

Sermon Title: Nothing is Impossible – June 22, 2013

Scripture Reading: Mark 8:1-10 Jesus Feeds the Four Thousand

Hello New Philly! I am Sky Becker, and I'm serving as one of the pastors at New Philadelphia Church, specifically at Itaewon campus.

So, beginning of this year I wrote down 5 “new year’s resolutions”... one of them was “to have one solid exercise routine”. Which I haven’t started yet. :P Can I talk to Sam Khil after the service today? Haha jk. And another was to “design and sell 5 T-shirts”, and I just got done with 2! So it’s coming along. And another one was that “God would raise me up as a preaching pastor – to preach 5 times”. And today is actually my 5th sermon and it’s only June! Who in here believes that God answers prayers?! So be careful what you pray for :P and be confident that God will surely give you what you ask for when it’s aligned with his heart. Amen?!

The message I want to preach is very simple, yet very powerful. It’s a simple revelation that brought a powerful transformation in my life recently, and I am excited to share that with you. Not just the knowledge, but the transformation part as well. Last time I preached at Hillside, I talked about how me being able to stand here in front of you guys and to preach is a miracle and a testimony in itself. Because I used to have a crazy stage fright. I hated being put on the spotlight, and I talked about how I used to cry, when my parents or my teachers would make me sing a song or do anything in front of a crowd. Well, I can say today that I actually enjoy being up here and I consider it a great honor to be able to preach about Jesus Christ and glorify God through my lips, and that is only possible because of the Holy Spirit that’s living inside of me. And that means nothing is impossible and I can do anything.

And that’s the main point of my message. You guys know the song, “Nothing is Impossible?” “Through you, I can do anything, I can do all things, cause it’s you who gives me strength. Nothing is impossible!” (through you, blind eyes are open, strongholds are broken, I’m living by faith. Nothing is impossible!) That’s it! That’s the revelation I got recently. I can do anything, I can do all things, cause it’s you who gives me strength. Who believes that to be true? We all know that, right? I knew that for a very long time! But was I living it out? Was I walking it out in my daily life? No. I wasn’t. And I want to challenge you guys to ask yourself the same question. Do you know this to be the truth? No, do you really know it as the truth in your life right now? My prayer is that all of you guys will walk out of this room today not just knowing as a head knowledge, but to walk out living that truth starting now. Some of us need a renewal of mind in this area. Sometimes knowing it doesn’t do it. We need our minds to be renewed, and I believe God is going to do that today.

Let’s turn to today’s scripture, Mark 8. It’s a very famous miracle performed by Jesus of feeding four thousand people with just seven loaves of bread and a few small fish. As we read this passage, I want us to focus today on the role the disciples played in this story. Because I feel like this passage is a great example of how God wants us to do his work at the present time. Reading from ESV, I’ll read the odd verses and you can read the even verses. Mark 8:1-10,

8 In those days, when again a great crowd had gathered, and they had nothing to eat, he called his disciples to him and said to them, ²“I have compassion on the crowd, because they have been with me now three days and have nothing to eat. ³And if I send them away hungry

to their homes, they will faint on the way. And some of them have come from far away.”⁴ And his disciples answered him, “How can one feed these people with bread here in this desolate place?”⁵ And he asked them, “How many loaves do you have?” They said, “Seven.”⁶ And he directed the crowd to sit down on the ground. And he took the seven loaves, and having given thanks, he broke them and gave them to his disciples to set before the people; and they set them before the crowd.⁷ And they had a few small fish. And having blessed them, he said that these also should be set before them.⁸ And they ate and were satisfied. And they took up the broken pieces left over, seven baskets full.⁹ And there were about four thousand people. And he sent them away.¹⁰ And immediately he got into the boat with his disciples and went to the district of Dalmanutha.

So back in the day, when Jesus went around performing miracles with his disciples, a huge crowd of people followed them around. You’re talking about k-pop idol group appearing in the middle of Gangnam and the entire city following them around everywhere. And on this very day, we’re talking only (?) about 4,000 people. If we were to bring this story to the present time, we can take our recent Church Wide Retreat as an example. Say 4,000 people registered and came, and for whatever reason we didn’t have any food prepared for them, except for our 11 core leaders having 7 loaves of banquette. That’s barely enough for the core leaders to eat and be satisfied. But in this case, at least we have Jjajangmyun (noodles) places to order from or convenient stores we can go and gut out, but it would still take at least 40 Jjajangmyun places if we were to order 100 from each place! I want us to really comprehend the seriousness of this situation before we move on.

Going back to Jesus and his disciples, according to his disciples’ words, there was no way for “one to feed these people with bread here in this *desolate* place?” But I want to point out that in the beginning of the passage, it says Jesus called his disciples to him because “HE has compassion on the crowd, because they have been with him now three days and have nothing to eat.” Jesus was the one that was determined to feed these people. And he called the disciples over simply to use them as vessels. And what was the disciples response? Doubt. Worries. “How can we feed all these people?”

I think a lot of times we get mistaken with our calling or vision that we’re seeking for God’s help when it’s God who is using our help. We get that mixed up. “God, I want to bless these hundreds of orphans and we need 10,000 dollars. God I need you to help me,” and we go on explaining in our prayer WHY he should help the orphans. When in reality, it is God who loved the orphans so much and had compassion on them first, and that’s why he chose us, like me and John-Michael to be God’s hands and feet. We can’t get that mixed up, because that’s what brings the lie of “it’s impossible.” Or “why would God do that for me.”

So here is my **first point: In order for us to really know that nothing is impossible, we need the right understanding of God’s identity and our identity.** God’s identity and our identity. He’s the boss, not us. Have you seen a worker at a company go up to THE boss and say “hey boss, this can’t be done?” Even if you did see it, check this out. The boss doesn’t care whether you feel like it can’t be done or not. If he’s determined to do it, he’s going to make it happen no matter what.

Going back to the passage, that’s what Jesus did. When he gathered the disciples and TOLD them “hey I want to feed four thousand people,” the disciples basically responded back saying, “it’s impossible.” But Jesus wasn’t moved, or persuaded, but rather he asked the disciples “What do you got?” (pause) “What do you got?” What do you have in your hands

that I can bless, so that it becomes possible? What is the talent you have that I can bless? What is the dream you have that I can bless? What is the desire you have that I can bless? Because those things are given to you by God in the first place.

Church, whatever God is calling you to do, He's the one that called us to it. He's the great almighty God who placed us on this earth so we can do the very things he's commanding us to do. Not the other way around. Only reason why he wouldn't answer your requests is if that's not what He wants for you or it's not the right timing. So there is no room for us to keep doubting the things God's putting on our hearts! We shouldn't need to worry about the possibility of it because God is the boss who's going to make it happen! Turn to your neighbors and tell them lovingly, "God is the boss, not you."

Hebrews 12:2 says Jesus is the author and perfecter of our faith, Genesis 1:1 says God created the heavens and the earth and everything in it. Out of all the amazing identities of God, I want you to get the full revelation of his name, "Adonay" today. Adonay is a Hebrew word meaning "Lord," which means God is Lord, and we are his servants. This identity of God tells us that the Lord is the only one who can empower us to fulfill HIS purpose for our lives. And he will surely give you the strength, faith, perseverance, and resources for you to do them.

What about knowing our identity? Which identity do we need to hold on to for us to know that nothing is impossible? I'll give you a hint. It's identity #14. If you know this, you can be an H&D pastor. :P It's "I am a branch of the true vine (John 15:5)." In other words, I abide in him, and he abides in me.

Jesus says in John 15, "I am the vine, you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." Have you seen branches that survive and bear fruit when it's cut off from the tree? No, that's what we call impossible. This is a promise and a warning Jesus gives us; that if we rely on him, he will be the source of all fruitfulness, but if we don't, we can do nothing. Do you know that this has been the most comforting thing I've ever heard? That I can do nothing apart from Christ? Man, because according to this verse in John 15, Jesus and I are like one body. Have you ever seen a game where two people hold each ends of the pipe, and they blow into the pipe with flour in it? I've never played it, thank goodness, but I've seen people play it. What happens is, whoever has greater strength in his or her lungs gets to blow all the flour there is in the pipe, to the other weakling. I know that's a little bit of a gross analogy, but imagine that you have a pipe of life, joy, peace, encouragement, power connected to Jesus, and more and more you let control of yourself, you get more of Jesus! And this verse is saying that I am a branch of the true vine – Jesus, and I get his spirit flown into me. I don't know about you, but that's so comforting to me! Out of the 5 times I preached this year, the most powerful times have been when I felt like I can't do it at all with my own strength. And I let God take over me, I let the Holy Spirit take control over the entire thing, and even I got blessed by my own messages!

Church, we love the word impossible. We don't say it out loud all the time, because we are taught to speak life in our Church culture and we might get rebuked if we don't, :P but we love to think it sometimes. Let me tell you a little secret to that word impossible. I believe that God made us impossible, on purpose. Because if you look closely at that word, and do a little spacing and apostrophe-ing, it becomes I'm possible. I know some people have seen this on the Pinterest or Instagram. But that's not the end. My version is cooler. That I'm there is not you. I'm here is God. One of God's names is "I AM," when God calls Moses in the book

of Exodus - to bring the Israelites out of Egypt, Moses asks him, "What do I tell the Israelites when they ask me who I'm sent by, and asks what his name is?" and God reveals his name "I AM who I am. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'" He is Yahweh, he's the beginning and the end, he is GOD that's what it means. I am impossible, but when I let God abide in me, it becomes possible, because his name is I AM!

And that brings me to my **second point: the reason why nothing is impossible is because we are not alone – we have the Holy Spirit as our helper.**

When we look at Mark 8, we see how the disciples were walking with Jesus. He was physically there. They roared the boat together, they ate together, they went around healing people together, walking on water together... man, they were tight! Imagine partnering up with Tony Stark from Ironman right now - you get to fly around in his suit, and defeat the bad guys, in real life. Wouldn't you think that nothing is impossible? We would say to ourselves, "man, if I had Jesus with me right now, I wouldn't be scared of anything." Right? Because the disciples knew that Jesus got their back. It's like when you go on a mission trip, and something goes wrong while you're praying for people at the altar... and you go grab the team leader or the preaching pastor and feel safe, because they got it under control. If anything went wrong, they could go to Jesus and ask him to fix it. Jesus was there physically to be their helper.

In Mark 8, we see that although the disciples had no idea what to do to feed the four thousand, it was ok because Jesus was there to lead them. Jesus had them bring to him whatever they got, seven loaves of bread and a few fish. Then Jesus "directed the crowd to sit down on the ground. (verse 6) And he took the seven loaves, and having given thanks, he broke them and gave them to his disciples to set before the people; and they set them before the crowd. ⁷ And they had a few small fish. And having blessed them, he said that these also should be set before them." All that the disciples had to do was to set the food before the crowd, because Jesus anointed it. He gave thanks, and blessed the food, and handed them over to the disciples. Jesus could've just given out the bread himself, but he entrusted that part to the disciples. And when the disciples stepped out with faith to obey Jesus' command to give them out, food multiplied. Remember! Jesus anoints it, and hands it over to you.

Church, what has Jesus anointed in your life? What is there in your life that Jesus is telling you to step out in faith and just do it? You would say, "well, that's not fair because I don't have Jesus with me right now." Yea, you're right. You don't have Jesus with you, but you have Jesus IN you. Jesus said to his disciples, "it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you" in John 16:7. John 14:16-17 says, "And I will as the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you FOREVER – the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he LIVES with you and will be IN you." Church, we underestimate Holy Spirit too much sometimes! He's like Jesus' twin! but a lighter one! The same spirit that raised the dead lives in you. I think we sometimes feel like seeing the blind healed on a mission trip is easier than seeing Jesus carry out our dreams. To open a business, to write a book, to release albums, to lead people to Christ, "no, it's too hard! It's impossible!" But we say yes and amen to seeing the lame walk and blind see.

This is where we need the Holy Spirit to renew our minds. That's my last point, **point #3: we need the Holy Spirit to renew our minds to do things that seem impossible.**

So I want to share with you my own experience and testimony, I had a breakthrough in this area recently and that's why I'm preaching to you guys this message - because I'm preaching to myself at the same time. ☺

So, one of the biggest struggles I had until recently was being confident in myself, or the things I do. Part of it was because of my perfectionist side, wanting to do things right and perfect, and another part of it was being raised in an environment where I was constantly criticized. When I was younger, I had a lot of criticism about my personality, and was spoken negative things over me a lot – like I'm selfish, lazy, inconsiderate... all the lies. And I would often get scolded or called out for things I did or said out of immaturity, sometimes a lot later than when it had happened – which eventually made me paranoid about my actions. So it made me overly humble and cautious of other people's feelings. And I'm a phlegmatic, which makes me a peacemaker as well, but sometimes it wasn't always a good thing when it meant hurting myself to satisfy other people. Did you know that humbleness overdone is insecurity? So I was very insecure especially in the areas of Art and creativity. I think it began when I went to college, as I majored in Architecture. My family members weren't really supportive of me studying Architecture, more out of a doubt that I won't make it.

Mind you I did make it to one of the best Architecture programs, our school was ranked #1 a few times amongst the public schools in the United States. The year we made it #1 our department made a little post card with a huge number 1 on it so we can send it to our friends and family... it looked like an Uno card. ;P Anyway, because our program was pretty good, it was very competitive as well. I went into the university with no major decided, so I had to apply to get into the Architecture program... which was an intense, 3 months long program where they would accept 60 people out of hundreds of applicants through an interview process, and only less than 1/3 could make it into the program after the summer – whoever got A- or above for both semesters. Which I also made it. ;P haha I'm not trying to boast, I'm just trying to explain how intense it was. Imagine what that environment would've been like. We would have very tense presentations of trying to prove why my design was the best compared to others. My biggest compliment I got from my professor was when I was getting a counsel from him about switching my major, that he said "I'm not "not good" and I shouldn't quit." I don't know why he couldn't just say "You are good, so don't quit." Haha.

And like Pastor Erin preached a few weeks ago about the power of encouragement, and also the reverse effect of criticism, I was molded in a way I couldn't appreciate my talents. And I didn't think it was a big deal, I thought I was just being "humble", until I realized how much it was slowing me down from carrying out God's will. In many areas of my life, especially with my creative anointing, I was quenching what Jesus has already blessed me with, with my own criticisms. I was so used to being told, no you can't do it. I thought of more reasons of why I shouldn't be able to do it than why I CAN do it.

It was the same way when this dance opportunity came last winter. Many of you guys probably saw if you were at the retreat that I was a part of the awesome dance team. (woot woot!) When Mary first added me to the group on facebook, I immediately came up with a long list of reasons why I shouldn't do it. Now, Mary invited me to dance after she saw a video of me dancing in college in a dance ministry – it was led by our beloved sister Eunice Lee here. I always liked dancing, just as a hobby, but performing in front of thousands of people WITH three professional dancers, no no no. Until when I told my husband in passing, "Hey they added me to this dance group thing for Christmas service... but I'm not gonna do it." He said, "why not?" and he really encouraged me to do it, even sacrificing going to sleep

early because the practices would usually end around 12 or later and I would come home around 1.

So long story short, I ended up joining and had a lot of fun performing at the Christmas service. During those 2 weeks there was so much grace to practice, and there was a great unity although the practice hours were so intense... it felt like a mini mission trip. But when the second opportunity to dance at the retreat came around, we actually had the time to think about it and make a decision whether to commit or not, and we had more time to practice, and ironically it was a lot harder. My first thought when I was added to the facebook group the second time was, "Can I do this?" And as we were having more practice time, there was more room to want to doubt myself and to feel insecure about it. Especially when during our practice, the leaders would divide us into small groups of 3 or 4 and have us do the moves in front of other people... man, I would freeze up! It wasn't because I didn't know the moves that I couldn't dance, I noticed that when my mind was clogged up, I couldn't dance! And I would catch myself and just pray and ask for the Holy Spirit to renew my mind, and I would dance fine the next practice. I would pick up moves faster, and really enjoy dancing as well.

That's the same when it comes to a lot of things we try to do in our lives. Often times, the blockage is in the mind, not anything of the physical. I needed my mind to be renewed before I start dancing, from the lies that "I look funny when I dance, I'm not a professional" to "I glorify God through my dance moves, I worship him and not the people around me." Because our beliefs manifest in the physical. If the disciples had absolutely no faith in Jesus, they wouldn't have given out the bread. Whether it was small or big, they had faith in Jesus and that's why they could obey him. Do you think you would jump off a cliff when you didn't have faith at all in the person who's telling you to jump off? Jesus said in Matthew 17:20, "if you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you."

We need the Holy Spirit to renew our mind. It's no persuasion or studying that will do it. You know I told you about my lack of confidence I struggled with for many years. Before I went to the Church Wide retreat, I was praying that God would deepen my intimacy with him, especially in the area of prayer, and I also prayed that he would give me new eyes to see myself. God, strengthen me in my identity. And on the third night of the retreat, Stephen Beauchamp, one of the speakers was going around praying for everybody. I was just standing near him to catch people and to put blanket over them, and Stephen gave me a side stare. And we paused for a moment, and I gave him a smile like "it's ok, you don't need to pray for me", and he grabbed my head and I just went to receiving position. I didn't get knocked out (surprisingly, because normally I'm super sensitive) or cry like a baby, but Stephen said two words: confidence, deeper. He didn't even say a prayer. He just said confidence, deeper, and walked away. And I could feel it in my spirit. That insecurity has been broken off and I got established in confidence. That was my most "dramatic" moment from the retreat for me, that and dancing like crazy on stage. And I've been feeling so confident and free ever since, like no other. There were even events afterwards that helped me see the evident change of my heart towards certain things. Where normally I would beat myself up, or feel insecure about, instead I was filled with peace, joy, and confidence,... confidence in his grace.

I want you to close your eyes. And ask the Holy Spirit. What are some areas your mind needs to be renewed? To live out the truth... that nothing is impossible through you who gives me strength?