

# When God Comes to Prove You

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Text: John 6:1-14

## Introduction:

Have you ever faced a situation that seemed so enormous that you couldn't seem to keep from panicking? Many times, in a situation like this, we feel like God has abandoned us, quit loving us, or has stopped caring about us. The real truth is that in these times our God is testing us. Although God does not tempt us to sin, He does test our faith.

In these verses Jesus and His disciples have just left Jerusalem where they enjoyed one of the Jewish feasts, healed a man who had been lame for thirty-eight years, and stirred up the Jewish religious community till they wanted to kill Him. He and His disciples sail across the Sea of Galilee and a great multitude followed them. Jesus went up into a small mountain and sat with His disciples. Realizing the Passover was close Jesus decided to prove the faith of His disciples, so He started with Phillip.

When God begins to test you what kind of testimony do you have?

g Two things are said to be unknown to Thomas A. Edison, the great inventor-- discouragement and worry. His associates have claimed that his freedom from these afflictions came from the fact that he possessed absolutely no nerves. One day, one of his associates had to report to him the failure, in immediate succession, of three experiments involving enormous expenditure of money and labor. But the inventor simply smiled at the recital. The associate, worn out with the nervous strain of his long workday, and disheartened by his disappointment, said impatiently: "Why don't you worry a little about it, Mr. Edison?" "Why should I?" was the inventor's reply. "You're worrying enough for two." The victory, which overcomes the world, is our faith; if we rely upon God and trust him unwaveringly, it will give us a self-composure and a peace that shall be free from worry.

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In this text there are some ways in which Jesus reveals his testing of His disciples. What are some of the faith testing "challenges" that Jesus tests us with.

- I. God will challenge you to make a spiritual decision. (5-7)
- A. He will make you ask yourself “is this situation too big for me to handle?” Are you going to face this as a human or as a Christian? Jesus asked Phillip where were they going to get bread enough to feed this multitude? Jesus already knew what He would do but He wanted to find out if His disciples would turn to Him by faith or become fearful because of the situation.
- B. Phillip seemed overwhelmed by the question; he told Jesus that it would take a lot of money to feed this many people. God challenges us to examine the situation and conclude, “is God bigger than my problems.” It is easy say yes with our mouth but hard to believe God and stand on our faith until He works it out.
- C. Phillip had the bread of life standing beside him and all he could see was the multitude of hungry people. When the problem comes will you be able to see Jesus. The Lord told my wife and I once while we were praying together that we should not look at situations, people, or circumstances, but that we should look at Him and He would bless the church and make it prosper.

God will come through for you; maybe it will not be just like you asked but He never fails.

g A young man went away from home to embark in a modest enterprise. His capital was small, but it represented the earnings of many years. He had won the esteem of his employer, and, as he was about to leave, the merchant said to him, "Don, if you ever get into a tight place, let me know of it. I will be glad to help you." For awhile the young man prospered; then came a misfortune. This was followed by others in such rapid succession that he began to see before him bankruptcy and ruin. He thought of his old employer, and at last resolved to write to him and ask for help. He had not the courage to ask for the whole amount, but hoped the small sum he asked for would enable him to somehow retrieve his fortunes. He waited eagerly for an answer, but no answer came. He knew that the merchant was at home, and that he was not a man who ever procrastinated about what he intended to do. Don's heart grew sick. Tomorrow his creditors would seize upon his possessions. There seemed to be no way of escape. As he sat wrapped in his gloomy thoughts, the door opened and his old employer stood before him.

"My boy," he said, "I received your letter, and while you said you wanted money, I made up my mind that you needed me. I have been to see your creditors, and they understand that my entire fortune is behind you."

His friend had kept his promise, but he had answered in a way that the petitioner had not dared to hope. Brother, if your Lord has given you exceeding great and precious promises, do not allow yourself to fear that he will not fulfill them. God does not always give his loved ones what they ask, but he never fails to supply their needs.

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## II. He will challenge you to look for a way to meet the need. (8-9)

- A. We feel the need, whether it is ours or someone else's. We begin to see if we can find an answer within our resources or ourselves. And like Andrew, who saw the five loaves and two fishes, we ask the same question as he did, "What are these among so many?"
- B. Upon realizing the enormity of the situation and that we are unable to handle this problem alone, we must learn to lean upon Jesus and trust Him. Here were five thousand men besides women and children who had followed Jesus across the sea and they were hungry for food and miracles. Jesus was about to give them both.
- C. However the disciples were not sure what could be done. Many problems in life are small and easily handled though they may be irritating and inconvenient. But there are those that are paramount that they seem unconquerable. Nevertheless, it is these huge problems that you cannot handle that God allows to come into your life to test you.

We have to find a way to meet that need. We must build upon the only solid ground, Jesus the way maker.

g When Frank Lloyd Wright accepted the task of designing the Imperial Hotel in Tokyo, he realized that he had his work cut out for him. Japan is a land of frequent shakes and tremors; the challenge was to build a building that could withstand the earth's instability. He discovered eight feet below the surface of the ground where the building was to stand lay a sixty-foot bed of soft mud. This gave him an idea: Why not float the Imperial Hotel building on this bed of mud, and let it absorb the shock of any quake? The cynics laughed at him. Other architects said it was impossible. Frank Lloyd Wright built the hotel anyway. Not long after its completion, the structure was put to the test: Japan experienced its worst earthquake in fifty-two years. All around Tokyo buildings were destroyed, but the Imperial Hotel stood firm.

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III. He will challenge you to take part in the miracle. (10-14)

- A. Jesus commanded the disciples to make the people sit down. The disciples knew that this act would begin to generate the faith of the people that they were about to receive something.
- B. He distributed the five loaves and two fishes to the disciples and commanded them to give to the people. Notice Jesus did not give to the people, He made the disciples give. They had to believe that Jesus was going to multiply the bread or create some miracle in order for this problem to be solved.
- C. Then He commanded them to take up the remnants of the meal. This took more faith. Did they want to believe that there would be anything left since they started with so little? However, they had seen that each of them had given out enough to every person. They took up twelve baskets full of fish and bread.

Conclusion:

Jesus never fails; our faith may fail from time to time when we allow fear and doubt to stop the work of God. God always has a plan, an answer, and a solution to our dilemma.

However, our faith in God must be accompanied with works. Faith without works is dead and works without faith is dead. Notice how a man in a boat explains this.

g An old boatman painted the word "faith" on one oar of his boat and "works" on the other. He was asked his reason for this. In answer, he slipped the oar with "faith" into the water and rowed. The boat, of course, made a very tight circle. Returning to the dock, the boatman then said, "Now, let's try 'works' without 'faith' and see what happens." The oar marked "works" was put in place and the boatman began rowing with just the "works" oar. Again the boat went into a tight circle but in the opposite direction.

When the boatman again returned to the wharf, he interpreted his experiment in these strong and convincing words, "You see, to make a passage across the lake, one needs both oars working simultaneously in order to keep the boat in a straight and narrow way. If one does not have the use of both oars, he makes no progress either across the lake nor as a Christian.

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God uses several different “challenges” to prove our faith. He doesn’t get a kick out of seeing you suffer, or seeing you in an uncomfortable situation. However, you must understand that God does this for your benefit not His. He wants you to know how strong and sure your faith is. He wants you to know that He is more than able to handle any situation and that He is going to want you to participate in the handling of each situation.

Just like the disciples whom Jesus involved in the perpetuating of this miracle. He is going to prove you.

#### References

May, Steve (1999) 1001 Contemporary Illustrations. Raleigh, North Carolina: Heaven Word Inc.