

Announcements: Dismiss Kids, Welcome Guests,

**“Multiply: 2020 Vision”
John 6:1-15**

Introduction:

Perhaps the prayer I have prayed more than any other the past few years is this: “God, give me your heart.” No matter the moment or situation, I have learned the value of uttering (sometimes quietly, sometimes very LOUDLY) “Your heart, God. Give me your heart.”

On this Vision Sunday, I am super excited to share the ONE WORD that not only captures where our pastors believe we should put our best energy, greatest focus, and strongest prayer in 2020, BUT also represents a theme intensely close to the heart of God.

God wants to see us MULTIPLY.

You say Tanner, “Prove it.” To me, it’s quite simple...

- What were the first words of God to humanity? **“Be fruitful and multiply . . .” (Genesis 1:28)** Multiply what? Image bearers! Worshipers!
- What about the last words of Jesus to his disciples: **“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations...” (Matthew 28:19)** DO you see that? It’s the same vision: MULTIPLY! Fill the earth with people who know my love and love me above everything!
- If that doesn’t convince you, consider the Book of Acts. Seven statements summarize what was happening in the lives of the first followers of Jesus and what should be celebrated with unapologetic zeal. Every single one highlight (that’s right!) . . . MULTIPLICATION, three do so explicitly!!
 - **“And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly . . .” (Acts 6:7)**
 - **“And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, [the church] multiplied.” (Acts 9:31)**
 - **But the word of God increased and multiplied.” (Acts 12:24)**

Multiplication is not RHC’s vision. Multiplication is God’s vision.

FCF: But here’s the problem. So many of us live, to varying degrees, as though we have not heard this vision. Like my wife who had a very one sided conversation with me last night for about 3 minutes, until she realized I was wearing my noise cancelling headphones under my hoodie, we too have drowned out the voice of God.

That is why I want to share a powerful story from the life of Jesus about his desire *and* his power to MULTIPLY.

This story will stretch our vision, ignite our faith, and help us hear God’s heart again!

Listen as I read **READ JOHN 6:1-15**, the only miracle recorded in ALL FOUR gospels.

What does this story teach us about a multiplication vision?

1. Gain God’s heart. 1-7

The Need

- There was a serious logistical problem: VERY LARGE crowd (15-20k!) VERY little food. What they needed EXCEEDED their resources.
- So Jesus asked Philip in verse 5: "Where are we to buy bread, so that these people may eat?"
- Jesus did not ask because he thought Philip was incredibly entrepreneurial.
- No. Verse 6 says: "He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he would do."
- Jesus was testing Philip's faith!

The question is not whether we will face moments of great need that exceed our resources. The question is: how will we respond?

- Will we respond like Philip?
 - His immediate inclination was to look to human strategy and human resources.
 - Look at what he says in verse 7: "Two hundred denarii would not be enough to feed each person a few crumbs." A denarius was a day's wage. He is saying, "7 months salary could barely give these people anything!"
 - Listen I'm all about analyzing and strategizing, but Philip saw "impossible" written all over the situation because he calculated without Christ, and he wasn't the only one...
- Check out his friend Andrew in verse 9.
 - Andrew tried to be resourceful, but all he found was a boy willing to share his lunch and what did he say? "but what are they for so many?"
 - His faith was no greater than Philip's. They both FLUNKED the TEST.

Take the third option. Chase after the heart of Christ

- He knew the ultimate test is always theological, not mathematical!
- He was not deterred by their doubts.
- "For he himself [Jesus] knew what he would do." He knew he was going to multiply the loaves and fish to feed the multitude.

Why?

- Jesus' wanted to provide. He wanted to bring multiplication.
- But he not only wanted to... he knew he could. Jesus was completely confident in his ability to come through.
- He has the desire and the power!

When a dream is stirring in your soul, where do you look first? At your situation and circumstances? To yourself? Faith rises with every look to Christ. That's how we gain his heart!

T: Multiplication is not just a vision. It is God's heart on display! A vision for multiplication begins with gaining God's heart, but gaining God's heart, will move us to...

2. Bring your best.

I love how John tells us about this little boy who offers his lunch. Look back at *verse 9*.

5 loaves and 2 fish are nothing compared to the crowd of 15,000 people, but it's even less than we imagine when we read these words. We're talking about a poor kid's lunch.

- He was not eating wheat bread, but barley bread, the cheap, staple food, of the poorer classes.
- The word for loaves isn't like what you'd pick up at Stop n Shop or Trader Joe's. It was nothing more than 5 small cakes.
- The 2 fish were not portions you would receive at Legal Seafood, but just enough to flavor the bread.

There are two things I want you to see about this moment.

1) First, God loves using the unlikely and unexpected.

- He's just a boy. What good could he do? He has no experience, no resources, no leadership skills, but he offers what he has!
- God specializes in using humble people everyone else would write off!
- And if God can work through a child, do you think maybe, just maybe, GOD can work through you?!!
- God has a plan AND a *mission* for you. Don't underestimate God by underestimating yourself. Give God your best, and be amazed by what he can do!

2) Second, he brought an unimpressive offering.

- 5 loaves and 2 fish were a laughable contribution for such a massive need.
- "Hey Jesus, we've got enough for 1! We're about 14,999 short!"
- BUT Jesus takes this poor kid's lunch makes another lunch, makes another lunch, makes another, until all 15,000 people are fed!
- How long did that take? How in the world did he do that?!!! I don't know. I just know he did it. And he's still doing it!
- Why? Because "whatever is transferred to Jesus can be transformed by Jesus." (Merritt)
- God is not looking for the spiritually elite. He is looking for people who will give what they have. You may not think you have much to offer, but if you give God what you've got, if you surrender your life into his hands, he can take it and multiply it beyond your wildest dreams (30, 60, 100-fold)."

T: Gain God's heart. Bring your Best. And finally...

3. Watch God work. 10-15

Jesus takes over in verse 10. He tells the disciples to get the people to have a seat. He then takes the little boy's lunch and thanks God, I believe for the meager provision in his hands and the miraculous provision to follow!

In this work of multiplication, we learn...

1) Jesus is not limited by our limitations.

- With straightforward simplicity, John records the miracle in vv 11-12.
- He distributed the bread and the fish, and the people ate "as much as they wanted." This phrase means they were "fully satisfied." They ate until they could eat no more.
- Jesus wants to speak to your heart through the words of this story: "I've got more than you think I do. I can do more than you think I can! I am not limited by your limitations! I am the God of Abundance!"

2) Jesus is the God of abundance.

- Here's a pro-tip for reading the Bible: always pay attention to the dialogue in any narrative. Look at *verse 12*,
- Why? I believe it is because he wanted to teach them a lesson they would never forget! Look at *verse 13*: "So they gathered them up and filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves left by those who had eaten."

How many baskets? Twelve. Say "twelve." How many disciples? Twelve! Hmmm..... I'm not a mathematical genius, but I know this. That's one for every one of his disciples.

I wish I could have been there. Did Jesus just smile and walk away?

- He is saying: I want every one of you to know who I am. I am the promised prophet like Moses who will take you on a greater exodus to a greater salvation. (That's why they wanted to make him king!)
- I am offering you so much more than a miracle that will satisfy you for a few hours.
- He satisfied their physical hunger to increase their spiritual hunger. JOHN 6:35 "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst."

His work of multiplication, then and now, is so that we grow closer to him. That's the ultimate goal!

Jesus operated with a different spiritual vision and a different spiritual power! The closer you get to Jesus, the more his life increases in you, the more you see what he sees and live with his power!

As we consider where God wants to take us in 2020, this story invites us to...

The Point: Watch God multiply his work as we gain his heart and bring our best.

RHC VISION...

As this happens, the possibilities are limitless. Let me share four focus points to pray for and pursue in 2020.

Imagine what will happen as God multiplies new...

1. Believers (50+!)

- We're talking about seeing at least 50 people say "yes" to Jesus for the first time, 50 people experiencing a vibrant, life changing relationship with God through him!
- Who will pray, God, move me to share your love in such a way that at least one person experiences new life in you?
- For this to happen, we're going to need to multiply our prayers, as well as the number of invitations and conversations we're having with people about Jesus.
- To see things we've never seen will require doing things we've never done. We have to bring our best!
- When it happens, when God pours out his Spirit, the number of baptisms and people experiencing new believer discipleship will multiply like never before!
- Can you see it? Will you be a part of it? 50 could be a very small number in the hands of God.

2. Leaders (30!)

- Healthy leadership is critical to move the mission forward.
- As God continues to grow our church, there are great opportunities for people to step into new leadership roles: We want to see God raise up new Team Leaders and Group Leaders, Teams Coaches and Groups Coaches, Ministry Directors and Pastors in 2020.
- Maybe this is one of your next steps at Redemption Hill, but to get there we need to multiply our leadership training efforts, as well as the number of people joining the family and mission of RHC through membership.
- Do you see how this works? These new leaders will help us multiply new...

3. Groups (5!)

- Did you know that 3 out of every 4 people who attend on Sunday mornings have connected with a Group during the week? That's amazing! Most churches would love 1 out of 2.

- But we're praying for at least 5 new Groups to be multiplied by the end of the year, bringing our total number to nearly 20!
- This will happen by helping people connect through avenues like NEXT and when our current Groups say... "The kind of spiritual community and spiritual growth we experience is too important not to share. We're going to send out some of the people we love, so that Pastor Jon's vision to see Groups started in Malden, Everett, Cambridge, Stoneham, Winchester, and Melrose, not to mention other strategic locations around Medford can be fulfilled!"
- How about one more specific dream for 2020?

4. Services (2!)

- As God continues to fill this place up, we are already preparing for what it will look like to multiply to two Sunday morning services in 2020. We're going to start with Easter, and be prepared to be ready to move to two services permanently in the Fall as God moves.
- Why? Raise your hand if you have a close friend or family member still disconnected from God. There are 318,000 people in Medford and the cities that touch Medford. God loves every single one of them!
- Multiplication is the natural consequence of us being in step with God's Spirit and committed to God's mission.

Are you ready to be a part of it?

Conclusion:

The Time is NOW.

Open your eyes and see what God is doing in our church. Open your eyes and see what God has multiplied to this point.

- Have you seen God multiply prayer in our church over the past 2.5 years?
- Have you seen God multiply the number of people who really, really believe God can do anything? Who live with a holy agitation, a longing for something more!
- Have you seen God multiply the number of people who believe Jesus is still alive and his Holy Spirit is filling us to live empowered, uncommon lives for his name?

Multiplication through us starts with multiplication in us.

The time is NOW. People need Jesus and they need Jesus NOW. People need more of Jesus and they need more of JESUS NOW!

Let's not be content with last year's stories. Opportunities abound today. God is working today! The unbelievable adventure God made you for is right in front of you, right now!

What's your next step to see God's work multiplied in you? What part will you play?

Invite the music team out...

If you want to be part of the awakening that's coming to this church this year, make this your constant prayer:

God, multiply your work in us.

This God of Resurrection, who has done it before will do it again!

PRAYER TIME. PRAYER TEAM.