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FEEDING THE 5,000

(episode 012)

theme: God can do a lot with the little we may have. **scripture:** John 6:5-14 **quote:** “For it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good

pleasure.” Philippians 2:13 **summary:** Nit Whitly is aided by his cousin Dim as he interviews a young boy who provided the five loaves of bread and two fish that Jesus used to feed 5,000 people. It was an amazing miracle and displayed how God has the power to take very little and use it to accomplish a lot.

We would like to serve God but feel limited by our lack of abilities. We don't feel we are smart enough or strong enough or talented enough to be of any real use to Him. The truth is, God isn't looking for people who excel in everything they do. He is looking for people willing to offer up everything they have to Him. God has used shepherd boys to defeat mighty giants. He has used fishermen to preach the gospel and turn the world upside down. Moses, Jeremiah, Gideon and many more all felt inadequate to do what God called them to do. It isn't us, but the power of the Holy Spirit working through us that accomplishes mighty things.

ELISHA & THE WIDOW

(episode 014)

theme: God hears our cries for help **scripture:** II Kings 4:1-7 **quote:** “For You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive, and abundant in lovingkindness

to all who call upon You.” Psalm 86:5 **summary:** There was a righteous man who died leaving some debt. His creditor came to the man's widow to collect what he is owed, but all she had was a jar of oil, so he is prepared to take her two sons to be his slaves in payment of the debt. God sends the prophet Elisha to the woman's aid, and Nit Whitly finds him at the widow's home. He instructs her to borrow all the jars and vessels she can from her neighbors. After she has done this, Elisha instructs her to pour the oil she has into them. She continued to pour oil until everyone of the jars and vessels were full. Then Elisha told her to sell the oil to pay her debt and what was left over would be for her and her sons to live on.

God hears our cries and He will never abandon nor forsake those who are His. As it says in Hebrews 6:10, “For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His name, in having ministered and in still ministering to the saints.”

THE MAN BORN BLIND

(episode 017)

theme: God resists those who are proud, but give grace to those who are humble **scripture:** John 9
quote: “God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.” James 4:6b **summary:** Nit
Whitly travels to the temple in Jerusalem to report on the healing of a blind man by Jesus. One of the
interesting things about this story is the contrast between the blind man and the Pharisees. The blind
man was humble and saw Jesus as his source of help and healing. The Pharisees were proud and
saw Jesus as a threat to their reputations and power.

There is a good reason we should be humble before God. He is smarter and stronger than we
are. He is also perfect and we are not. Those who understand this difference are in a position to
receive from God, because He shows compassion and favor on those who are humble. Those who
refuse to accept their inferiority to God will find God resisting and opposing them. The blind man went
away with his sight, the Pharisees went away as spiritually blind as ever.

JESUS CALMS THE SEA

(episode 032)

theme: Jesus is Lord over nature. **scripture:** Mark 4:35-39 **quote:** “Who then is this, that even the
wind and the sea obey Him?” mark 4:41 **summary:** Nit Whitly travels on the water to report on the
miracle of Jesus calming a storm at sea. He was on a boat with His disciples. While He slept a storm
broke out that threatened to sink the ship. The disciples woke Jesus up and He rebuked the wind and
commanded it to be still. It did, and the disciples were amazed that even the wind and the sea obeyed
His voice.

Jesus controls nature. It is at His disposal to use as He wishes. He uses nature, as He does
everything else, for His plan and purpose. His control is complete and it can be a comfort for us to
know that the God who commands nature is not only willing, but able, to watch over everything that
concerns us.

HEALING THE CENTURIONS’S SERVANT

(episode 043)

theme: Jesus has authority over all creation. **scripture:** Matthew 8:5-13 **quote:** “For I, too, am a man
under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to t his
one, ‘Go!’ and he goes, and to another, ‘Come!’ and he comes, and to my slave,
‘Do this!’ and he does it.” Matthew 8:9 **summary:** For this REALiTY CHeCK we draw an
illustration from the military. In any kind of an army discipline and obedience are essential. When an
officer issues an order it must be obeyed without objection or complaint. This is the same kind of
authority Jesus exercises over all of creation.

Nit Whitly interviews a soldier who relates the story of a Centurion who came to Jesus seeking
the healing for his servant. Jesus offered to go with him and heal the servant, but the Centurion said
he wasn’t worthy to have Jesus in his home. Then he displayed incredible insight into the things of
God. He understood that Jesus, as ruler of all creation, need only speak the word and the servant
would be healed. Being in the military, the Centurion understood how, by merely giving an order, his
will would be carried out by those under his authority. He extended that reality to Jesus and His
authority.

Jesus is ruler over all creation, and even His words make things happen.

THREE MEN IN A FIERY FURNACE

(episode 047)

theme: Our first allegiance is always to God. **scripture:** Daniel 3 **quote:** “Let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or

worship the golden image that you have set up.” Daniel 3:18 **summary:** Cowboy Bob relates the story of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego to the Rodeo Round-Up Gang. They were three young Israelite men who worshiped God living in Babylon. One day the King of Babylon set up a golden image and ordered everyone to worship it. Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego refused because by worshiping this golden image they would be breaking the First Commandment. When the King found this out, he was furious and ordered that the three young men be brought to him. He gave them one last chance to bow before his idol, and if they didn't, he said he would throw them into a fiery furnace.

Not hesitating, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego informed the King that God was able to deliver them out of the fiery furnace, but even if He didn't, they would not serve his god or bow to his image. The King was furious and ordered the furnace be heated up seven times hotter than it normally was and to throw Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego in. The three young men survived the furnace. They were not burned up. They didn't even smell of smoke.

We may never find ourselves in a life or death situation like Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego did, but every day we are likely to be faced with situations that call for us to take a stand for righteousness. A call for us to go against what is popular or safe and take a stand for God. Sometimes obeying God will be inconvenient, or make us an object of ridicule by those around us, or maybe even dangerous. In those cases we must remember that our first allegiance is always to God. Remember Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego while you're going through your fiery furnace.

MIRACLE OF THE CATCH OF FISH

(episode 065)

theme: We are all called to preach the gospel. **scripture:** Luke 5:1-11 **quote:** “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations.” Matthew 28:19a **summary:** When calling three of His 12 disciples to follow Him - Peter, James and John - Jesus used a miracle involving fish. They were fishermen. He also used these fish in illustrating to them what their lives would become.

Jesus had been speaking to a crowd of people by the lake of Gennesaret when He saw two boats on the shore. The fishermen were washing their nets. Jesus got into Peter's boat and asked him to put the boat out a short distance in the water. Peter did and Jesus taught the people from the boat. When He was finished He said to Peter, “Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch.” Peter told Jesus that they had worked hard all night without catching anything, but he agreed to do as Jesus said. What happened next was quite amazing. His nets quickly filled up with fish. So many, in fact, that he had to call for help from the other boat. The catch was so large that both boats were filled and on the verge of sinking.

Jesus told Peter not to fear, “From now on you will be catching men.” Peter, James and John, when they had brought their boats to land, left everything to follow Jesus.

This call to be “Fishers of men” is not limited to Peter, James and John. We have all been called to preach the gospel. We preach it in the way we live, in the way we conduct ourselves, in the way we treat others, and especially when we share the good news of Jesus Christ with our friends, family and even strangers.

Just before Jesus ascended into heaven He gave us what has been called the Great Commission, and it has never been rescinded. So, let us “Go...and make disciples of all the nations,” remembering that Jesus promised to be with us always, “Even to the end of the age.”

HEALING ON THE SABBATH

(episode 073)

theme: It is proper to do good on the Sabbath **scripture:** Luke 13:10-17 **quote:** “Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save a life or to kill?”

Mark 3:4 **summary:** God has given us the Sabbath as a day of rest. It is a day when we are to take a break from work and spend it focusing on God. It’s a good way to keep ourselves from being so wound up in day-to-day living that we lose our focus of what’s important.

By the time Jesus came the religious leaders of Israel had turned the Sabbath into more of a ritual that had lost the heart of its intent. They had rules and regulations that constituted what was proper and what was a violation of keeping the 4th Commandment. It had become an obligation that didn’t require the heart to be engaged.

It’s not surprising then, with this in mind, that the synagogue official was indignant with Jesus when, on a Sabbath day, He healed a woman who was sick. The official said to the people, “There are six days in which work should be done; therefore come during them and get healed, and not on the Sabbath day.”

Jesus called him a hypocrite and pointed out that each of them, on the Sabbath day, will untie their animals and lead them away to water them. “And this woman,” He continued, “A daughter of Abraham as she is, whom Satan has bound for eighteen long years, should she not have been released from this bond on the Sabbath day?”

The Sabbath day is a day for us to rest from our work and to keep ourselves focused on God and His kingdom. But we should remember that it is also a day to do good, which is an excellent way to renew our spirits.

JESUS WALKS ON THE WATER

(episode 080)

theme: When stepping out in faith, let’s be careful not to fall prey to doubts and fears. **scripture:** Matthew 14:24-31 **quote:** “Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith.” Hebrews 12:2a **summary:** For this Reality Check report Nit Whitly travels on the sea to discuss the miracle of Jesus walking on the water. Jesus’ disciples were in a boat on the sea. Jesus had stayed on land in order to spend some time in prayer. Somewhere between 3 and 6 o’clock in the morning, Jesus went out to the disciples walking on the water. Upon seeing Him they were afraid, but Jesus reassured them that it was He and that everything was alright.

Peter answered Jesus and said, “Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water.” Jesus did, and out onto the water Peter went. But seeing the wind, he became afraid and began to sink into the water.

There will be times when we will have to take a step of faith, causing us to do something we are uncomfortable with, something we may not want to do, or something that seems totally impossible. It’s at those times that we must take, like Peter did, a step of faith. Once we’ve taken it though, we will be tempted to see the storms and the winds around us, and fear and doubt can grip us. This is tough, but we must not allow these fears and doubts to cause us to sink. We must set our eyes on Jesus, remembering His promises. God said He would never leave us nor forsake us.

Psalms 121:3 tells us: “He [God] will not allow your foot to slip; He who keeps you will not slumber.”

HEALING THE PARALYZED MAN

(episode 091)

theme: Jesus has the power and authority to forgive sins. **scripture:** Luke 5:17-26 **quote:** “In order that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to

forgive sins,” -He said to the paralytic- ‘I say to you, rise, and take up your

stretcher and go home.” Luke 5:24 **summary:** The friends of a paralyzed man, wanting Jesus to heal him but unable to get into the house where Jesus was teaching, cut a hole into the roof of the house and lowered their friend down. Jesus, seeing this demonstration of faith, said to the man, “Friend, your sins are forgiven you.”

Listening to Jesus that day were a number of Pharisees, and they were bothered that Jesus was speaking this way. They realized that only God can forgive sins, and Jesus, in telling the paralyzed man that his sins are forgiven was speaking as if He were God.

So Jesus put this question to them. "Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins have been forgiven you,' or to say, 'Rise and walk?'"

His point was this: To tell someone that their sins are forgiven is a much greater thing than telling them they are healed, because illnesses and infirmities are physical things and only affect us here on earth, but sins are spiritual and extend even into eternity. So, in this sense, it is easier to heal a physical ailment (which men are capable of doing) that it is to forgive sins (which only God can do).

On the other hand, we are not able to see with our natural eyes when sin is forgiven. There is not necessarily a physical manifestation to show that it has happened. While it's more apparent when a physical ailment (especially paralysis) has been taken away.

So Jesus, in order to show those present that He had the authority to forgive sins (the harder things they couldn't see) He cured the man of his paralysis (the easier things they could see). All those present were astonished at what they saw. They began to glorify God and saying "We have seen remarkable things today."

Jesus is the same today as He was then. He still has the power to heal sickness and disease, and, more importantly, He has the power and authority to forgive sins. Men are still seeing these remarkable things today.

BLIND BARTEMEUS & BEING DESPERATE FOR GOD

(episode 120)

theme: Like Bartemeus, we should be desperate for God. **scripture:** Luke 18:35-43; Mark 10:46-52

quote: "[Bartemeus] called out, saying, 'Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!' And those who led the way were sternly telling him to be quiet; but he kept crying all the more, 'Son of David, have mercy on me!'" Luke 18:38,39 **summary:** Bartemeus was a blind beggar living in Jericho. One day a crowd went by, so he asked what it was all about. He was told that Jesus of Nazareth was going by. Bartemeus had obviously heard of Jesus, and desiring to be healed, cried out, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" Those who were standing nearby began to tell him to be quiet, but he cried out all the more.

Jesus stopped and commanded that Bartemeus be brought to Him. Bartemeus came, and Jesus asked him what it was he wanted Him to do for him. Bartemeus said he wished to have his sight. Jesus said, "Receive your sight; your faith has made you well." Immediately Bartemeus regained his sight, and he began following Jesus, giving glory to God.

We are all in need of Jesus. Bartemeus serves as an example to us of how desperate we should be for Him. Psalm 42:1,2 states, "As the deer pants for the water brooks, so my soul pants for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God." It is easier for us to feel this way when we are in trouble than when things are going well, but we still need Him every day, even the good ones. Let's remind ourselves daily of our need for God, and seek Him fervently and desperately as a deer panting for a drink of water.

THE MONEY FISH

(episode 135)

theme: Jesus laid aside His rights and privileges as God to become a man for our sake. **scripture:** Matthew 17:24-27, Philippians 2:6,7 **quote:** "Although [Jesus] existed in the form of God...[He] emptied Himself, taking the

form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men." Philippians 2:6,7 **summary:** In Matthew 17:24-27 the issue of paying the temple tax came up. When Peter asked Jesus about this, Jesus asked him if the kings of the earth "Collect customs or poll-tax from their sons or from strangers." Peter answered, "From strangers." Jesus said, "Consequently the sons are exempt."

He said this to point out that, as the Son of God, Jesus was exempt from paying the tax. But, so as not to give offense, He told Peter to throw a hook into the sea and the first fish he catches will have enough money in its mouth to pay the tax for the both of them.

What does this story mean? Jesus is here giving us an example of what the Apostle Paul wrote about in Philippians 2:6,7. There Paul tells us that even though Jesus was God, He freely emptied Himself, or laid aside, His rights and privileges as God to take on the form of a man. He never ceased to be God, but He took the form of a bond-servant. He did this so that we might be saved.

Paul wrote that this same attitude should be in each of us. We should be willing to lay aside our rights and privileges in order to serve others. We should always consider the welfare and benefit of others, and be willing to empty ourselves for their sake. This attitude was in Jesus, it should be in us as well.