

SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE

Message Series: SUPERNATURAL: When prayer invades the natural
Message Title: Supernatural Provision
Speaker: Pastor Kevin Myers
Date: November 6, 2011

Icebreaker:

Pastor Kevin (PK) shared his favorite lunch-bag treat from childhood: Little Debbie Swiss Rolls. Did you bring your lunch to school, or did you have to eat the dreaded school cafeteria “hot lunch”? What was your favorite lunch-time treat?

Message Overview:

This week PK borrowed a message from his mentor, John Maxwell, about God’s supernatural provision. To summarize:

- **When there’s a need sensed by a few, and each individual understands his (or her) responsibility, and gives his all regardless of the odds, then Jesus works a miracle.**

The story of Jesus feeding the five thousand, as told in Mark 6:30-44, illustrates each component of that truth:

1. The disciples sensed the need;
2. Jesus expected the disciples to take responsibility and get involved;
3. The boy with 5 loaves and 2 fish gave all he had, regardless of the odds; and
4. Jesus worked a miracle.

One last fact about miracles. What do all miracles have in common?

- **Every miracle begins with a problem.**

If you have a problem, you’re a candidate for a miracle!

Discussion:

(Leaders: The questions that follow are designed to stir reflection and discussion on this week’s primary Message points. Please read through them prior to your meeting, so you can be prepared to prayerfully pace your group well. And remember, as leader, your goal is to promote increased *biblical* awareness, as well as individual *self* awareness – a combination that with the help of the Holy Spirit, results in revelation and...transformation!)

- Read Mark 6:34-37. The problem is clear: it’s late, there’s a crowd, and there’s no food. How was the disciples’ proposed solution different from Jesus’ plan? Think of a problem that you’ve taken to God in prayer. Did you already have a suggested solution in mind? If His response didn’t match your idea, were you able to hear Him clearly? The disciples were almost

argumentative, offering Jesus an excuse. What about you? Do you ever argue with God's will, telling Him why you can't do what He may be asking you do to?

- Miracles often break down at the point of responsibility and participation. When you need a miracle, what's the difference between being God's cheerleader and being His partner?
- Let's look at a few other miracles documented in the New Testament, occurring after Jesus' ascension. Read Acts 3:1-8, Acts 9:32-25 and Acts 14:8-10. Now – after they'd received the Holy Spirit – how did the disciples respond when they encountered someone in need? Can you imagine these disciples simply telling someone who was sick "we'll pray for you," and then going on their way? How could we get more involved in the miracles God wants to do around us?
- PK speculated that the boy with the five loaves and two fish might not have been too eager to give up his lunch. He may have hesitated and "sat on it" for a while before offering up what he had. One reason we may be reluctant to give our all is that it's hard to care for others when you're comfortable yourself. Have you found that your own struggles make you more compassionate and generous towards others?
- The boy may have also been tempted to cling to his own lunch out of a fear that he would go hungry if he gave it up. PK shared that growing up in a household of scarcity left him with a low-grade fear that God might not provide for him. Do you find security in holding onto things – whether it's food, money or just "stuff"? Have you learned that you can "trust Jesus with your lunch"?
- We can imagine that the boy who gave Jesus his small lunch and saw it multiplied miraculously had quite a story to tell! Surely, partnering with Jesus marked his life. Has your life been marked by trusting God? How has God blessed you when you've given yourself away and partnered with Him to bless others?

Wrap-Up/Close:

The service closed with an invitation to use a brown paper bag to represent one of three things:

- A decision to "trust Jesus with your lunch" in an area where you've been withholding obedience,
- A prayer for a miracle that you need now, or
- A commitment to bring your metaphorical "loaves and fish" for the offering on December 11 for the Feeding of the 5000 in our community this Christmas.

PK said, "*The supernatural invades the natural when we pray, obey and give ourselves away.*" Where do members of your group need to see miracles in their lives in this season? Are there opportunities for group members to partner with God in serving each other? How are you going to give yourself away this holiday season?

Don't forget:

- If you are unemployed or you're a single mom, go to feed5000.12stone.com to pre-register now to reserve your Christmas package (groceries, Honeybaked Ham and Gwinnett Braves tickets) on December 11
- About 500 volunteers are needed to serve unemployed families and single moms in the community on December 17, both at the 12Stone campus and at Coolray Field. Go to feed5000.12stone.com to sign up.
- O2 is this Friday (11/11) at 7:00. Wear your walking shoes, dress in layers, and come ready to worship. (Remember, no childcare is provided.)

Throughout the Week: (Optional)

(Leaders: Share these optional exercises for further study and growth with your group.)

In preparation for O2 on 11/11, considering memorizing this verse:

"You who are far away, hear what I have done; you who are near, acknowledge my power!" Isaiah 33:13 (NIV)

For context, read all of Isaiah chapter 33. Begin to prepare for communion by reading about The Last Supper in Luke 22:7-23 and reflecting on Jesus' sacrifice for us.