Just a Lad

Matthew 16:8 (NKJV) "But Jesus, being aware of it, said to them, 'O you of little faith, why do you reason among yourselves because you have brought no bread?'"

# INTRODUCTION

In a small village nestled among the hills of Galilee, there lived a lad. His family was poor, their home a modest one room dwelling made of mud and stone.

The lad’s father was a laborer, working long days in the fields, and his mother tended their small garden, growing vegetables to supplement what little they could afford.

Their lives were simple, and so was their food. Barley, rough and coarse, was often the only grain they could afford, while wheat was a luxury for those with more means.

Barley bread filled their bellies, but it lacked the softness and sweetness of wheat. To most, barley was considered the food of animals, not people.

Despite their struggles, the lad’s family was devout. They often spoke of the coming Messiah, the One who would free Israel from oppression and restore their land.

Stories of this teacher, Jesus of Nazareth, began to spread through the village like wildfire. People whispered of the miracles He performed, how He healed the sick, gave sight to the blind, and even raised the dead. The lad, curious and full of hope, longed to see this man who could do such wonders.

One day, as word spread that Jesus was near the Sea of Galilee, a crowd from the village gathered, eager to hear Him speak. The lad begged his mother to let him go. She hesitated at first, knowing how far it was, but eventually relented.

She gave him what little food they had for the journey, five small barley loaves and two tiny fish, dried and salted to keep them from spoiling.

These were not grand provisions, just enough to sustain him for a little while. The fish, called osparia in their native tongue, were humble as well, as small, more like a relish to eat with the barley bread than a full meal.

With his meager provisions in hand, the lad set off, following the crowd that had begun to gather. By the time he reached the hillside where Jesus was teaching, thousands had gathered.

Men, women, and children surrounded the Rabbi, their faces full of expectation. The lad, small and unnoticed in the crowd, managed to weave his way closer until he could see the Teacher clearly.

Jesus was unlike anyone he had ever seen. His presence was peaceful yet powerful, and His words seemed to touch the hearts of everyone there.

Hours passed, and as the sun began to sink lower in the sky, whispers of hunger rippled through the crowd.

People had come from far away, many of them unprepared for such a long day.

The disciples looked concerned, and the lad overheard them speaking with Jesus. “There are too many,” one of them said. “Where can we find enough food for all these people?”

The lad’s heart raced. He looked down at the small bundle of food in his hands. It wasn’t much, just enough for himself, but something inside him stirred.

Perhaps it was the way Jesus spoke of trust in God, or maybe it was the faith that had been growing in his heart since he first heard of this man. Whatever it was, the lad knew what he had to do.

He approached one of the disciples, a man named Andrew, and offered up his small meal. “It’s not much,” the lad said, his voice trembling slightly, “but maybe it can help.”

Andrew looked at the boy in disbelief that his provisions were enough to feed the thousands, but he still brought him to Jesus.

When the lad handed over his loaves and fish, he felt a mixture of pride and nervousness. Surely this wasn’t enough to feed everyone. But Jesus took the food with a smile, lifting His eyes to heaven and giving thanks.

Then, to the lad's astonishment, He began to break the loaves and fish into pieces, passing them to the disciples to distribute to the crowd.

The lad watched in awe as the food seemed to multiply in Jesus’ hands. Basket after basket was filled, and the people ate until they were satisfied.

The barley loaves, once seen as simple and unworthy, had become a feast in the hands of the Messiah.

The small, salted fish had been transformed into sustenance for thousands. And when it was all over, twelve baskets of leftovers remained.

As the lad stood there, amazed by what he had witnessed, Jesus turned to him with a gentle smile. “You gave what you had,” He said, “and it was enough.”

The lad returned home that evening empty handed but a full heart. He couldn’t wait to tell his family what had happened, the miracle he had seen, and how even something as simple as God could use five barley loaves and two small fish to bless so many.

From that day on, he never looked at barley or small fish the same way.

What once seemed humble and insignificant had become a symbol of God’s power.

And so, the boy from the poor village became part of the miracle, not because of what he had, but because he was willing to give it.

Just a lad…

# 1. GOD USES THE SMALL AND INSIGNIFICANT

John 6:9 (NKJV) *“There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish, but what are they among so many?”*

This statement wasn’t made in faith; it was made in doubt. Andrew wasn't marveling at the boy's offering; he was questioning its usefulness. And that’s often how we look at what we have.

We think:

“I’m too young.”

“I don’t have enough experience.”

“I’m not talented enough.”

“My past disqualifies me.”

“What I have is barley, not wheat.”

However, Scripture shows us time after time. God doesn’t ask for *talent*; He asks for *obedience*.

He uses:

* A shepherd boy (David)
* A stuttering prophet (Moses)

A widow with just a little oil (2 Kings 4)

A poor widow with two mites (Mark 12)

Barley was the grain of the poor, rough, coarse, and common. It was often used to feed animals. Yet Jesus took barley bread the kind most would reject and turned it into a miracle.

That’s what Jesus does.

He takes the rejected, overlooked, and underestimated and makes it the *centerpiece* of His plan.

Isaiah 43:19 (NKJV) *“Behold, I will do a new thing… I will even make a road in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.”*

Your limitations are the starting line for His miracles.

Jesus doesn’t need the elite or the impressive. He needs the **available***.*

Matthew 19:26 (NKJV) *“With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”*

You might think, “I’m just a student… I’m just a lad...”

But when you give what you have to God, He will make it enough.

You are not just a lad in the hands of our Creator.

# 2. GOD INVITES US TO BE PART OF HIS MIRACLES

John 6:11 (NKJV) *“And Jesus took the loaves, and when He had given thanks He distributed them to the disciples…”*

Here’s a critical truth: Jesus didn’t hand out the bread. His disciples did.

Yes, the multiplication came from His hands, but the distribution came through theirs.

God loves to partner with people in His miracles. He could do it alone. He could rain down manna from heaven like He did in Exodus. But instead, He invites *you and me* into the story.

Look at your hands… These are the hands that God chose to use to spread the goseple.

You might think you are just a lad, but remember, as you look at your hands, that God chose you… You did not choose Him

**John 15:16 (NKJV) “You did not choose Me, but I chose you** and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.”

Why? Because He’s not just after a result. He’s after a relationship.

He wants you to trust Him, to be part of the process, to part of the miracle.

Matthew 9:37–38 (NKJV) *“Then He said to His disciples, ‘The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few.’”*

The issue isn't a shortage of opportunity; it's a shortage of availability.

The lad gave up his food, his only food for that day. That’s not convenient generosity. That’s sacrificial participation.

We don’t give to Jesus because we have extra. We give because we believe He’s enough.

Romans 4:17 (NKJV) says God *“calls those things which do not exist as though they did.”*  
God renamed Abram to Abraham—“father of many”—before he had a single child.

God doesn’t wait for the outcome to call you. He names you based on your *potential*, not your past.

So when God calls you a “chosen,” “enough,” or “talented,” believe Him. He invites you into a miracle that only happens when you step out in faith.

# 3. THE POWER OF GENEROSITY

John 6:12–13 (NKJV) *“So when they were filled, He said to His disciples, ‘Gather up the fragments that remain, so that nothing is lost.’ Therefore they gathered them up, and filled twelve baskets…”*

Not only was the crowd fed, but there was more left over than what was originally given.

The math doesn’t add up, because it’s not earthly math.

I call this kingdom math.

What is sacrificed in faith is multiplied in power.

That small lunch became a legacy.

That lad's decision became a sermon in all four Gospels.

That offering became a testimony that continues to feed the church today.

Why? Because the boy didn’t wait to be asked. He simply offered.

Too often we hesitate:

“If the pastor asks me…”

“If they need someone…”

“If I feel led…”

But the lad didn’t wait for an invitation. He made himself available.

Jesus doesn’t need our surplus; He just needs us to surrender.

Philippians 1:6 *“…He who has begun a good work in you will complete it…”*

The God who begins with barley doesn’t finish with crumbs.

Twelve baskets were left over.

God didn’t just provide. He proved a point*.*

When you step out in generosity, God shows up with abundance.

Faith doesn’t just meet the need. Faith multiplies.

# CONCLUSION

Matthew 16:9–11 (NKJV) *“Do you not yet understand, or remember the five loaves of the five thousand and how many baskets you took up? …How is it you do not understand?”*

Jesus is saying, “You were there! You saw what I can do with a small offering! How are you still doubting Me?”

Young person, don’t forget what God has already done in your life.

If He used you once, He can use you again.  
If He multiplied before, He’ll can do it again.  
If He called you before, He hasn’t changed His mind.

You are not *just a lad*.

You are a vessel.

You are proof that faith + obedience = supernatural outcomes.