**RISE UP** in 2021

January 24, 2021

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**RISE UP and Serve**

Matthew 14:13-21



In the first part of our series RISE UP … week one we learned to follow Jesus by **denying ourselves** and **taking up our cross**. We learned …

When you **lose** what you cannot **keep** … you **gain** what you cannot **lose**.

We are letting go of the things in this world in order to take hold of the things of God.

Last week, we learned that love is not about you and that the greatest way to love God is by loving the **you beside you**. That is the Jesus model …

The **Jesus Model** centers on the **you** beside **you**.

Rise up and follow Christ; Rise up and love the you beside you. Today we are challenging ourselves to Rise up and serve.

Have you ever seen a need and felt a nudge to do something about it?

**What was your response?**

Maybe thoughts like these run through your mind …

* I do not have the talent or gifting.
* I do not have the time.
* I do not have any experience.
* I do not have the financial resources to help.
* I do not have the confidence.

The noise of our **inadequacies** can be crippling.

*But he said to me, “****My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.****” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. …* ***For when I am weak, then I am strong.***2 Corinthians 12:9–10

If you focus on your own **neediness,** you will never respond to the needs of others.

*Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in* ***whatever situation I am to be content****. I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance,* ***I have learned the secret*** *of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need.* ***I can do all things through him who strengthens me****.* Philippians 4:11–13

But here is the truth, the big idea, the main point …

Jesus would not **nudge** you toward a need without meeting the need **with** you.

5,000 Hungry people and only five Loaves and two fish – **Now that is a need!**

*Now when* ***Jesus heard this****, he withdrew from there in a boat to a desolate place by himself. But when the crowds heard it,* ***they followed him*** *on foot from the towns. When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and* ***he had compassion on them and healed their sick****.* Matthew 14:13-14

Jesus was grieving the death of his cousin John the Baptizer and yet, He still had compassion on those who were sick.

Valuing **people** leads to **compassion** for people.

Jesus valued the poor, the sick, the lame, women, sinners … why? Because they ALL bear the image of God.

God is love.

God loves everybody.

Everybody matters to God.

These ideas are uniquely Christian ideas. The Greek and Roman Gods did not love anybody. The Greek and Roman Gods did not care about people and therefore, they did not require you to care either.

In the first century, there were more slaves than Roman citizens. You were one step of bad luck away from becoming a slave. Unwanted children were left at the river or the edge of a forest … left to their fate. If they lived, then that was to be their fate. If they died, eaten   
by wolves, taken by someone to be a slave or worse … that was   
their fate.

You have to **see** a need before you can **respond** to a need.

*Now when it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, “This is a desolate place, and the day is now over; send the crowds away to go into the villages and buy food for themselves.” But Jesus said, “They need not go away;* ***you give them something to eat****.”* Matthew 14:15-16

The disciples had been with Jesus and they watched Him respond to the needs of people. Like many, they were hungry, that was their problem; we are hungry, so let’s go search for food because we are out here in the middle of nowhere.

Our own **anxiousness** limits our **capacity** to respond to needs when we are nudged by Jesus.

Sometimes we just feel all anxious and resistant to the thought that we have to get out of our comfort zone, give something we are holding onto like time, talents and treasures. Feelings of inadequacy and insecurity.

*They said to him, “We have only five loaves here and two fish.” And he said, “****Bring them here to me****.”* Matthew 14:17-18

Just stop for a minute … listen to what Jesus says … Jesus is saying … **you** serve, **you** give, **you** meet that need.

And you say … this is all the time I have to give; this is all the knowledge or experience I have; this is all the faith I have; this is all the compassion I have, the empathy I have, … you get the picture.

Jesus only **asks** us to bring to Him whatever it is that we **have**.

All you have is all He needs.

When you **respond** to God’s nudge with a yes, the adventure begins.

*Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass, and* ***taking the five loaves and the two fish****, he looked up to heaven and* ***said a blessing****. Then he broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds.*  Matthew 14:19

If you **dismiss** the prompting of Jesus, you will **miss** the miracle.

*And* ***they all ate and were satisfied****. And they took up* ***twelve*** *baskets full of the broken pieces left over. And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.* Matthew 14:20–21

When you say **yes** to the prompting of Jesus, He does the **rest**.

What need will you and Jesus meet together?

You plus Jesus is …

* … always more than **you**.
* … always more than **enough**.
* … always more than **you started with**.

Where is Jesus nudging you to meet a need?

Children – Fellowship Kids need you.

Students – Fellowship Students need you.

Worship – Tech team needs you.

Widows, single moms you know, a friend stuck at home needing groceries …

Hunger – Feed The Hunger needs you.

Homelessness – Hope Impacts needs you.

Justice issues, human trafficking, to help the hungry, those in prison, men and woman in recovery.

Say **yes** … and watch what **Jesus** does!