gave him permission to go with some friends to see this Jesus character. His parents are never mentioned. Little Irving is about to become the second most important figure in this story, but he doesn’t know it yet. That’s the way it is with believers today. We don’t know what God is up to most of the time, so we need to play along and trust Him. He often has something big up His sleeve.

So, let’s recap. We have a large crowd gathered in a lush green field overlooking the beautiful Sea of Galilee on a warm Spring day. Little Irving is part of that crowd and has no idea he is about to become a key player in this drama. We have 12 apostles, a group of guys from a variety of backgrounds, some of whom would never have associated with the others had it not been for Jesus. (*Sounds like the body of Christ today, doesn’t it?*) Among those apostles are Philip and Andrew who are also unaware they are about to be singled out for a special appearance in our documentary.

We now come to the central character in this story, Jesus Himself. Today and for the past 20 centuries or so there has been constant debate about who Jesus really is. Some years ago Josh McDowell wrote in his book *Evidence That Demands a Verdict* that there are really on four possibilities regarding the identity of Jesus Christ. First is the idea that He was merely a legend. A made-up story about an ancient fake religious character. There have been plenty of those stories. The problem with this proposal is that there exists more hard evidence, even outside the Bible, to the existence of Jesus, even evidence for His resurrection from the dead, than there is hard evidence

for the existence for either Julius Caesar or William Shakespeare. Whatever else He might have been, He was a genuine historical figure.

Second is the idea that Jesus was a liar. He knew He was not God but claimed to be. There are at least two primary problems with this view. The first is that even agnostics who admit the existence of Jesus as a historical figure also admit He was a significant moral leader, an influential moral teacher. The problem with that view is that one cannot be a great moral figure and be a liar. The two don't mix. Liars aren't moral people. Moral people don't lie, certainly not on the scale that Jesus would have if that were true about Him. The second problem with the "Liar Hypothesis" is that people do not willingly endure torture and death for what they know to be a lie. That would include both Jesus and His apostles. Those guys would never have turned the world right-side up for their loyalty to a liar.

The third possibility is that Jesus was simply a lunatic. He was crazy. He really thought He was God; He was just out of His mind. Again, the evidence from history is against this theory. One need only consider the lives that were changed during His lifetime and ministry and the millions of lives changed in the centuries following to understand the fallacy of this argument. It is true that sometimes people, even large crowds, follow a crazy guy with crazy ideas. But they don't do that for long under the threat of torture and death. And crazy guys don't influence culture for the good as Jesus has. The critic then has the enormous task of explaining away the mathematical impossibility of so many ancient prophecies being fulfilled in every aspect of the life of Jesus. One theoretical mathematician took just eleven prophecies related to the birth of Christ and calculated the odds against their fulfillment as  $10^{59}$  power to 1. That is, the number 10 followed by 59 zeroes to one against their fulfillment. That is just eleven prophecies out of more than 350 related to Jesus, all of which came true in every detail. What is crazy is to ignore that kind of evidence for the truth.

The fourth and final possibility is that Jesus was exactly Who He claimed to be: Lord. He was not simply a representative of God or much like God, He was actually God Himself. This idea is called the "deity of Christ." To be sure, it is still debated today. Our Mormon and Jehovah's Witness friends deny that Jesus was God. He was a great man, but not God. (Now we are back to the Liar argument!)

The Bible teaches that Jesus was equally God and man. He was not half man and half God, that would be a freak. He was not all God and no man, otherwise Isaiah was wrong when He wrote about Jesus that He was a man of sorrows, acquainted with our grief (Isaiah 53:4). The writer of Hebrews was wrong when he said we have a High Priest Who was tempted in every way just as we are, yet without sin (Hebrews 4:15). The Scriptures teach that Jesus as a man got hungry, he was tired, he needed sleep. He was an extraordinary man to be sure, but He was a man.

Neither was Jesus all man and not God at all. The Bible is full of references and evidence to the deity of Christ, the certainty that He was God. To cite just a few, Jesus is both the creator and sustainer of all life (John 1:3; Colossians 1:15-17; Hebrews 1:2). He is eternal – that is, He has always existed because He is God (John 1:14; 8:58; 10:30; 14:9). He is the only source of eternal life (John 3:36; 10:10; 14:6; 20:31).

Our conclusion, then, is that Jesus was all God and all man. But look at it this way:

He was man when He was tired and slept in the back of the boat, but He was God when He told the wind and waves to “Hush!”

He was man when He wept at Lazarus’ tomb, but He was God when He called Lazarus back from the dead.

He was man when He made a whip and drove the corrupt businessmen out of the temple, but He was God when He demanded respect for His house.

He was man when He got hungry and thirsty, but He was God when He fed thousands with a few biscuits and sardines.

He was man when He suffered agony on the cross, but He was God when He took on Himself all the sins of all mankind.

He was a man when His corpse was anointed and buried, but He was God when He set the captives free and walked out of the tomb alive.

Only Jesus deserves to be the central character in this story!

### III. The Plot

If the theme of this story could be expressed in a single sentence it might be *“When life throws the worst it has to offer at you, trust the Lord to do the unexpected.”* Or, in more modern terms, *“When life is a bummer, think outside the bum!”*

To fully appreciate the plot of this true story you need to crank up your imagination. Watch this movie unfold in your mind as it really happened. Take your eyes off the printed pages of your Bible and look at this story as if you were actually there.

The crowd on the hillside is getting restless. The day is pressing on and the people are hungry. They are in the middle of nowhere and there are no stores or restaurants nearby. Even if the people had money, which they didn’t, there was no place to spend it on food. Some of the apostles are concerned about a possible riot. They begin to fear for their own safety, let alone the safety of Jesus, whom they foolishly imagine might need their protection.

In Matthew’s account of this story he writes (14:15) that *“When it was evening, His disciples came to Him, saying, ‘This is a deserted place and the hour is already late. Send the multitudes*

away that they may go into the villages and buy food.” Imagine 20,000 people descending on the local tiny villages hoping to get some food late in the day. Impossible!

In Mark 6:37 Jesus’ response to his disciples was, “YOU give them something to eat!” This is repeated in Luke 9:13. but in John’s Gospel Jesus asks Philip, “*Where shall WE buy bread that these may eat?*” (emphasis added). John tells us that Jesus asked Philip this to test him. It is here that we get an insight into Philip’s mind. He quickly calculated the size of the crowd, the cost of bread, did the math in his head and considered an average man’s daily wage and replied, “*Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not enough . . .*” That would be the equivalent of eight month’s wages in those days. Just beneath the surface you can imagine Philip thinking, “*If I worked 8 months straight and gave every penny I earned to this ridiculous scheme there would only be enough for this bunch to have a few crumbs each. What a joke!*”

Philip the mathematician. Phil the calculator. Phil the expert in cost analysis. Phil . . . the guy who left out the most important element in his deliberations: what could Jesus do about this problem? Don’t be too hard on old Phil the lover of horses. Isn’t this how we often respond to overwhelming problems and stuff that is clearly bigger than our resources? Look in the mirror and give Philip a break.

As this scene is unfolding Andrew the fisherman shows up and overhears the conversation. He has Irving in tow. How did that happen? Back up a few camera frames and see Andy going through the crowd greeting people. “Hi! My name’s Andy. Glad you’re here!” “Hi! Glad you could come out to hear Jesus. Beautiful day isn’t it?” “Let me help you folks on crutches get a little closer to Jesus. He’ll want to meet you.” And then, “Hey little feller!” as he kneels down to get at eye level with an 8-year-old boy. “My name’s Andy, what’s yours?”

“Irving,” the boy whispers.

Andy thrusts out a huge hand to shake while putting the other on the little boy’s shoulder. Somehow the kid knows instinctively he can trust this big guy.

“Hey, Irv. Would you like to meet Jesus?”

“Uh . . . uh, (gulp) *me?*”

“Yep, you. Come with me and I’ll introduce you to Him. Jesus loves kids! Plays with them all the time.”

Taking the boy by the hand Andy works his way back through the crowd and approaches Jesus just in time to hear the conversation with Philip. Before Jesus can respond to Philip’s answer Andy



steps up and says, “Master, I promised this young man that he could meet you. I know its not much with such a huge crowd, but the little guy has his Star Wars lunch box with some biscuits and sardines. Reckon you could use that?”

[Remember, you have to use your imagination here.]

Jesus kneels down and smiles as he says, “Hi, Irving. I’ve been expecting you.”

“Me? How did you know my name?”

“I know stuff, Irving. Tell me, little buddy, could I borrow your lunch for a minute? I promise I’ll give it back when I’m through with what I need to do.”

Irving reluctantly looks at his only food, looks at Jesus, looks back at his food and makes a decision. A decision that would make a huge difference in the lives of many people.

“Sure, Jesus. I trust you.”

“I know you do, son. Now stand over there and watch carefully. Never forget what you are about to see.”

Then Jesus told the apostles to get some baskets, enough for each man to have one. Then He said the blessing and began to break up the biscuits and sardines. Somehow, no matter how much He put in each man’s basket there was always more available. With wide eyes little Irving was watching this scene unfold. His little mind could not comprehend what was happening. Neither could the minds of the grownups.

Jesus had ordered His men to have the crowd sit down in groups of 50 (Luke 9:15) and that is how we know how many were there. As each man’s basket was filled, he went out into the crowd and began passing out food. We don’t know how this next part happened, but somehow there was no end to the supply of food. Maybe the men kept going back to Jesus for more. Maybe they just never ran out as they distributed the food among the people. The point is, there was plenty for everyone.

The Gospels tell us that every person had enough to be “filled.” That term comes from a Greek word that describes a cow that is bloated from eating so much. Not a pretty picture, but you get the idea. Jesus illustrated what Paul would later write about when he said God is able to do “exceeding, abundantly above all we ask or think.” (Ephesians 3:21)

Meanwhile, little Irving has a front row seat to this miracle and looks on in astonishment. So did the big people. Nobody had ever seen such a thing.



When everyone had eaten so much they couldn't take another bite, Jesus told his men to gather up the leftovers. When they did and returned to Jesus, they filled up twelve baskets with the excess food. Here is where a little knowledge of the original Greek language comes in handy. There are different words for our English word "basket." One describes a small basket like Irving might have had. Another describes the baskets used by the apostles to distribute the food. But the word for the baskets that held the leftovers is a word used for a basket placed in the center of a fishing boat to hold the entire day's catch. Probably about 5 feet in diameter. Peter, Andrew, James and John were quite familiar with this kind of basket. Now there were 12 of them filled to overflowing. Enough for each apostle to have his own. Including Philip. All told, the amount of food left over would have taken about 200 denarii to purchase. Think about that a moment . . . .

As we near the end of this movie let's unpack some important life lessons from what we have seen.

The *crowd* teaches us that no matter how big the problem, our God is ready, willing and able to solve that problem. Because God is omniscient – that is, He knows everything, He is never surprised. Even by the mess we sometimes make of our lives. Because He is not surprised, He is not disappointed. Think about that. Disappointment is a function of surprise and unmet expectations. That never happens to God. So, take the biggest problem you are facing today and give it to Jesus. He has been waiting for you to hit the bottom so you would finally look up and see Him.

There is a story told of a guy wearing a backpack. As he walks people put heavy rocks in his backpack from time to time. He grows weary under the load. Finally, he stumbles and is convinced he just can't take another step. He sees Jesus and asks Jesus to please take out a rock or two to lighten his load. But Jesus says, "No. Give me the whole backpack." That is what He wants to do for you today. Take the whole load. Solve the entire problem and do it with unexpected grace and mercy, just like He did for the crowd in our story.

The *apostles* teach us that in His supernatural power God chooses ordinary, struggling, common folks to play a role in great accomplishments for His glory. A traitor (Matthew), an assassin (Simon the Zealot), some fisherman and most of the bunch we had never heard of before Jesus chose them and we never hear of them again in the Bible after the book of Acts, these are the apostles. Yet, even after great failure their lives they were transformed following the resurrection of Jesus. These guys who had fled from Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane became wholly devoted to Him. They were used by God to transform the world, one life at a time. All but John were tortured to death. Simon the Zealot preached the Gospel in North Africa, Egypt and Persia, where he was killed by being sawn in half like Isaiah. "Doubting Thomas" went to India

and introduced Christ to that lost subcontinent before being martyred for his faith. Peter was crucified, but not until he had been forced to watch his wife die first. Neither recanted their faith.

**Philip** was tested by Jesus, according to John 6:6. Like many of us he failed the test, not because he wasn't smart, but because he was too smart for his own good. Like us, he analyzed all the "facts" before him and came to a logical conclusion. His reasoning made perfect sense, right up to the point that he left out Jesus in his calculations. Philip had already seen Jesus perform miracles. His faith was young, but not an excuse for his failure to even consider Jesus. And not just the extraordinary and supernatural power he had seen Jesus display already, but – more importantly – the *character* of Jesus. The Son of God Who, had Philip thought about it, was not likely to let the very people He was healing go hungry. Do I hear a "duh" in the background? Don't be too hard on Phil, though. Don't we often make the same mistake when faced with a serious problem? We analyze all our resources, conclude that our problem is too big for our resources and walk away in despair. We forget that every need is an announcement that our God is the supply.

In one of the final scenes of our imaginary movie I want you to picture Philip standing over a 5-foot wide basket full of bread and fish. Two hundred denarii worth of food. Eight month's wages worth. All for him. What emotions do you think were at play in his heart? Guilt, shame, sorrow? "How could I have ever doubted Jesus," he may have asked himself.

Then Philip feels a gentle arm around his shoulders. He turns and looks into the most compassionate, loving eyes he would ever see in this life. Jesus doesn't have to speak. He communicates to Philip on a much deeper level. The message is clear: "*I love you, Philip. I understand. Now, learn from this!*" It is easy to see oneself in Philip. Perhaps tears coursed down his cheeks as he realized God loved him enough not only to forgive his doubt and solve his problem, but to gently nudge him toward greater faith. What a wonderful Savior!

**Andrew** stands out as the guy who is always bringing people to meet Jesus. John MacArthur said, "Andrew is the picture of all those who labor quietly in humble places. Not with eye service as men pleasers but as servants of Christ doing the will of God from the heart. Andrew is not the pillar like Peter, James and John, he is a humbler stone. He could have anticipated the sentiment of the poet Christina Rossetti who wrote:

*'Give me the lowest place, not that I dare ask for that lowest place, but Thou hast died that I might live and share Thy glory by Thy side. Give me the lowest place so if for me the lowest place is too high, then make one more low where I may sit and see my God and love Him so.'*

That's Andrew. I mean, after all, he was one of the original two called and yet he wasn't in the inner three, but it didn't seem to bother him. He was always Peter's brother. He's one of those

rare people willing to take second place. One of those rare people who wants to be in support. Or one of those rare people who doesn't mind being hidden as long as the work is done. He is the kind of man that all leaders depend on. He's the kind of person that everyone knows is the backbone of every ministry. The cause of Christ is dependent, beloved, on self-forgetting souls who are content to occupy a small sphere and an obscure place, free from self-seeking ambition, and yet he will sit on the throne judging the tribes of Israel."<sup>1</sup>

Christian tradition says that Andrew went to Scotland where he was later declared their patron Saint. He was crucified, but not with nails. He was tied to the cross to prolong his death. A faithful and humble servant, a lover of Jesus until the end.

*The Little Boy*, whom we named Irving for this story, remains anonymous. He is never mentioned again in either Scripture or Christian history. He is not celebrated as a saint; there are no statutes of him, though you may visit the Church of Multiplication in Taghba today and see the floor mosaic of the loaves and fishes he gave to Jesus.

In Luke 18:17 Jesus said, "*Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it.*" This little boy has taught us a great lesson about faith and about giving. Think about it:

1. He gave *instantly* and without hesitation when Jesus asked him to.
2. He gave *all he had* with no reservation. Unlike Ananias and Saphira (and some of us) he held nothing back.
3. He *made himself destitute* to obey Jesus. He never considered "looking out for number one." He was prepared to starve in exchange for obedience.
4. His *partnership with Jesus* led to a great miracle.
5. He *got back* far more than he gave.

We'll see this little boy one more time before the movie ends.

**Jesus**, of course, is the central character. Consider what He did with the little boy's lunch and apply it to your life as a follower of Christ. Jesus did four things with the food . . . and with us.

1. He **took it**. He took what the boy offered, no matter how meager. Even Andrew wondered, "What is *this* among so many?" But Jesus takes what we offer for His use.
2. He **blessed it**. He took the ordinary and used it for a supernatural purpose. He still does that with every life given to Him and yielded to His purpose.

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<sup>1</sup> From John MacArthur's sermon series *Twelve Ordinary Men*, available online from Grace To You, gty.org.

3. He **broke it**. The multiplication was impossible without the breaking. Had the bread and fish resisted being torn apart the miracle would not have occurred. A.W. Tozer wrote, “God cannot fully use a man until He has fully broken him.” Don’t resist the pressure you are under today. It just may be that God is preparing to do something marvelous with your life through the brokenness.
4. He **used it**. A little boy, a little lunch, an unrestrained faith, and God used it for His glory. Like you and me today, the little boy had no idea how God would use his surrendered heart to accomplish His purpose. But Jesus knew.

*It is never necessary for us to understand what God is up to . . . only that we trust Him.*

The final scene in this movie shows the crowd disbursed, the apostles are walking toward the lakeshore where they will board a boat for the next unexpected miracle and the lush, green field overlooking the Sea of Galilee is now empty.

Except for one little figure in the distance.

The camera zooms in on a little boy skipping through the field, gaily jumping over rocks and limbs as he makes his way home. The microphone picks up the faint sounds of a high-pitched 8-year-old voice as he sings,

*“Yes! Jesus loves me  
Yes! Jesus loves me.  
Yes! Jesus loves me . . .  
the **Bible** tells me so.”*

[NOTE: Cut or fold this outline in half, place in Bible and take to pulpit for Preaching Notes.]

## ***Uncommon Faith – Unlimited Results***

John 6:1-13

### ***Introduction***

This is a story about a little boy, a little lunch and a huge miracle. For effect, let's tell the story as if it were a movie. We're not going to violate the Scripture in any way but crank up your imagination and pretend you are watching this story unfold on the "big screen."

Every movie has the same elements: Location, a Cast of Characters, a Plot and, hopefully, a dramatic ending. Here we go . . .

### ***I. The Location***

6,000 miles away at the Northwest corner of the Sea of Galilee, a.k.a. Sea of Tiberius, Lake Gennesaret, etc. 600 ft. below sea level. Largest source of freshwater in Israel.

Lush, green field overlooking the water, big enough to hold a large crowd. It is the Spring, near the Passover time, so it is warm and pleasant.

Near the little village of Taghba. Church of Multiplication, built in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries. Mosaic floor – loaves and fishes.

### ***II. The Cast of Characters***

The Crowd  
The Apostles  
Philip  
Andrew  
The Little Boy (Irving)  
Jesus

### ***III. The Plot***

Theme: *"When life throws the worst it has to offer at you, trust the Lord to do the unexpected."* Or, in more modern terms, *"When life is a bummer, think outside the bum!"*

[Replay conversation between Jesus and Philip from all 4 Gospels.]

[Play imaginary conversations between Andrew, Jesus and Irving.]

Life lessons:

Crowd – no matter how big the problem, Jesus is able.

The Apostles – God uses ordinary people for extraordinary works.

Philip – Don't leave God out of your calculations.

Andrew – Always be on the lookout for someone to introduce to Jesus.

END

1. Irving – He gave *instantly* and without hesitation when Jesus asked him to.
2. He gave *all he had* with no reservation. Unlike Ananias and Saphira (and some of us) he held nothing back.
3. He *made himself destitute* to obey Jesus. He never considered “looking out for number one.” He was prepared to starve in exchange for obedience.
4. His *partnership with Jesus* led to a great miracle.
5. He *got back* far more than he gave.

Jesus – The perfect God-Man. Did 4 things with Irving's gift:

1. He **Took It.**
2. He **Blessed It.**
3. He **Broke It.**
4. He **Used It.**

Final scenes:

Philip standing over the huge basket of food.

Little Irving skipping down the hill singing “*Yes! Jesus Loves Me.*”