

# Matthew Chapter 14 v 13 - 21

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Date: 24 September 2017

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[ 0 : 00 ] Please be seated. Let's come to our God in prayer together. Let us pray.

There's really no answer to that question, how great thou art, how great you are, or how great are you. O Lord our God, that question has no answer because, O Lord, there is nothing that we can qualify you against.

There's nothing in all the universal creation to measure your greatness. Everything else, the greatest of all things, the greatest of all men, the greatest of all occasions, the greatest of all deeds are all tiny and inconsequential when laid aside your greatness, for everything about you, O Lord, our God, has no limit.

You are infinite. You are a God who is not caged in or boxed in by time or space, boxed in, O Lord, by limitations or restrictions.

Lord, everything about you is great to the greatest extent and beyond. And that doesn't just mean your power, of which we're thinking today on this Harvest Sunday, or of what we've been singing, that you should create this world, this universe, which as yet human beings have nowhere come near reaching the end of or finding out the furthest point.

[ 1 : 34 ] Neither do we mean, Lord, by your wonderful supply and provision for this world and this universe, by which you give the seasons and you provide the sun and the rain and the food and this wonderfully fertile planet on which we live.

Lord, we know that, again, you feed and provide and have provided in this world enough and more than enough for the seven billion people who inhabit it at this time.

We know that those who go hungry go hungry ultimately because of the sinfulness, the war, the arrogance, the greed of human beings like ourselves.

But, Lord, we think particularly, as we've already read in your Word, as we've declared again and again and again and again, oh, Lord, that your love endures forever.

Your love has no limit. Lord, we're so grateful for that. We're so grateful because, oh, Lord, it seems at times our sins have no limit. Lord, the wickedness of our lives and of our world seems to be without limit.

[ 2 : 45 ] We see one thing, we think it can't get any worse than this, but then it does get worse than this. And, oh, Lord, we thank you that your love cannot be conquered by evil.

It cannot be exhausted by wickedness. Your love, oh, Lord, is limitless. And we thank you again that it is forever, not only forever in time, but forever in capacity.

Lord, there is enough love in your heart that you gave your Son, the Lord Jesus, the greatest gift of all to suffer and to die for us, to carry that dreaded sinful curse, which is ours by rights because we have earned it.

But, oh, Lord, he suffered and took it from us upon himself. And so, Lord, we thank you that however deep our sins, however innumerable our sins, however black our hearts, however far we are from you, there is forgiveness, there is love, there is reconciliation, there is pardon, there is life in the Lord Jesus Christ more than enough to meet all our needs.

And so we ask, oh, Lord, especially that you would give to us a thankful heart. Your word declares, as we read, give thanks to the Lord. Give thanks to the Lord.

[ 4 : 04 ] Give thanks to the Lord. May we come this evening, oh Lord, with grateful and thankful hearts and bring you our praise and worship, for we ask it all in Jesus' name.

Amen. Now, this morning we read from John's Gospel his account of the feeding of the 5,000.

This evening we're going to read Matthew's account of that same event, and it's found in Matthew chapter 14, Matthew chapter 14, page 981, page 981, if you've got the church Bibles.

Each one of the Gospel accounts mentions and records the feeding of the 5,000. It's one of those events which each one of them gives us intimate details, witness details of what happened.

But we're going to read from verse 13. So Matthew chapter 14, verse 13, and we're going to read through until verse 33. When Jesus heard what had happened, that was actually the death of John the Baptist, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place.

[ 5 : 25 ] Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns. When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed those who were ill.

As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, this is a remote place, and it's already getting late. Send the crowds away so that they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food.

Jesus replied, they do not need to go away. You give them something to eat. We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish, they answered.

Bring them here to me, he said. He told the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves.

Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over.

[ 6 : 27 ] The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children. Immediately, Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side.

After he dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone, and the boat was already a considerable distance from the land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it.

Shortly before dawn, Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. It's a ghost, they said, and cried out in fear.

But Jesus immediately said to them, Take courage, it is I. Don't be afraid. Lord, if it's you, Peter replied, tell me to come to you on the water.

Come, he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water, and came towards Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink, cried out, Lord, save me.

[ 7 : 36 ] Immediately, Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. You of little faith, he said. Why did you doubt? And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down, and those who were in the boat worshipped him, saying, Truly, you are the Son of God.

If you've got your Bible to hand, then have your finger there in Matthew 14.

That was page 981. And then, if you can, pop your finger as well into John and chapter 6.

John and chapter 6, page 1069, which, again, as I said, this morning, we considered that, we looked at that miracle of Jesus, but we particularly focused on the truth that Jesus brought out from that when he said, I am the bread of life.

Life itself can appear to be just one long series of never-ending challenges, attempting to come up to the expectations of other people.

[ 8 : 50 ] From the moment we are born, we find ourselves striving not to be a disappointment to those around about us, our family, our friends, our teachers, and so on.

And even when we're in the womb, there's certain expectations of us as the grandparents or as the friends talk. We're expected to have our father's eyes and our grandmother's chin.

We're expected, of course, once we're born, to be able to walk by the time we're 12 months, talk by the time we're 24 months, and by, of course, the time we're 36 months, we should be able to feed ourselves and be potty trained.

All these expectations are put upon us, even from the cradle. And then, of course, we go to school and it gets worse, doesn't it? As we attend school, we are almost immediately supposed to be able to read a book, even if it's made of fabric, and solve basic math problems and count to 10.

And so our life is set on this course where we are loaded down with expectations. And once we achieve, perhaps, those expectations, our GCSEs or our A-levels, then new and higher goals are instantly placed upon us.

[ 10 : 07 ] We're like a high jumper who is always having the bar raised just beyond our reach. Now, this practice can, of course, be very damaging to us.

Parents who have very heavy and very weighty expectations on their children can crush them, can do them a great deal of harm. If we are raised on unrealistic expectations that we will somehow meet these requirements, we carry them into our marriages, and so we have them upon our partners.

We carry them into our workplace, and we have them upon those who work under us or alongside us. We carry them into our churches as well, where somehow everybody around about us should meet our requirements.

Of course, if we're brought up in that way, then perhaps the hardest person whose expectations to meet are those of ourselves.

We're hard on ourselves. We think that we never quite measure up to what people want us to be. We're never quite the man or the woman that we should be. We're always a disappointment to ourselves.

[ 11 : 19 ] Failure seems to be always around the corner, and we often long that we were somebody else. And that view of life casts a very long shadow over our concept of and our relationship to God.

I believe that many people see God as a setter of unrealistic expectations. A God who puts up a bar which we can never jump across, and then tells us how awful we are and terrible we are when we fail.

And when we look at the feeding of the 5,000, we have an example of that in one sense with the Lord Jesus. When he says to the disciples here in Matthew's account, but it's in others as well, as I said, they do not need to go away.

You give them something to eat. What an expectation to place upon those 12 disciples of Jesus. 5,000 men plus women and children are there.

They're all hungry. They're tired after day. Jesus says, right, off you go. You give them something to eat. It's unrealistic, isn't it? It can't be done.

[ 12 : 40 ] And in John's account, as we look this morning, it was Philip particularly that Jesus spoke to, didn't he? And said to him, you give them something to eat. And he says, but half a year's wages wouldn't buy enough food for them just to have one bite each.

And in this account, we're told the disciples said, we've only got five fish and two, five loaves and two fish. How on earth can Jesus expect so much of them?

Why does he burden them with such an unrealistic request? But isn't this typical? Isn't this typical, people say, of God, the God of the Bible? Look at those 10 commandments.

How can anybody keep those 10 commandments? It's impossible. How are we supposed to live up to God's expectations of us? Especially in the way Jesus explains them.

Jesus tells us they're not even just a matter of keeping them, as it were, outwardly. We're supposed to keep them inwardly. We're supposed to have thoughts right thoughts judged by them as well, and motivations.

[ 13 : 44 ] Think about Jesus, that first sermon that Jesus gives on the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5. What are the things he says there? Blessed are the meek, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers.

Does he really expect anybody to be like that? Is there anybody really who meets these standards? We haven't even got into the New Testament epistles and Paul's commands and instructions about our relationships in marriage and our relationships with other people and how we deal with suffering and how we're supposed to be a witness and all these sort of things.

So many demands on us as Christians. Demands we can never, ever hope to meet. It's not too surprising then that, like the disciples, when we're faced with these expectations, as we're faced with God's word to us, we meet it with disbelief.

How can it be done? Where are we going to get food to feed these people? They can't even get a bite. How am I supposed to be able to keep God's commandments? And we begin, in one sense, to resign ourselves to the fact, I'm just going to fail.

Doesn't that sometimes happen, doesn't it, with children when they're in school or even people in the workplace? They have these demands placed upon them and they're so hard and they keep failing and they seem to be so disappointed.

[ 15 : 17 ] In the end, they say, what's the point? I just won't even bother anymore. What does it matter if I miss by a mile or an inch? I just won't bother. I just can't do it and to try to do it just makes me feel awful.

I might as well resign myself to living below expectation. I believe that's why many non-Christians dismiss Christianity.

I think it's how some Christians perhaps even here this evening think as well. I think that many Christians, many of us live unhappy lives because we think something similarly.

God's commands for me to live the Christian life are too much, it's too hard, I can't do it, so what's the point of trying? I'll still come to church, of course I will, and I'll still be a Christian, but I'm not going to push myself, I'm not going to try.

are we right to think this way? Is the world right to think of God and view God in this way as a bar setter who looks for and loves it when people fail?

[ 16 : 29 ] Probably you had a PE teacher like that, did you have a PE teacher like that? They loved it when people couldn't do so they could mock and ridicule. Ah, look at you, you know, I just knew you couldn't do it.

You set up to fail. No, that's definitely not the case. That's definitely not the God of the Bible. That's definitely not the attitude that we meet in the life of Jesus and we meet in the whole of God's Word.

This miracle of Jesus teaches us something not only about his wonderful power, as it were, to provide and to meet the needs of people, but it also speaks to our hearts about the expectations that God has for us and how, how they can be met, how they are to be met.

Let me just say two simple things. First of all this, Christ expects that we cannot do what he asks. I'll say that again. Christ expects that we cannot do what he asks.

Never for a moment did Jesus think that these disciples would be able to find enough food to provide for all these males to feed. He didn't, he didn't expect them to do it.

[ 17 : 47 ] In fact, when we read this morning from John's account, again, that's why I said keep your finger there because I think that is helpful, the insight that John gives us into the very mind and attitude of Jesus.

We're told that when he asked Philip, where shall we buy bread for these people to eat? We're told Jesus asked this only to test him for he already had in mind what he was going to do.

The words of Jesus were to test Philip and of course all the disciples in that sense as well because they were all clustered together. His words were not given to crush them, to destroy them, to disappoint them, to make them feel absolutely worthless.

What he was doing was wanting them to respond in the right way to his request and the right response was for them to say, Lord, you provide for them because we just can't do it.

The test was will they put their faith in Jesus? Will they trust him? Will they ask of him? Will they believe that he is able to provide their needs?

[ 19 : 01 ] And when we go back through the scriptures actually we find this truth recurring again and again. Several months ago we looked at those Ten Commandments in some detail and at the end of those Ten Commandments in Exodus chapter 20 verse 20 tells us this, Moses said to the people do not be afraid God has come to test you.

The explanation for those Ten Commandments was it was God's test before the people. Yes it was what he wanted. Yes it was what he desired. God never for a moment expected that the people would keep those Commandments.

He knew they never could and of course they never did but they didn't pass the test. God knows only too well that keeping the Commandments of God are as much within our reach as the cow jumping over the moon.

Just doesn't happen. that begs the question why? Why say that? Why set those Commandments before the people?

Why expect that we should do these things? Why set before us God's law? Why set before us the challenges and the difficulties of Christian life? Why tell us what God wants when he knows that we can't do it?

[ 20 : 20 ] Is it some sort of a sick joke? Is it again the PE teacher? Is it just so God can feel better about himself and look down on us as creation and say well you know I knew that they'd never amount to anything?

Of course it's not. God gave us his commandments God gives us his law because it is to bring us to Jesus.

Because it is to make us come to him the one who provides and gives what we need. Paul writing to the Galatians talks about the law of God and its purpose and he says this really what we've been saying in verse 19 of Galatians 3 why then was the law given at all?

If we can't be saved by keeping the law if we can't be made right by keeping God's command why was it given at all? And he answers it it was added because of transgressions until the seed that's the descendant of Abraham the Lord Jesus Christ to whom the promise referred had come and then it goes on to say later in that same chapter the law was our guardian until Christ came that we might be justified by faith the law's purpose God's commandments before us are to make us see we need Jesus to make us see that we need his grace his power his mercy what happens when we get unwell or what happens perhaps when imagine maybe this has happened to you you're somebody who've been most of your life you've been relatively fit and well and you like to go walking and then one day you go walking and you find you can't catch your breath what's that saying to you it's saying

I must go and see the doctor and find out what's wrong it's a warning sign isn't it it's showing to you that what you thought you were capable of doing you now cannot do and it moves you and motivates you to find a cure and so it is with sin when God raises up the word of God when he raises up the commandments he says to you you shall not steal you shall not bear false witness and you find I can't do that I I fail I took that which wasn't mine to take I fiddled my taxes or whatever I did or when I was put in that spot I told a lie to get myself out of trouble what is that for it's to show us that we need God that we can't do it in our own strength that we're not good enough that we're not powerful enough and so when Jesus we're told spoke to Philip and says you give them something to eat John tells us he only asked us to test them he already had in mind what he was going to do he knew that he would feed these people he knew that he would provide for them he knew he just wanted them to ask him so God knew exactly what he was doing and what he would do in the future when he put the commandments before God's people he knew he would send his son he knew he would send his son in fact when we read the bible we see this incredible truth even before the world was created even before men and women were made

[ 23 : 52 ] God knew he would need to send his son when Adam and Eve were made and came into this world and they were without sin the only sinless people at least to begin with God knew he'd still have to send his son because they broke his commandments they turned their backs against him but God knew what he had in mind he would do that he would send his son that's why Jesus when we read his words in that sermon on the mount says this don't think I came to abolish the law all the prophets I've not come to abolish them but to fulfill them the Lord Jesus Christ came to do what we cannot do he came to live and he lived that perfect human righteous life and in his death he bore the penalty of our failings of being unable to keep God's law he kept all of

God's commandments perfectly on our behalf let's think about sin well what is sin we talk about sin we say well people talk about sin well sin is this it's this particular act or atrocity or this particular crime but actually the Bible describes sin in this way in Romans 3 23 all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God the law in one sense is God's glory it's God's standard it's God's declaration it's God's saying this is good this is what I'm like in one sense the law is a reflection of God he is good he does not steal he does not lie he does not cheat he does not murder he does not all these things are true of him and he has made us in his image we've been created in the image of God that's what sets us apart as human beings but sinners marred and spoiled that image of God so instead of us being able to do what God wants us to do we keep falling short we don't measure up to what God made us to be but when we come to faith in Christ all that changes when we come to faith in

Christ and we are born again of his spirit then something happens something happens quite wonderfully that righteousness that goodness of Jesus that perfection of Jesus is given to us it's transferred we thought about that last Sunday morning when we were thinking about sola fide only by faith we are justified in God's sight we are accepted in God's sight we pass the mark in God's sight because Jesus does it for us on our behalf and because by faith we are united to him so the law is there to test us God's expectations are there to test us so that we might come to Christ and that's not just true in regard to being saved and forgiven and pardoned that's true in every part of your life and mine as Christians when you become a

Christian you do so by faith but what's the whole what's the what's the what's the phrase what's the word in Habakkuk the just shall live by faith not just be made alive by faith but live by faith every moment of every day it's living by faith and Christ expects that we should receive from him everything we need to do what he commands Christ expects that we should receive from him everything we need to do what he asks so Jesus said to them you give them something to eat actually that's exactly what happened look there in that Matthew passage Matthew 14 Jesus said they do not need to go away you give them something to eat verse 16 then if you look in verse 19 right near the end the disciples gave them to the people gave the food to the people so they did didn't they they did what Jesus expected of them they did what Jesus commanded of them but of course we know what happened in between

Jesus gave them the bread to give to the people they didn't provide it themselves it didn't come out of their pockets it didn't come out of their sweat of their brow it came from Jesus and even if we say well there's five loaves of bread and two fish we know where they came from because we read that this morning from that young boy so even then they didn't provide that either so the Christian life dear friends can only be lived by the power and the enabling of Jesus Christ working in us and through us here's what Peter opens up his second letter to the disciples there to the believers there he says this his that's God's divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness the trouble is that many of us don't really believe that we go through each day struggling because we feel ourselves weak and we feel inadequate and unable but we don't recognize that his divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness no I'm not don't think I'm suddenly straying into those areas of extreme

[ 29 : 35 ] Christian teaching where every day the Christian lives a victorious life and the Christian never gets it wrong and if you only bought my book and read it then you too could have a victorious Christian life too no I'm not saying that at all what I'm saying is this that in Jesus we have all the resources that we need to live for Christ day by day to obey his word to follow his commandments that's what Jesus says doesn't he in John chapter 15 and verse 5 I am the vine you are the branches if you remain in me and I in you you will bear much fruit apart from me you can do nothing it's as simple as that remaining in Christ which is which is trusting and looking to and drawing from him as a branch draws as it were life from the vine we will bear fruit that means living the Christian life doesn't it we know what bearing fruit is it's living as Christ wants us to live it's living in a way which displays the work of God in our lives but apart from me separate from me on your own can't do anything you can't do anything the reason that we give up the reason we don't even bother trying to pray or to serve or to witness or whatever it is is because we think it's all up to me it's in it's all up to me

I've got to do these things there's God's commandment he says to me that I should pray every day he tells me that I should witness every day tells me that when I suffer injustice I should bear it with rejoicing and all these things it's up to me I've got to have that stiff upper lip I've got to have that determination I've got to do it but we need to get rid of that misconception dear friends we need to get rid of it we need to throw it away it's not up to me we would be free if we would be free to serve the Lord to bring glory to God to be a blessing to others and to ourselves then we've got to get rid of it's up to me and we've got to get hold of it's up to Jesus it's over to you Lord I'm looking to you you're my provider you're the one who should supply but how do we do that I just want to spend the time we've got left looking at how do we do that how do we receive from

Christ the strength the power the help the provision the supply well the first thing of course is we've got to begin by acknowledging our utter inability in and of ourselves and that's part of the problem isn't it because pride is always the problem pride is the problem for the non-Christian and it's a problem for the Christian as well we just do not like to ask for help we just do not like to believe that somehow we need God's help yes we need a bit and we need it in really special times difficult times you know like you see in the movie and the person they're hanging off the cliff edge whatever and their rope's about to fray through and suddenly they pray God help me when life's like that yes we need God but most of the time day by day you know we can manage we've got to get rid of that concept and that isn't belittling ourselves that isn't me saying to you right you've got to really think that you're rubbish and you're useless and you're worthless no it's not but it is recognizing the reality of our hearts and saying they're sinful and when it comes to pleasing God I just can't do it we have to do that all the time don't we when we've got our accounts to settle at the end of the year or something and say how do I work all these sums out and all these massive mouths and

I need to give it to somebody who knows how to do it so we need to acknowledge our inability it's interesting we often talk about the feeling of the 5,000 but do you know there's also a feeling of the 4,000 and it happens just very soon afterwards in fact you turn over the page from Matthew 14 to Matthew 15 you get the feeling of the 5,000 and a very similar thing happens people are there Jesus has compassion on them they've had nothing to eat disciples don't say the same thing do they look at verse 33 they don't say the same thing so where could we get enough bread in this remote place to feed such a crowd now I'm not saying that they've made a huge leap to absolute faith in Jesus but it's no longer that desperation of saying well it's going to take half a year's wages I think there's a sense in which they're learning they're learning they're learning that they don't have what it takes that's the first thing can you in all honesty before the Lord say Lord I really really need your help and I'm just not managing I'm just not managing those of you who work and help in the food bank you know that those who come in only come in when they're really at the lowest ebb and it takes a lot of guts to do that for many of them for some now I know but for many of them it takes a lot of guts to come into the food bank and say

I'm really desperate and I haven't got a thing in the house to feed my kids can we humble ourselves before God say Lord I can't do it then secondly is of course faith we said we just shall live by faith and therefore that faith must be an active belief if I can put that way an active belief that with Jesus not only is it possible for me to live the Christian life but actually I can do it you know there's that incredible statement of Paul isn't there in Philippians 4 13 he's been talking about being hungry being naked being thirsty he's been talking about how how he's really struggled in his life and then he says at the end he says I can do all things through him who gives me strength and you think well Paul that's a arrogant boast isn't it well it would be if he could said I can do everything I can bear with suffering I can bear with imprisonment I can live the Christian life I can do everything that in one sense God throws at me but he's not saying that he's saying I can do everything through



[ 36 : 13 ] Christ who gives me strength there's faith there isn't it and we know that there are times when Paul quite honestly opens his heart doesn't he to us he tells us in 2 Corinthians at the end he says I pleaded with God please take away this thorn in the flesh this suffering this problem I've got and God spoke to him and said my grace is sufficient for you I'll give you what you need to cope with to deal with to get you through even that so do we believe put your faith in Jesus do you believe that on Monday morning he's got enough to supply you with the grace for that workplace or that difficult situational circumstance or that bully at school or whatever it may be and then if I can put it this way when we see our weakness and trust in Christ get on with it get on with it if prayer if I can put it that way expecting and relying and trusting that God will meet your need as you do it yeah how do you know if that rope bridge across the valley is going to take you away to you're going to have to stand on it sorry that's the only way you can know isn't it how can we know that God is faithful how can we know that Christ will meet our needs how can we know we get on with it here's what Paul writes to the

Philippians very similar thing therefore my dear friends as you've always obeyed not only when I've been there in my presence but now much more in my absence continue let's press on carry on to work out your salvation with fear and trembling for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose in other words get on with it be obedient follow the Lord live for him yes with a sense of weakness fear and trembling not that I'm anxious all the time but yeah I'm aware that I need help for it's God who works in you and you'll see God at work in you and you'll see God fulfilling his purpose in you see your weakness trust Christ do it with prayer and give him all the glory give him all the glory as you're doing it and at the end of it as well 1 Corinthians 1 31 therefore as it is written let the one who boasts boast in the

Lord Lord thank you I can I don't I don't say this I've been a Christian for over 30 years I've been a full-time Christian for 25 years and if it wasn't for the Lord there was no way I would have managed one day of either of those things okay I'm not saying that in some sort of humble pseudo humble way that's just reality that's just the way it is I just know and I failed a lot and I've cocked it up and I've made mistakes but the Lord has brought me so far and he will with each of us whoever we are whatever the challenge whatever the difficulty and then dear friends let's look for God to raise the bar you see that's the wonderful thing he fed the 5,000 he took the disciples and he fed the 4,000 and he took them on and he was what he's doing all the way through their his life with them and ministry with them he was pushing them in their faith he was enlarging their faith he they were in the spiritual gym as it were of faith and they were having to lift heavier weights and he was given the strength for them to do that expect that as we see

God's faithfulness in our lives in small things that he will give us greater things greater expectations yes to prove his faithfulness his what Paul writes to Ephesians now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine according to his power that works in us God can do in you and me that's what he's saying God can work in you and me to do things we never imagined God could possibly do that's what he's saying but it's his power it's his strength if we feel confident in ourselves we're ruined if we feel incompetent in ourselves but our competency is in Christ then we shall succeed Paul says this Paul says when he looks around at the work that God has given him to do so who's sufficient for this who's sufficient to do these things who's got the strength to look after these churches and to do the mission all this stuff he said our sufficiency is of God our supplier provider the ten commandments Jesus beatitudes the New Testament New

Testament commandments and instructions they're not there to crush us to make us feel that we're bad Christians and we're lousy followers of Jesus they're there to cause us to not be content with zero expectation but to test us to test us so that we can test God and prove him faithful one of the great heroes in church history and I'll close with this was a man called William Carey I think it's him who said this you'll probably correct me up somebody will correct me afterwards it may have been Hudson Taylor there we are it's one of them great missionaries who went out with nothing to a massive country like India or China and they well by God's grace that was William William Carey he was just a shoe repairer cobbler that's all he was and he went out and he was able to translate the Bible into the language of the people he was able to establish a church there Hudson Taylor did similar things in

[ 42 : 22 ] China it was one of these men and they said this expect great things from God attempt great things for God let's just respond to God's word quietly in prayer you know just in our own in our own seats just where we are let's not pray audibly but pray from the heart Lord perhaps there's particular challenges at the moment particular difficulties let's come in prayer thank you father God that even as we began this time this evening with those words his love endures forever so again we are brought back to that reality your love endures for us your love is enough for us your grace is infinite there is no lack with you and those things that we've been thinking about those matters in our own lives and our families in our workplaces in our even in the church Lord which seem to us to be so big so difficult more difficult even than feeding 5,000 people with five loaves of bread and two fish Lord thank you that you know exactly how to meet our needs we ask that Lord you'd give us not only that sense of our own inability but give us that wonderful faith to trust you and to live in lives those lives of obedience and trust knowing that you are the one who can and will and does give to us all that we need and more besides when we think of those 5,000 who were fed they'd all eaten to the full and there was still baskets and baskets of food left over thank you you're not a stingy God but you're a generous God give us that faith then we pray in the week ahead to trust you to live for you to follow you and to glorify you for we ask it in Jesus name amen now to him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly more than all we ask or even imagine according to his power that is at work within us to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout every generation forever and ever amen you