

A Miracle-Ready Life

Discussion Note – August 2, 2026

1. If you could ask God to do one impossible thing in your life or in the life of someone you love, what would it be?

In "A Miracle-Ready Life," the feeding of the five thousand (more likely 10,000-25,000 people) becomes a masterclass in how ordinary people position themselves for the miraculous. When thousands were hungry on a hillside with no food in sight, the disciples defaulted to the obvious: send them away and let someone else manage the problem. Jesus gave the opposite instruction, bring the need here. The sermon traced three miracle-ready postures: first, bringing our needs directly to Jesus rather than managing them away on our own; second, offering what we actually have rather than calculating what we lack (Philip ran the numbers and declared it impossible, while Andrew found a boy with five barley loaves and two fish and simply offered them); and third, preparing for provision before we see it, Jesus had the crowd sit down for a meal that did not yet exist. The takeaway: surrender does not earn the miracle, it puts us where the miracle moves through us.

Read John 6:8-9

"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?'" (ESV)

Andrew's response stands in sharp contrast to Philip's in the verses just before. Philip had calculated the cost, two hundred denarii, roughly eight months' wages, and concluded the need was mathematically impossible to meet. Andrew's move was different: he did not solve the problem, he brought a person with something. The barley loaves carry a meaningful detail. Barley was the grain of the poor; wheat bread was for those with means. The boy's lunch was the humblest offering imaginable. Yet John records this detail deliberately, he wants readers to see that Jesus is doing what Elisha did in 2 Kings 4, feeding a crowd with barley loaves, but at fifty times the scale and on his own authority. What looked like an embarrassing little is exactly what God chose to work through.

2. Which do you recognize more in yourself: Philip calculating what's impossible, or Andrew bringing what's available? What does that reveal about where you're placing your trust?

Read 2 Corinthians 12:9

"But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me." (ESV)

Paul wrote these words after begging God three times to take away something painful he called a "thorn in the flesh." God's answer was not to remove it but to reframe it: the weakness was not the problem, it was the point. Where Paul felt most inadequate was exactly where God's power showed up most clearly. That flips the logic most of us operate with. We tend to wait until we feel strong enough, prepared enough, or resourced enough before we step out. But this passage says God is not waiting for us to have it together. He works through the gaps, and the gaps are often exactly where he is most at work.

3. What is something in your life right now that feels too small or broken to offer God? What would it look like to offer it anyway?

Read Ephesians 3:20

"Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen." (ESV)

Paul closes a long prayer with what might be the boldest promise in all of Scripture: God is able to do more than everything we could ever ask or even imagine. Not just a little more, but immeasurably, impossibly more. And notice where it happens, not somewhere far off, but "within us," through ordinary people in ordinary churches. This ties directly to the sermon's closing image: each disciple walked away carrying a full basket. They came to that hillside with nothing to offer. They left with more than the crowd received. God's provision was not just enough, it was personal, and it was addressed to them specifically.

4. Each disciple walked away with a full basket, more than they came with. How does the idea that God's provision might be personally addressed to you change how you approach what you're currently asking him for?

Read John 6:26

"Jesus answered them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves.'" (ESV)

The morning after the feeding, the same crowd tracked Jesus down on the other side of the lake. They were eager, persistent, and motivated, but Jesus diagnosed their motive plainly: they came back for the bread, not for him. What followed is one of the most demanding passages in all four Gospels, the Bread of Life discourse in John 6, which ends with many followers walking away because they could not accept what Jesus was claiming about himself. The feeding miracle was meant to point to Jesus as the true bread from heaven, not simply to solve a hunger problem. When we reduce the miraculous to a transaction, God as a means to a better outcome, we miss the whole point. The miracle is not the destination. Jesus is.

5. Jesus told the crowd they were following him for the bread, not for him. Are you seeking the Miracle-Worker or just the miracle? What would pursuing Jesus himself look like this week?

Prayer Points

- Courage to stop managing our problems alone and instead bring them directly to Jesus
- Faith to offer what we have, however small or broken, rather than waiting until we feel we have enough
- Eyes to see Jesus himself as the answer, not just the one who gives answers

DEEPER DIVE: Elisha, A Life of Expectant Faith

Elijah's successor, Elisha, walked a life defined by a single conviction: God's supply is never limited to what the natural eye can see. Where others saw scarcity, closed doors, or impossible odds, Elisha consistently expected divine intervention and then acted accordingly, often before any visible sign of it. His story threads directly through the sermon: Jesus was doing at massive scale what Elisha did with twenty barley loaves, and John named that connection deliberately. But looking at Elisha's wider ministry reveals that the feeding miracle was not a one-time anomaly, it was a pattern. Elisha's life models what it looks like to live with expectant faith as a posture, not just a moment.

Read 2 Kings 4:1-7

"Now the wife of one of the sons of the prophets cried to Elisha, 'Your servant my husband is dead, and you know that your servant feared the LORD, but the creditor has come to take my two children to be his slaves.' And Elisha said to her, 'What shall I do for you? Tell me; what have you in the house?' And she said, 'Your servant has nothing in the house except a jar of oil.' He said, 'Go outside, borrow vessels from all your neighbors, empty vessels and not too few. Then go in and shut the door behind yourself and your sons and pour into all these vessels. And when one is full, set it aside.' So she went from him and shut the door behind herself and her sons. And as she poured they brought the vessels to her. When the vessels were full, she said to her son, 'Bring me another vessel.' And he said to her, 'There are no more vessels.' And the oil stopped flowing. She came and told the man of God, and he said, 'Go, sell the oil and pay your debts, and you and your sons can live on the rest.'" (ESV)

The widow's situation was desperate: her husband was dead, her sons were about to be taken as debt-slaves, and her only asset was a single jar of oil. Notice what Elisha asked first, not "what do you need?" but "what do you have?" The entire miracle hinges on her answer. His instructions were a test of faith before any provision was visible: borrow vessels, not a few, close the door, and pour. The oil multiplied only as she poured, and it stopped precisely when the vessels ran out. Her faith set the ceiling. This is the pattern the sermon called "preparing for provision before you see it", the widow borrowed containers for oil that did not yet exist. The miracle moved through what she already had and was willing to offer.

Read 2 Kings 4:42-44

"A man came from Baal-shalishah, bringing the man of God bread of the firstfruits, twenty loaves of barley and fresh ears of grain in his sack. And Elisha said, 'Give to the men, that they may eat.' But his servant said, 'How can I set this before a hundred men?' So he repeated, 'Give them to the men, that they may eat, for thus says the LORD, "They shall eat and have some left.'" So he set it before them. And they ate and had some left, according to the word of the LORD." (ESV)

This passage is the Old Testament prototype that John deliberately echoes in his account of the feeding of the five thousand. Twenty barley loaves for a hundred men, still impossible math, still the servant's objection, still abundance left over. But notice the mechanism: Elisha gives a prophetic word ("they shall eat and have some left") and then the command to distribute. He does not wait to see the miracle before acting on the word. The servant had to begin handing out food he had no reason to believe would stretch. Jesus follows this same pattern on the hillside, the disciples distributed before seeing any multiplication. The loaves that feed thousands begin the same way as the twenty that fed a hundred: someone has to obey first.

Read 2 Kings 6:14-18

"So he sent there horses and chariots and a great army, and they came by night and surrounded the city. When the servant of the man of God rose early in the morning and went out, behold, an army with horses and chariots was all around the city. And the servant said, 'Alas, my master! What shall we do?' He said, 'Do not be afraid, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them.' Then Elisha prayed and said, 'O LORD, please open his eyes that he may see.' So the LORD opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw, and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha. When the Arameans came down against him, Elisha prayed to the LORD and said, 'Please strike this people with blindness.' So he struck them with blindness in accordance with the prayer of Elisha." (ESV)

By this point in Elisha's ministry, his servant had presumably witnessed the widow's oil, the hundred fed, and more, yet when surrounded by a hostile army, his first response was still panic: "What shall we do?" Elisha's answer is not a battle strategy; it is a corrective perspective: "Those who are with us are more than those who are with them." Then he prayed, not for rescue, but for his servant's eyes to be opened. The mountain was already full of fire. The provision was already in place; the servant simply could not see it. Elisha's life demonstrates that expectant faith is not naive optimism. It is a trained perception that refuses to let the visible threat be the final word. The sermon's closing challenge, "we need a church that believes God can do the impossible", is exactly what it looks like to live with Elisha's eyes.

Deeper Dive Discussion Questions

1. Elisha's first question to the widow was "what do you have in the house?", not "what do you need?" How does that reorientation, starting with what is available rather than what is missing, change the way you approach a current situation where you feel like you do not have enough?
2. The widow borrowed vessels before the oil appeared, and Elisha's servant distributed food before it multiplied. Both had to act on what God said before they could see what God would do. What is something God has spoken to you, through Scripture, a prompting, or a sense of calling, that you have been waiting to act on until you can see the outcome first?
3. Elisha's servant saw the same situation as Elisha but came to a completely different conclusion. What "chariots of fire" might already be in place around a situation in your life that currently looks more like surrounded than supported, and what would it mean to pray Elisha's prayer, "open my eyes," about it?