My name is Sean Campbell, and I am the youth pastor here at Grace Hills. Sometimes I play drums. Sometimes they let me out. Today is one of those days they let me out, so I'm excited. It is an honor to bring the word of God to you this morning. We are in the middle of an amazing series. I've been just so pumped to share with you this morning. We're doing this series on miracles, the miracles of Jesus, and when we talk about miracles, I think we could think of all sorts of different levels of miracles. We think of people getting healed, some people getting a revelation of healing in their hearts, and I think this is just a great series just to focus on the power of God, to focus on who God is, and how he works in miracles, whether they're big or small. Sometimes, I just want to throw this out there.

Sometimes I think we forget that sometimes the greatest miracles are when God works inside of our heart. When he heals us, when he works and reminds us to forgive other people, when he causes us to repent. These are all things that God just does, right? He's a good God. He is still at work today, and one of the things I just want to start out by saying is we at Grace Hills still believe that miracles happen. We believe firmly that God is still at work, that the Holy Spirit uses miracles to point us to worship Jesus. Today, that's not something that ceased in the early church. It's still happening, and I was actually reminded this morning, I saw Mr. Bashi back there. A couple of weeks ago, we had a dinner and he was sharing about an incredible miracle that happened to him. What was it, like 30 years ago or something like that?

Yeah, and it was just... I remember hearing that testimony going, wow, like that's so cool of God,. This morning, I just want to go through a miracle with you together, and I want for this entire message this morning, it's not going to be super long, but I want to just plant this in your hearts and your minds right now. I want you to ask yourself, how can I see Jesus? How can I look at this miracle and see the heart of God? Can we jump in this morning? Is that okay? We're going to be talking about the miracle of the 5,000, where Jesus somehow supernaturally takes two... What is it, two fish and five loaves of bread, and then blows it up and feeds like a bunch of people. Before we get there, though, I thought I would just start out with this scripture. It's from John 20, and it's just a good reminder of what miracles are for.

It says here, now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which not written in this book, but there are, or these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. I think it's just a good reminder that miracles point us to Jesus. Their purpose is to help us trust, trust Jesus, to believe in him, and to the penned on him. I think that's a good reminder for this morning, so that's what I put. The purpose of miracles is to lead us to believe, trust and find life in Jesus. Amen? Amen. Let's go ahead and jump in. If you have your Bibles, you can turn to John 6 with me. That's kind of what we're going to be this morning.

I thought this would be kind of fun, but I I have a kids storybook Bible with me this morning. A couple of weeks ago, Kaylee and I were reading. We take this book out, and our little Josiah, we've kind of started reading him Bible stories before we put them to bed. The other night we were reading this story, and then literally the next day Brandon asked me to preach on this story, so I was like, of course I've got to use this, but I thought it's kind of cute, but it's actually really eloquent. I thought it would be better than me, in some ways, of just kind of breaking down this story. If you want, I'm going to read from this book. If you want to follow the scriptures that are on the screen and then, yeah, we'll just kind of go through this. Does that sound good?

Let's do it, so feel free to read from Your Bible, or you can listen along. How's that? There were once 5,000 tired, and hungry, and probably very grumpy people sitting on a hillside wanting their dinner.
They'd come to hear Jesus that day. They came before breakfast, stayed all morning, all afternoon, and way past the dinner. No one had meant to be out there that long, but that's how it was listening to Jesus, as if time didn't exist. People could listen to Jesus for hours, and on this particular day, that's exactly what they did. But they hadn't brought enough food, and they couldn't just go and buy themselves a burger and fries, because of course they're in the middle of nowhere, with no shops and restaurants. Besides, that kind of food wasn't invented yet. Sure. Okay, so what did they do? Jesus' friends had an idea. Let's send everyone home for dinner. But Jesus said, "They don't need to go."

Then what did he say? One of the disciples said, "You can give them something to eat," so that got suggested, right? Did Jesus want them to travel all the way back to town and buy food for everyone? Jesus' friends panicked. But we don't have enough money. "So what food do you have?" Jesus asked. Go and see. There was a little boy in the crowd. He had brought a lunch that his mother had made for him that morning. He looked at his five loaves and two fish. It wasn't much, not nearly enough for 5,000 but it was all he had. "I have some," he said, Jesus' friends laughed when they saw his little lunch. "That's not nearly enough," they said, but they were wrong. Jesus knew it didn't matter how much the little boy had. God would make it enough. More than enough. Jesus said, "Bring me what you have."

The little boy gave Jesus his lunch. Jesus winked at the little boy and whispered in his ear, "Watch." I kind of think that Jesus was like, let me show you this. Kind of like one of those modes. Anyways. How in the world will Jesus feed everyone with just that? The boy asked. Jesus' friends said, because they thought... I'm sorry, Jesus said that, or Jesus' friends' said that because they thought it was impossible, but Jesus knew the one who made all the fish in the oceans, and Jesus knew the one who had in the very beginning had made everything out of nothing at all. How hard would something like this be for someone like that? Jesus took the little boy's lunch, looked up to heaven, and thanked his father. Then Jesus gave the little lunch back to his friends.

As Jesus' friends started to hand out the food, do you know what? It was the strangest thing. No matter how much they broke off, there was always more, and more, and more, enough for 5,000. Everyone ate as much as they wanted. Second helpings, third helpings, even fourths, until they were full and still there were leftovers. Jesus did many miracles like this. Things people thought couldn't happen that weren't natural, but it was the most natural thing in all the world. It's what God had been doing from the beginning, of course, taking the nothing and making it everything, taking the emptiness and filling it up, taking the darkness and making it light. Isn't that cool? Kind of from a kid's perspective. I think that's kind of a cool way to, to look at that, so we have this miracle. Jesus is stuck in the middle of nowhere. There's no McDonald's, and yet he's presented with this opportunity to show the heart of God.

What I've got written here, I just want to give you a couple little nuggets about this from kind of like a background. This is the only miracle mentioned in all four gospels. I think that's kind of fitting, that it's sort of like one of those big, miraculous moments that's documented a whole lot. If someone took a McDonald's meal and turned it into 5,000, that'd be a pretty big deal. In addition to that, so Philip, the disciple is the one that kind of sort of confronts a situation. He's the guy that that sort of comes out of the woodwork and says, "Hey, I don't think this is like reasonable for us. Like, are you expecting us like, to feed these people and just pay for it?" Philip actually brings up the point that this amount of food to feed that many people was up to two thirds of salary back then for a year.
That's a lot of money, right? Philip is kind of like the Debbie downer. He's like, ha, ha, don't think that's possible unless you're really rich. Then Andrew comes along. Andrew's actually disciple that kind of brings to light the boy with his little lunch. Andrew is hopeful. He sees the story unfolding, where God can do something, God can do something and change the circumstances. Right, and then honestly, this is kind of up for debate, but some scholars think that it was 5,000. Some think it actually was 10,000, because based on... They mentioned in different versions of it that it was men, so if you add children, add a full family, it could be actually more than 5,000 people. There's the potential for that, and then it also mentions in Mark that they decided they’d break up the crowds in groups of 50 or a hundred.

By the time you group and organize people, it's still a lot of people, right? It's still an overwhelming task for Jesus to feed all these people. So I just, as I was praying through this this week, I felt like the Lord just put on on my heart just to share with you what it looks like to partner with God in the miraculous. What does it look like to take part in a miracle with God. And so I have three points for today. They're super simple, so if you want to take notes, you can, you can do that with me. But the first point that I thought just kind of thinking through the story, praying through it is we have to be willing, that's kind of the first, the first nugget for today that we have to be willing. So God wants us to step out in faith when we're asked to.

He wants us to be open for him to move, and I think this story kind of represents three different kinds of people. You have Phillip, right? Who's kind of the guy who's like, ha not possible, right? He's the guy that says, "I don't think God can do this," or maybe he's the guy that's a little bit negative. He's looking at the circumstances going, there's no way. There's no way that this is going to happen. I know for me, when I'm having a really bad day, I turn into Phillip. I get super negative. I don't really think positively. I get frustrated, and I think, there's no way. If we're not careful, we can ride the Phillip train a long ways, and become very down, and depressed, and angry when we're not careful. I think the second kind of person to look for in the story is Andrew.

Andrew kind of represents more of a positive neutral, I would say. He's the guy that comes along and says that we have got... He's hopeful, and faithful, and he's thinking, maybe there is possible something that God could do here. He's the one that kind of comes along and says, "You know what, I think, I think there's a chance." I think of that quote, so you're saying there's a chance. One of my favorite movies, and I think that's Andrew's perspective. He's just going, you know what? Why not? Why not just see what happens? Then you have the boy, and the boy represents someone who is just all out ready to do whatever God asks. I think sometimes we need to be reminded that that's what God wants. He wants a child likeness in our hearts, where when we get asked to do something by God, our only answer and response is yes, I believe you.

If you say you're going to do that, I believe you. You know when you're telling a kid a story, they're like all into it. They're like, really, and they're gullible, I think sometimes that's what God wants. Just that humor, or that humility where we're just like totally believing him at any moment. Those are the three things that I kind of thought about, but I also just want to ask you a question, and today's kind of going to be a little bit reflective as we kind of go through this together. But I thought sometimes God asks us to give what's in our hands for the miraculous. Sometimes that's a talent, sometimes that's just our time. Sometimes it's resources like money or maybe an opportunity, but I just want to ask you the question this morning. What is in your hand?
What could God possibly use that he's given you for miracles? What could God ask of you to serve the body of Christ? What could God ask you to give that maybe you just haven't yet? I think about this story. What if the boy didn't give what was in his hands? What would have happened? Would Jesus still have performed the miracle? Probably, but I think it kind of shows God's heart on wanting to partner with us, but sometimes all he's asking for us is just to lay up front what is in our hands. A kind of are kind of cool store that comes to mind is a couple of years ago Kalea and I, we were in Tulsa, Oklahoma before we moved here, both working, and one day we just felt like the Lord told us to start setting aside our tithe money, just start putting it in an envelope every single month.

We did that for a couple of months and a one day Kaylee comes to me and she says, "Hey, my boss is leaving for a new job." A little backstory, her boss is a single mom going through kind of a rough spell, and she's moving to a different city, and just doesn't have a lot of money. Kaylee just was like, I really feel like we're supposed to give this envelope to this mom. I really feel like we're just supposed to give it away, and so I was like, okay, let's do it. She writes a note, and a note of encouragement, and then sticks the envelope on her desk, and a couple of days, or no, I'm sorry, a couple of hours later, this mom comes in just weeping, just to Kaylee's office going, was this you? In that moment Kaylee was like yes, yes, it was us. Her response was emotional, because she didn't have any money, and little did we know, but that was the exact amount that she needed to move.

I think she bought a fridge with that, and all that she needed for this move. I think about it like to us, I don't remember how much was in that envelope. I don't think it matters, but to us it, you never know what your, what God's asking in your hand, what it could mean to someone else if you just wanted to give, you're just willing to obey and be obedient. I think we have to be spirit-led and just asking the Lord constantly, Lord, what's my assignment? What am I supposed to give that's in my hands? What is it in my life that you've given me to give back in some capacity? I think that's a good question for us to ask that, and when we do that, when we're giving, I think that's kind of a good indicator of where our hearts are at. I think if we're hoarding what God's given us, that shows God that we're putting something else above him, and that shouldn't be that way, right?

We've got to be obedient and at any moment we got to worship God with our resources. Here at Grace Hills, we believe in giving, we believe in tithing, and that's such a huge part of showing people the body of Christ, the love of Christ. I just want to encourage you to think about that as as we go on, and even just ask yourselves as a family, maybe get together this week and and ask the Lord, how can we be generous? How can we use what we've been given to show the love of Christ to somebody this week? Second point I have is that sometimes we have to be at rest. To partner with God, we have to be willing to rest. As I was studying this passage, I didn't realize this. I've read this passage a dozen times or so, I don't, but this week was the first that I actually saw this in the passage. Before Jesus does the miracle, you know what he does? He asks everyone to sit down. He asks everyone to rest, to be quiet and rest.

When we're holding on to something, or we're striving, or we're stressed, God can't often do what he wants to do, and so I think that's kind of a good point here is when God wants to work, sometimes the best thing that we can do is let go, to sit down, to rest, to breathe in. I think sometimes when there's circumstances that are super overwhelming, we tense up, we get stressed, we think about the negatives, right? We kind of go to that Andrew model and we go, okay, this is going to happen, and this is going to be bad, and this is not going to be fun. I think God just wants us to in those moments, just go,
trust me, rest, relax in God. I don't know about you, but I'm a striver. I grew up in an environment where I learned how to work hard.

I learned how to sweat, and that's my natural inclination. I know some of you are that way as well, and so the hardest thing for me at times is to sit back, to rest, to let God do his thing. I think that when we go and we try to be God, we mess it up, and sometimes we just have to learn to go, no, you're God, I trust you. I'm going to let you do your thing. I think that's a great example for us, that we have to be willing to do that. I was kind of looking up what the word Sabbath means. Sabbath is kind of the word that comes to mind when I think about rest, and in the Hebrew, it literally means to rest from labor, to become sanctified, so I want to bring up this point that when you’re resting, you’re actually becoming more like Christ.

When you're resting and you're seeking God's presence, instead of trying to push something through, push that key performance, sales quota, whatever it is, whenever you're trying to strive, I think that can rob you of walking in God's presence sometimes, because we become so goal focused, instead of becoming Jesus focused. I threw a couple of notes together on Sabbath that I thought were fitting Sabbath helps us to respond to pain correctly when we rest. That helps us to process and really healthy ways. When we take a moment to breathe, to let God speak to us instead of to respond out of our emotions. I also think that rest helps us stay focused on the eternal purpose. Sometimes we can become egocentric where we put ourselves in the center and we go, what about me? What? How does this affect me?

When we're resting, when we're fixing our eyes on Jesus, we're able to recenter and go, wait a second. No, that's not right. What does God want in this? What is God's purpose in this situation? How does God want to use me to impact this person, or just to serve and become love? I also think that Sabbath helps us stay focused on who we are in Christ. The orphan mindset, where we think self centeredly, and selfishly, and hoarding can creep in very quickly when we forget who we are in Christ, and so I think by coming back to Christ, by loving God's presence, worshiping, staying prayerful and our decision making, that helps us respond like God would want us to as his children.

So many times I think we forget who we are and we don't even realize it, and I don't know where I heard this quote, but I think that... I think it goes like this, that every single day is an opportunity to rededicate yourself to Christ, to take a moment, and fix your eyes on Jesus and go, God, I follow you, God, I worship you. I think taking a Sabbath allows us to do that, so I think that's what Jesus is doing in this moment. He's saying, "You know what? Let me do this. Let me take control. Take your hands off, rest, rest, and trust me, rest and trust me. Allow me to do my work. Allow me to speak to that person who's agitating you. Allow me to work on your heart so you can respond correctly to this person here." God wants us to operate like the boy, to be trusting, giving and generous. My last point is we have to look to Jesus. We have to trust him.

We have to, as we've already talked about, be willing, be at rest, but trusting Jesus is taking a whole nother step. Here's what it means for me. This is where I think trusting Jesus is. Have you ever done the trust fall? You ever done those activities in work, culture building? The first time I did a trust fall, I hit the ground and hit my head, so it's hard to trust the trust fall after that, but I think that kind of is like a good analogy for us to walking with Jesus. We just got to trust him, which means we don't just stand there, but we... If you ever see in a trust fall, there's a group of people behind you that are supposed to catch you, and you just kind of let go, and see what happens, so to speak. I think for us, if we're really trusting...
Jesus, we take action. We don't just let something simmer in our minds. We actually act though. We believe, act as though we want God to move, act as though we are trusting God to do something.

Question for you. If you're focused on the task at hand, are you actually able to trust Jesus? No. Sometimes I think the enemy wants us to become paralyzed and fearful, to lock us up in fear where we don't move, we don't take action, but statistically speaking, if you're willing to take the first step, it gets a lot easier to take the second, and the third, and the fourth, and so on in trusting God. I just want to pose this question for you. Whatever came to mind when I asked you what God put in your hands, how can you take a step forward and giving that to him this week? How can you take a step forward in changing your lifestyle, or changing whatever, taking that action step forward? I just want to challenge you. It's not... God doesn't often ask us to take huge steps. He asks us to take a little one, and then as we obey him, that's another little one. He doesn't ask us to do anything that's crazy right out of the gate. He works up to that, I think. He works up to that.

When we obey God, what happens? What happens when we obey God? God gets the glory, right? He gets the focus. He gets our attention. Where if we're so focused, if we're not willing to take steps forward, the attention is on us, right? I think of the classic Peter example, when Peter took his eyes off Jesus, what happened? He took a swim, right? We have to keep our eyes on Jesus, and as we keep our eyes on Jesus, we take 80 bitty steps. We walk with him, little by little forward. As we do that, that process of walking with Jesus, it's not heavy. It's not striving. It doesn't feel like you're carrying a million pounds. It's light. I think we often scare ourselves into thinking that when God asks us to do something, it's going to be scary and that's not the truth. That's not the word of God.

Scripture says here in Matthew 11:28 through 30, come to me all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. Just to remind you, when you take that step, it's not going to be something that hurts you, and maybe if you think that way, maybe you're... You've been hurt by someone in the church, or someone in the past, that's prohibited you from trusting in that way. I just want to ask you to reset, because that's definitely not the heart of God. He's gentle. Holy Spirit is a gentleman, so anything he asks you to do is going to be kind. It's going to be seen through, or it should be seen through a filter of love.

As I close, I just want to ask you a couple of questions. First question is, what can you do to partner with God right now? What can you do to partner with God right now? What can you give? Maybe you don't know the answer to that right now, but later this week, I would challenge you to seek God and find out, to reflect on that. As Neil comes, we're actually going to give you a moment to ask the Lord. We're going to do things a little bit different as we close today. We're just going to give you a moment with God just to pray, to ask the Lord for what he wants. I also just want to ask you to assess your heart and go, how can I be that boy? Willing, able, trusting, and just surrendered, surrender to God? Maybe ask yourself the question, what is keeping me from doing that? What is keeping me from walking in faith in a certain area, or what relationship do I need to let go to God and trust him in?

What situation does God need to take the lead on, and for me to take passenger's seat on? These are hard questions to ask, but I believe when you listen for God, sometimes God speaks in spontaneous thoughts. As you listen to the Lord, he's going to move you into a place of rest, and take you out of striving, and just a sign to know if you're really following God, you'll feel peace in your heart and you'll get to a place of worship. You'll get to a place where you're really willing and ready to surrender to God,
and you want him to get the glory. You want him to have all the focus, so we've got communion set up all around the room, and we're just going to have a couple minutes for you to reflect, just to pray, to seek the Lord. Maybe let's treat this like a prayer room for a little bit, so you can come as you want, just to see communion.

Communion is often one of the best ways just to surrender, just to go, God, I trust you. God, I want your presence more than anything. I want what you want more than anything, and as Jesus gave his body for us, I think it's fitting that we give back to him, right? We give him all that we have, all that we are, as this next song is going to talk about, we just surrender. This is a moment to surrender for you, just to give your heart back to God this morning. If you would, let's pray. I'm going to allow us just to go into that time of worship. God, thank you for this morning. Lord, thank you that you're the god of miracles, and that, Lord, you ask us to do that with you. You ask us to take part in building your kingdom, so Lord, we just ask you to show us how to do that this week.

Help us to trust you, or help us to be willing to be generous, and to be open to following you, to following your lead so we can change people, and just, Lord, help them to see you. Lord, we surrender. We surrender, God. We lay down our pride. We lay down any idols in our heart. Lord, we surrender. Nothing is impossible for you. God. Thank you. Pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.