**Series Road Map**

**Series Overview:** In this series, Supporting Cast, we are looking at the lesser known yet vitally important characters in the Bible. We believe that every single person has a specific role to play in the story of God and it is only when we all follow God’s call that He can accomplish His work in the world.

**Week Overview:** This week focuses on the story of the feeding of the five thousand and the boy with the basket of bread and fish.

***Outline:***

**Grab the Room (Intro):**

* Story of boy who raised money for the food kitchen.

**Tension (what’s the struggle):**Do you trust that Jesus will do a lot with your little? Do you believe God is bigger than all your doubts?

**Text:** John 6:1-21

**THP**: Jesus does a lot with our little.

**Supporting Points:**

-The disciples doubted (sometimes we doubt that Jesus can really do what He says he can)

-The boy trusted (we need to trust God with our little)

-Jesus provided (we don’t want to miss out on what God has for us)

**Application (call to action)**: What is your little that Jesus is ready to do a lot with?

I think one of the coolest things in our society is seeing people step up in significant ways to help their neighbors and even strangers. I think it’s especially cool when I see kids doing this…as a kid it’s so easy to be in your own little world, so to have the awareness and belief that you can actually make a difference is a big deal! I heard a story recently about how a boy decided not to ask for presents for his birthday. Instead he organized a food drive in order to help a local food kitchen in his community. He ended up having over 100 people drive to his house just to contribute to this collection. The food kitchen said it was one of the largest donations they had ever seen and it took over 5 car loads to transport all the food. This was all able to happen because ONE 12 year old boy gave up his birthday presents that year!

He did a lot with the little influence he had. We all know Jesus isn’t always known for using the strongest, the wisest, the oldest, or the most equipped to get his ministry done. He uses people from every walk of life, every background, and even every age to work wonders. He uses the most unlikely of circumstances or means to make his name great. We see this in how God equipped David to defeat Goliath with one single stone, God used Moses, one man with a stutter and a staff, to lead his people out of Israel and part the sea before them, and God used a boy with a small basket of bread and a few fish to feed thousands. You know what all of these people had in common? **They trusted that God could do a lot with their little.** They took a step of faith even though they felt unequipped with what they had to offer.

I want to look at just one of these stories today. A very famous story from the bible but also so hard to fathom. The story of the feeding of the five thousand. Now you may have heard this story many times in your life but I want you to lean in and focus specifically on the role of the boy in this story today. In this series, we are not focusing on the main characters of the story but those supporting cast members who play a significant role but may not get the spotlight. Jesus used this boy to do something incredible, Let’s check it out in John 6:1-14;

“After this Jesus went away to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, which is the sea of Tiberias. And a large crowd was following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing on the sick. Jesus went up on the mountain, and there he sat down with his disciples. Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand. Lifting up his eyes then, and seeing that a large crowd was coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, “Where are we to buy bread, so that these people may eat?” He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he would do. Philip answered him, “Two hundred denarii worth of bread would not be enough for each of them to get a little.” One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, said to him, “There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are they for so many?” Jesus said “Have the people sit down.” Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, about five thousand in number. Jesus then took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated. So also the fish, as much as they wanted. And they had eaten their fill, he told his disciples, “Gather the leftover fragments from the five barley loaves left by those who had eaten. When the people saw the sign that he had done, they said, “This is indeed the Prophet who is come into the world!”

I immediately notice a few things reading this passage. The disciples doubted, the little boy trusted, and Jesus provided.

When Jesus asked Philip what they were going to do Philip practically says “this is impossible.” When Simon Peter comes to Jesus with the basket of bread he basically communicates to Jesus that “this won’t even make a difference.” Yikes…they were standing before Jesus, yet they forgot what He could do. I hate to admit it, but I often times can relate to the disciples. How easy it is to look at our circumstances and think those same thoughts? Maybe you’re struggling with depression and the thought of getting help or getting better feels impossible. Maybe you’re feeling challenged to go on a service trip but you think “I cant even make a difference.” Maybe you have a sick family member and you feel like you can’t help, make a difference, or that your circumstance feels impossible to overcome.

The reality is that in those moments we are making Jesus smaller than the circumstance. Indirectly communicating that what we’re facing is just too big for him….but with Jesus nothing is too big. And the little boy remembered that that day..

Let’s just think about this boy for a second. He was one of thousands gathered around Jesus that day. It is highly unlikely that he was the only one who brought a lunch. Yet no one else stepped up to offer theirs. I have to think that what held others back was the very thought of “I can’t make a difference with what I have” But this boy was different, he believed he could. We don’t know this child’s name, his story, what he said to Simon Peter when he offered up his lunch, I mean there is literally one verse in the bible that directly mentions him. In the scheme of things he’s pretty insignificant. But we can learn a lot from him, because he believed Jesus could do a lot with his little. With his five loaves of bread and two fish. He knew that he didn’t have much but he offered it up anyway, trusting Jesus could use him and use what he had. What faith that takes and what a big lesson we can learn from this boy. This leads to our THP today:

THP: Jesus can do a lot with our little.

Now the bible never mentions the boy’s response to this miracle being performed, but I can’t help but wonder what that boy thought when he saw Jesus use his lunch to perform this miracle. He was probably amazed, shocked and excited all at once. I would think he would have felt significant, important and of value. To know that Jesus used what he brought and multiplied it to bless others. I can imagine him running around as the food was being passed just beaming with pride as he saw each person being able to receive their fill of food. I imagine he had no regrets and truly believed he made a difference.

I also can’t help but imagine what he would have felt like if he wouldn’t have offered up his lunch. If he would have sat still like everyone else there that day and believed that his little wouldn’t make a difference. He would have probably fought feelings of selfishness, guilt, or regret. He would have never experienced the joy that came from giving and then receiving such a blessing. He would have missed out on being a part of what Jesus was about to do. As Christ followers we have an obligation to bring to Jesus’ feet what we have, big or small. We can’t assume that if we sit around and wait on God that he’ll do something in our life. I wonder if this miracle would have still happened if the boy didn’t bring to Jesus what he had? Maybe, but would the same point have been made? We have a part to play in God’s story, and we often don’t take that first step because it’s overwhelming. But we’re not alone, Jesus power will work through us. As it says in Ephesians 3:20 “Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us” Jesus was still capable of performing a miracle that day without the help of the boy but I believe Jesus intentionally worked through him instead. He wanted to reveal the power of letting yourself be used by Him.

\*Share a story here about a time you let fear of “something feeling impossible” or the thought of “I can’t make a difference” held you back from allowing Jesus to use you\*\*

I’ve had many times in my life where I felt Jesus pushing me to take action or to step up but I let those thoughts of “this is impossible” or “I can’t make a difference” sneak in and stop me from allowing God to use me. I remember experiencing this during my freshman year of college. I lived on a floor where the large majority of the girls were not believers. They were all wonderful girls and I grew to have friendships with some of them. I started to attend a bible study through a college ministry on campus and we met in my roommate and I’s dorm room. The girls on our floor would walk by our door each time we were meeting and I always felt this pull to simply invite them in. And I never did. I always let the thoughts of “they are too far gone”, “it feels impossible to get them even the slightest bit interested”, and “I don’t want to be rejected” stop me from taking that step of faith. I simply just didn’t trust God enough with that invitation. I made him too small and my fear too big. It pains me to think about the ways God could have used me to influence their lives in significant ways during their college years. I missed out on a piece of the story God could have had for me. I didn’t fully believe Jesus could do a lot with the little influence I had.

Maybe you can think of a moment like this in your life too. A moment where you didn’t believe God could do anything with the little you had to offer. You let that belief hold you back from how Jesus could use you. You made Jesus too small in your story. I don’t bring this up to shame you, or to make you heavy with regret. We all have had those moments when we think too much of ourselves and too little of God. But, I do bring this up so that we can learn how to not miss out on God’s story for our lives.

Do you feel like you have little to offer in specific areas of your life? Maybe you feel God calling you to join a life group but you’re scared and don’t believe it’s actually going to make a difference in your life. Maybe you feel like God is calling you to talk about Jesus to a friend at school but you don’t feel like you have the right words to say. Maybe God has given you opportunities to say yes to something out of your comfort zone but you’ve avoided it because you don’t feel like you’re gifted or talented enough to do it. Maybe you’ve stopped yourself from giving or serving because you’ve convinced yourself it won’t make a difference. But let me ask you this simple question, “Do you believe God is bigger than all your doubts?”

Like I mentioned earlier, the last thing I noticed in this story was that Jesus provided. He didn’t just simply provide, but he provided abundantly. The scripture says that there was even food leftover after everyone had eaten! God will provide when we are faithful and entrust to him what we have!

The little boy took a step of faith that day. He knew what he had wasn’t physically enough to feed everyone there, but he brought it to Jesus’ feet anyway. He didn’t focus on the nature of the circumstances but instead the nature of Jesus. He knew that Jesus was a provider and he trusted he could play a part in Jesus’ providing that day. I think it’s so important for us to learn how to look at Jesus like that boy did that day.

So what is “your basket of fish and loaves” that you need to bring to Jesus’ feet and watch him work wonders with? What is your little that Jesus is ready to do a lot with? Is it your time, gifts, money, talents, or material things? Maybe you just need to simply go to God and admit “Jesus, I know I don’t have much to offer, but I want you to use me, I trust you to do a great work through me. Use me to further your ministry on this Earth” Maybe you simply need to say YES to the thing God has put on your heart time and time again. Don’t ignore it any longer, don’t miss out on what God wants to do through you. Trust that Jesus is ready to a lot with your little.

\*\*Could do a reflection moment here where they think about or write down what their “little” is\*\*

**Kylee: This is a super challenging message! I think our students are going to appreciate someone calling them to a higher standard and showing them that they have something to offer. I also think the THP is super catchy. A few ideas…**

* **I wonder if you could replace the opening story with a story of a student at your campus? You could use the story of the 12-year-old boy but if you have a student that is “doing a lot with their little” it could be a cool moment to recognize them.**
* **Again, I would type out what story you would use if you were the one teaching it! Just so we can see the direction you are going in.**
* **I made a note above of where some more relevant examples could be placed!**

**Kent: Love what you have here Courtney!!! I think it's good, to the point… I like the THP! Maybe tie in the series title somehow… maybe bring to light the fact that he wasn't the main character in this story but the fact is without the boy and his lunch Jesus couldn't have pulled off this significant miracle.**

**I would write out your personal example. This helps others know the direction you would take it. I would also throw in some examples for students to connect with, allowing students to think about what they have that Jesus could use would be helpful.**

**Aaron: Court had me read over this before she turned it in, so I have already given my feedback:)**

**Harrison: after the part in the middle saying when an obstacle looks too big it is “indirectly communicating that what we’re facing is just too big for him” I this would be a good time to talk about the right thing to do when we see an obstacle too big for us, which is go to Jesus in prayer. I agree with kent saying that the personal stories should be written out. I think another good idea for the end would be that the little we bring to God could be a “yes.” Obedience is a little we bring that God can turn into a lot. Great work!**

**Ryan: This is so good! I can’t think of much to add, other than maybe adding to the THP of a lot with our little: we have an obligation as followers of Christ to bring to him what he have. We can’t sit around and expect him to do something all the time. Would this miracle happen if the boy didn’t do his part? Maybe, but would the point have been made? We have our part to play, and we often don’t because it is overwhelming, the thought of what we have to contribute from our end in our relationship with Christ. But really, it is more simple than we think, and Christ can do more than we can possibly ask or imagine. Maybe tie in Ephesians 3:20 somehow**