

JESUS: THE SERVANT AT WORK

VOLUME TWO

STUDY TWO

An Unforgettable Dinner on the Grounds

Mark 6:30–44

We face magnificent opportunities throughout our lives, each of which is brilliantly disguised as an impossible situation.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

A health issue that medicine calls incurable. A relational conflict that worsens after many counseling sessions. A financial crisis that has no solution. We all face circumstances that are not just difficult, worrisome, and troubling but humanly impossible. The more we think about them, the more panic sets in. Food loses its flavor. Sleep is gone.

Merriam-Webster's defines *impossible* as “incapable of being or of occurring . . . felt to be incapable of being done, attained, or fulfilled . . . insuperably difficult.”¹ We know exactly the situations in our lives that fit that definition. We stare at them from our human point of view and think, *Won't work. Can't be done. Doesn't add up. Impossible!* The obstacle is so big, so “insuperably difficult,” that it blocks us from seeing God standing in the middle of it. We lose sight of His great power, His divine plan, and His perspective.

One of the purposes of Mark's gospel is to open our eyes to God's great power in Jesus, who cast out demons (Mark 1:23–27; 5:1–20), healed the sick (1:34, 42; 3:5; 6:5), and calmed the storm (4:35–41). Jesus' miracles astonished His disciples and prompted them to ask one another the most important question anyone can ask, “Who is this man? . . . Even the wind and waves obey him!” (4:41).

In the passage of this *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study, we'll sit in the crowd of thousands and observe Jesus, once again, doing the impossible. We'll find out exactly who Jesus is, and we'll let God adjust our lenses to view life's challenges from His unlimited perspective and plan.



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SEARCHING
THE
SCRIPTURES
BIBLE STUDIES

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PREPARE YOUR HEART

Sing, hum, or simply reflect on some of the words from the lyrics of the hymn “Turn Your Eyes upon Jesus” by Helen Lemmel.

O soul, are you weary and troubled?
No light in the darkness you see?
There's light for a look at the Savior,
And life more abundant and free!

Turn your eyes upon Jesus,
Look full in His wonderful face,
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim,
In the light of His glory and grace.²

Now, turn your eyes to Jesus and share with Him the impossibility you face. Thank Him for His great strength that sustains you, His precious Word that guides you, and His sure presence that gives you rest.



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

“O Sovereign LORD!” Jeremiah prayed, “You made the heavens and earth by your strong hand and powerful arm. Nothing is too hard for you!” (Jeremiah 32:17). Jesus’ disciples had witnessed God flexing His “powerful arm” through Jesus. Truly, *nothing* was or is too hard for the Son of God. Not calming a stormy sea and not even raising Jairus’ daughter from the dead. When One is omnipotent—all-powerful—there is no such thing as an impossibility.

Although the disciples saw Jesus perform miracles, they still struggled to fully grasp His divine nature. Perhaps they wondered if, in His humanity, Jesus had reached His miracle-making limit.

The disciples had reached their limits. They were exhausted. Remember, in [Mark 6:7–13](#), Jesus had given them authority and sent them out to minister in His name. When they returned from their mission, they were thrilled to share their experience, but they needed rest. They couldn’t keep going. After all, they were only human.

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With their “human-limit” mindset, they stepped into a situation that demanded more from them than they could give. The obstacle blinded them to the opportunity to trust Jesus to do what they couldn’t do. Turn to Mark 6 to find out what happened.



Observation: Jesus Feeds a Big Crowd

To get the most out of your time in the Word, first observe the text by putting yourself in the scene.³ Imagine yourself as one of the disciples. You’ve just returned from weeks on the road living on handouts and ministering in situations that stretched your abilities. You need a break. Feel the weariness and sense the deep need for rest as you read the verses.

The Setting—Mark 6:30–33

Read [Mark 6:30–33](#). Mark 6:12–13 portrays the tiring work the disciples had just done. Jesus could see the weariness written across their faces. What did Jesus tell them in 6:31–32? What were their expectations? What happened in 6:33? Now pause and imagine these twelve weary travelers full of high expectations as their boat came to a shoreline packed with people.

Now the hope for rest—the anticipation of time alone, sitting around an open fire, broiling some fish, relaxing together—is over. Why? Because the people have beat them to the place where they were going to be alone.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

The Dialogue—Mark 6:34–38

In [Mark 6:34–38](#), how did Mark describe Jesus’ sentiment toward the crowd, and what did He begin to do? What problem did the disciples bring to Jesus? What “reasonable” solution did they offer Jesus?

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What was Jesus' command in Mark 6:37? Pause and turn to [John 6:5–6](#). What insight into Jesus' thinking did John provide? What did Andrew say concerning the five loaves and two fish?

The Miracle—Mark 6:39–44

Instead of dismissing the crowd, Jesus rang the dinner bell! In [Mark 6:39–44](#), what did Jesus ask the disciples to do? What do you observe about His actions in 6:41? What is significant about how Mark described the miracle in 6:42–44?



Interpretation: Human Viewpoint Versus Divine Viewpoint

Jesus viewed the masses not as an interruption but as an opportunity to teach His followers about trusting God when faced with impossibilities. In the following chart, write your own list of contrasts between how the disciples most likely viewed the crowd from their human point of view and how Jesus viewed the crowd.

The Disciples' Perspective of the Crowd <i>Impossible Problems</i>	Jesus' Perspective of the Crowd <i>Divine Opportunities</i>

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Divine Perspective of Impossibilities

The miracle of feeding the five thousand demonstrates the nature of Jesus' true kingship, where He provides generously out of His abundance and rules over creation. It's no coincidence that Mark recorded Jesus' meal for the masses right after Herod's bawdy banquet in Mark 6:14–29.

With Jesus, all the people were welcome and were satisfied in body and soul. In contrast, Herod and his upper-class friends gorged themselves on rich food and debauchery, and the outcome was death served on a silver platter. What a contrast between Jesus' kingdom and the kingdom of this world.

Viewing impossibilities from a *divine* perspective reassures us that nothing is impossible for Him. He can multiply the little we offer Him. Write down the meaning of the miracle to you in the form of a principle.

Faith When Faced with Impossibilities

What principle do you glean as you consider the meaning of the disciples' struggles with faith?

How great it would have been if Andrew had added, "But Lord, You're the Lord of bread, You're the Lord of fish. This is nothing to You. There is nothing You cannot do. . . . I remember reading twice in this little section of Jeremiah's prophecy that there is nothing too hard for You. We trust You for this. We rely on You to feed all these people . . . this is something only You can handle."
That's a divine viewpoint.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

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Correlation: Operating from a Divine Viewpoint

Throughout Scripture, the people of God often faced impossible situations. Some looked at the problem from a divine viewpoint while others saw it from a human perspective. Compare [Mark 6:30–44](#) and [Numbers 13:25–33; 14:1–9](#). In what way do both accounts highlight human viewpoint and divine viewpoint? How important is it for God's people to operate from God's viewpoint like Joshua and Caleb?

Look at the list of men and women who trusted God and the many impossible things some of them saw Him do before their very eyes in [John 11](#); [Hebrews 11](#). Which episode from these passages touches you the most and why? What role does releasing our human impossibilities to God play in demonstrating our faith and helping us experience peace?

The divine viewpoint is the vertical—God's unlimited perspective and plan. It is how God operates, it is what He has in mind, and it is what He pleases as He does what He has planned on our behalf. If I operate my life from the divine viewpoint, I screen life through those thoughts. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Application: Releasing the Pressure, Finding Rest

Problems sometimes weigh down on us with unbearable pressure. Weariness blurs our vision of God's plan. People's demands overwhelm us, and we feel irritated, angry, and depleted. But that's okay. We're now ready to completely rely on the sufficiency of Christ.

As you look at your current situation that is humanly impossible, how can you release the pressure as you consider the timeless truths you've found in this passage?

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*How do I release the pressure? “I put the food and the fish in His hands.”
You needed the reminder that things in His hands are in the best hands.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll*

The disciples saw clearly the size of the problem, but they couldn’t see the size of God. Pressure makes pessimists of us all!

Remember to see the potential in our problems.

*We face magnificent opportunities throughout our lives, each of which is
brilliantly disguised as an impossible situation. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll*

What hidden opportunity might be disguised in your impossible situation? Take some time to tell God how humanly impossible the situation is for you and express your trust in Him to take it from here.



A FINAL PRAYER

Good Father, I do lay before You this impossible situation. I trust You to do what I cannot do. I know that for You the odds mean nothing. You are all-powerful. I release this situation to You to do with it what only You can and will do for Your glory. In Jesus’ magnificent name, I pray. Amen.

ENDNOTES

1. Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 12th ed. (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, Inc., 2026), see “impossible.”
2. Helen Howarth Lemmel, “Turn Your Eyes upon Jesus,” Hymnary.org, hymnary.org/text/o_soul_are_you_weary_and_troubled.
3. To learn more about Pastor Chuck Swindoll’s *Searching the Scriptures* Bible-study method, go to the web page “How Does Pastor Chuck Swindoll Study the Bible?” at insight.org.

For the 2026–2027 broadcasts, this *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study was developed by Mirlenda Noëlliste in collaboration with Bryce Klabunde, vice president of *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll’s messages. Copyright © 2010, 2026 by Charles R. Swindoll, Inc. All rights are reserved worldwide. Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.

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