

Fil-Am Community Church
Pastor Rolly Estabillo
July 15th 2012
Key Verse: John 6:1-15

“Extraordinary Power of God to Provide”

Good morning! We’re going through a new series called “Extraordinary Power for Ordinary People.” Last week, we talked about the extraordinary power of God’s presence. And we said that the presence of Jesus in our lives can make a difference because he is good, he is in control, and he knows what’s best for you and me. Today, we’ll continue in this second of this series and we’ll look at the power of God to provide.

Let me ask you. Did you experience God’s extraordinary power this week? I know one person who experienced that and I’m going to call him later on to give a testimony. But right now, let me share with you how God showed his extraordinary power to my family this week. Yes, we experienced his power in a way that’s unbelievable. Perhaps, something you’ve never heard before.

Well, it happened last Wednesday around lunch time. I was at work and Anabel called me on my cell. The first words she said were, “Rolly, Eza fell on the stairs outside the house.” I immediately felt alarmed knowing that the stairs was concrete but her next words calmed me down. “But she’s all right.”

Then, she narrated what happened. First, let me show you the picture of the stairs. Then, the picture of the porch. What happened was that all of them were walking along the porch toward the stairs and to the car, with Nanay Monet and Eza leading

the way. Eza already knows how to get down the stairs. She normally holds the railing on the side and slowly steps down with Nanay or Anabel or myself beside her just in case.

Now, as Eza was getting close to the edge, she suddenly looked back probably because she looked for Anabel who just closed the door.

As she looked back while still walking, her left foot missed the first step. Now, what do you think would happen? You would imagine she would tumble down head first, right?

Let me ask Nanay Monet what she saw. She's going to narrate in Filipino so she could describe it better. And I'll try to interpret it afterwards.

If you didn't understand her, I guess you could already deduce what happened because of how she demonstrated it. But basically, she said that Eza's body never touched the steps of the stairs and she saw her turned around like an acrobat, or like a diver doing a somersault and most amazing of all, everything happened in slo-mo. She testified that it was like watching a slo-mo replay in boxing or basketball. Ally was behind them and saw what happened too. She said to Anabel, "Mommy, Eza floated. And her body turned crazy. Then she fell to the ground slowly". In the car, Eze who saw it too, suddenly prayed and said, "Lord, thank you for sending an angel to save Eza."

I wish it was caught on video. But with video or not, I believe an angel caught Eza and perhaps, because Eza was a bit heavy, the angel had a hard time keeping her

steady that's why her body bounced around until the angel was able to put her down slowly.

Folks, that's God's extraordinary power to protect. We experienced a miracle and I'm sure God would like you to experience a miracle in your life too. Just believe that he can do a miracle in your life.

So, going now to our message this morning, let me talk about God's extraordinary power to provide.

All of us are in need of something. Some of us need love. Some of us need sympathy, some of us need good health, some of us need money, some of us need encouragement, some of us need a house, a car, a job. All of us need a building, Amen? All of us need an answer to prayer.

When it comes to meeting our needs, the passage we're considering this morning shows us that Jesus is ready to meet our needs. Sometimes he comes in to supply your need in a simple way but sometimes he comes in in a way that blows you away.

Please follow along as I read this passage. **READ JOHN 6:1-15**

As we study this passage I want to share with you six things about Jesus meeting our needs.

1. WHERE JESUS IS, THERE ARE MIRACLES (v.1-2)

“Some time after this, Jesus crossed to the far shore of the Sea of Galilee (that is, the Sea of Tiberias) and a great crowd of people followed Him because they saw the miraculous signs he had performed on the sick.” (NIV)

If Jesus did a miracle before, Jesus can do a miracle again today. Do you believe that? Many people can't believe that because they don't even believe that Jesus is alive. But Jesus is alive. He resurrected on the third day after his death. That's why we have Easter Sunday.

You see,

(a) JESUS IS STILL IN THE MIRACLE-WORKING BUSINESS

He hasn't stopped doing miracles. In John 5, prior to his feeding the five thousand, he healed an invalid and made him walk. The Jews questioned him for healing on the Sabbath. What was his reply? *“My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working.” (John 5:17)*

Jesus says he is always at work. When Jesus says “Always” he means “Always” not sometimes, not occasionally, not every now and then. He doesn't take a break. He doesn't take a holiday. If you need a miracle, he assures you that he is there to give you a miracle.

Now,

(b) IF YOU WANT TO SEE MIRACLES, YOU HAVE TO GET WHERE JESUS IS

In short, you have to follow Jesus. Our text says, “a *great crowd of people followed Him.*” You cannot just stay where you are. You have to move. What it means is that you have to make a decision whether to become a follower of Jesus or not. It’s not easy to follow, I can assure you. There will be obstacles along the way. But one thing is sure. It’s worth it. It will be the best decision you’ll ever make.

Where Jesus is, there are miracles. I also want us to see that

2. JESUS DESIRES TO SPEND TIME WITH HIS PEOPLE (v.3)

“Then Jesus went up on a mountainside and sat down with His disciples.”

Jesus is a people-person. He wants to be with people. He wants to spend time with people. That’s why we should never feel afraid or embarrassed in coming to him.

The problem is

(a) WE HAVE A TENDENCY TO THINK GOD IS TOO BUSY FOR OUR PROBLEMS

We think, “How can God ever pay attention to me when billions of people are simultaneously trying to get through him?” Let me read to you something I received in my email. It says, “*We've all learned to live with the reality of answering machines and voicemail. They seem to be a necessary part of life these days. Imagine if you were praying to the Lord one day and after addressing Jesus, you heard, "Thank you for calling my Father's house. Please select one of the four options. Press 1 for requests, press 2 to offer thanks, press 3 to complain, for all other inquiries, press 4.*

Now, of course, God doesn't have an answering machine or voicemail. Because he always answers when you call.

He says in Jeremiah 33:3 (MSG), "*Call to me and I will answer you.*" When I'm not busy. Of course he doesn't say that. He says, "Call and I will answer." I like the second part of this verse. "*I'll tell you marvelous and wondrous things that you could never figure out on your own.*"

He's saying if you call him, he'll answer for sure and give you an answer that'll blow you away.

When I was a missionary in Russia, I was with other young people like me and we would go to schools presenting the gospel with songs, skits, and testimonies. I was one of the guitarists and sometimes worship leader and so I had to carry a guitar with me. The guitar had a case but it was a hard case. Needless to say, it was a bit heavy. And sometimes we walked a long distance. It came to the point that my back started to ache. One day, it was so bad I said to God, "Lord, I need a massage." That afternoon, when we were back in our dormitory, our Russian interpreter, Dmitri is his name, who became my friend, came to see me. He brought along his brother. He said, "Rolly, I want you to meet my brother. He's a doctor." His brother talked to me, told me about himself, and then he said, "Rolly, do you need a massage?" Imagine my surprise. Then he continued to say that that was his expertise. From that time on, he came to our dorm to give me a backrub three times a week. And my dormmates started to say jokingly to me, "Rolly, you're a bum."

It was an answer from God that I could never figure out on my own.

You see, Jesus is eager to help you with your problem. You have a direct line to him. He'll never turn you away. The problem sometimes is that

(b) WE THINK OUR PROBLEMS ARE TOO SMALL FOR GOD

That's not true. He's concerned with every detail of your life. He even knows the number of your hair. But because we think God is not listening, we worry. What does the Bible say?

Jesus says in Luke 12:6-8 (NLT), *“What is the price of five sparrows—two copper coins? Yet God does not forget a single one of them. And the very hairs on your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid; you are more valuable to God than a whole flock of sparrows.”*

What does worry do to you? It gives you a headache, a stomach ache, and maybe, a heartache, meaning, heart attack. But it doesn't solve your problem. Someone wisely said, “Worrying is like sitting on a rocking chair. It gives you something to do but it doesn't take you anywhere.” So, stop worrying. Everything is under control because

3. JESUS NOT ONLY KNOWS THE PROBLEM, HE KNOWS THE SOLUTION (v.4-6)

“The Jewish Passover Feast was near. When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, ‘Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?’ he asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do.” (NIV)

Let me tell you one simple truth:

(a) OUR PROBLEMS DON'T TAKE GOD BY SURPRISE

Jesus is never taken by surprise. We always get surprised when troubles come. But not Jesus. Because he is God. He knows the beginning and the end. Jesus says in Revelation 22:12-13, *"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End."* Because he is eternal, Jesus knows the past, the present, and the future. He is not bound by time like us.

I read the story of a pastor back in the 19th century who said to his church that he was called by God to travel to another land for ministry. So, he and his family prepared for the trip.

They packed their belongings and sold some of them to pay for their boat tickets.

On the day that they were about to leave they received news that the boat they were going to board caught fire and sank. His heart sank as well because all their belongings were already in the boat and they were left with virtually nothing. He thought he heard from God. Wasn't God calling him?

They didn't know where to go as the church had a new pastor already. However, this was a situation which God knew was going to happen. It turned out that God wanted him to start another ministry where he was and this ministry flourished.

Are you in the same situation wherein you don't know what to do and where to go? Has your heart sank so deep that even the joyful songs of worship couldn't lift you

up? Friend, remember

(b) GOD IS IN TOTAL CONTROL OF THE SITUATION

He says in Psalm 46:10, *“Be still and know that I am God.”* God is saying, “When things around you seem chaotic and disorderly, relax, have no fear because I am here.” The thing is we usually take matters in our own hands when we’re caught in a bind. We act like we’re God knowing exactly what to do. But our minds are limited. Our bodies are limited.

There is only one God and he is the God of the Bible. He is in total control.

4. WE HAVE TO OFFER WHAT WE HAVE (v.7-9)

“Philip answered him, ‘Eight months’ wages would not buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!’ Another of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, spoke up, ‘Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?’”

The Bible doesn’t tell us who the boy was or what his name was. I guess the name is not important. What’s important is his deed. The boy unselfishly gave his all to Jesus. He could have said together with the disciples,

“What’s the point of giving you the bread and fish? It wouldn’t feed these thousands of people.” But he did give what he had, and he became a part of a great miracle.

If we want to see Jesus perform a miracle in our lives, we have to give him what we have.

And then watch as Jesus transforms the little we have to something great. You see,

(a) JESUS TURNS THE LITTLE INTO A LOT

Let me tell you a true story. In 1984, Mike and his family belonged to an East Coast church. One Sunday evening, the sermon was on sacrificial offerings, and a special offering was taken at the end of the sermon. The only money in Mike's wallet was a \$50 bill, which was supposed to buy a week's worth of groceries for his wife, their five children, and himself. However, in a move of faith, Mike put the \$50 bill in the offering. Then, after the conclusion of the service, the family went out to the parking lot to go home. Within minutes, they joyfully returned to the sanctuary, and asked the pastor to come outside and see their miracle.

Somewhat skeptical, the pastor accompanied them outside to their 20-year-old station wagon. Peering through the windows, he saw that the interior of the vehicle was completely filled with bags of groceries. Happy for the family, he remarked that someone had given them a huge blessing. "You don't understand, pastor," Mike said. "Before service, I made sure that all the windows were rolled up and the doors were locked. I have the only key, so it must have been the Lord!" To which the pastor added, "Giving truly is the only key to God's provision!" Mike had no family living in the area, and no one from the congregation ever claimed responsibility. Mike gave whatever little he had and watched it turned into a lot by the Lord.

5. JESUS GIVES US REST IN TIMES OF NEED (v.10)

“Jesus said, ‘Have the people sit down.’ There was plenty of grass in that place and the men sat down, about five thousand of them.” (NIV)

When we are in need, it’s hard to be at rest, right? Our minds are occupied, we feel panicky and sometimes, we cannot even go to sleep. But Jesus knows your need. And Jesus knows when you’re tired and weary because of that need.

He knows what you’re feeling. He knows what you’re going through. Just like he knew that the people were tired and hungry and so he told them to sit down. In the same way, he offers you rest today. You see, he’s the Great Shepherd who cares about you so much. King David says about his Shepherd, *“He makes me lie down in green pastures.”* (Psalm 23:3)

(a) ALL WE NEED TO DO IS TO TRUST IN HIM

Jesus cannot give you rest unless you turn over all your burdens to him. There was this guy who was carrying a bag of items. It was quite heavy and he didn’t have a car. He walked on the road and after a while he decided to hitch a ride. So, he waved his hand hoping that a kind soul would stop to give him a lift. It didn’t take long before someone slowed down and stopped before him. “Where are you going?” the driver asked. “Just a couple of miles down the road,” he replied. “Hop in then,” the driver said. “And you can put your bag in the back seat.” The man replied, “That’s okay. I’ll just carry it with me.” And all through the ride, this man had his heavy bag sitting on his lap.

We’re like that man sometimes. We come to Jesus to take up his offer but we still carry our burdens. We never turn them over to him. Jesus says, *“Come to me, all*

you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

Now, as we cast our burdens to him, we’ll find that

(b) HIS GRACE IS MORE THAN ENOUGH

I don’t know what kind of problem you have right now. Is it sickness? Is it a lack of money? Is it a failed relationship? Is it a wayward child? God knows exactly what it is and he knows exactly the solution to your problem. But we fret and worry because we feel the pressure. What should you do then? Pray. It’s the first step. Problem is, sometimes we make it the last step.

The Bible says in Hebrews 4:16 (NLT), *“So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most.”*

It is God’s grace we need the most when in a crisis. We need his grace to keep us balanced. We need his grace to offer us comfort. We need his grace to keep our thinking straight.

I remember the time many years ago when I went home feeling depressed because of what someone said about me. I worried about it so much that I literally developed a headache. I went outside my apartment to get some air but the worries and headache persisted. Much as I tried I just couldn’t get it off my mind. So, I went back inside and tried to sleep. I had a hard time sleeping but I finally did. At

around 2 in the morning, I woke up with these worries still bothering me. I cried to the Lord and begged him to take them away. Suddenly, these words were impressed on my mind, “Be a warrior, not a worrier.” Then, the verses from Ephesians 6 also came to my mind, “Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power...” and so on and so forth until the end of the chapter. As those words came to me, my worries slowly went away and they were replaced by thoughts of peace and calm. My burden was lifted away that night. God’s grace is strong.

6. JESUS FILLS US TO OVERFLOWING (v.11-13)

“Jesus then took the loaves, gave thanks and distributed to those who were seated AS MUCH AS THEY WANTED. He did the same with the fish. When they all had enough to eat, he said to his disciples, ‘Gather the pieces that are left over. Let nothing be wasted.’ So they gathered them and filled twelve baskets with the pieces of the five barley loaves left over by those who had eaten.”

Our God is not a stingy God. He meets our needs and then fills us some more. You see,

(a) WHEN JESUS MEETS YOUR NEEDS HE RUNS THE CUP OVER

In Psalm 23:5, King David says, *“You prepare a feast for me in the presence of my enemies. You honor me by anointing my head with oil. My cup overflows with blessings.”*

God wants to bless you and bless you abundantly. Now, what I’m saying here is not the same as that which is being preached by the Prosperity Gospel Preachers.

They say that a Christian should be wealthy and healthy at all times. If you're not, then something's wrong with your faith. Maybe you don't really have faith in God.

What I'm saying is when God blesses you he sees to it that all your needs are met. That's his promise in Phil. 4:19 (MSG) through Paul, "*You can be sure that God will take care of everything you need, his generosity exceeding even yours in the glory that pours from Jesus.*"

Notice that he will meet your needs, not your wants. Sometimes what we're asking is just what we want. And so, God will not give it to us. Now, God can also give you much more than what you need. You'll be surprised that sometimes he gives you a lot of extras. Because he is a generous God.

Let me call Kevin to share his testimony of God's blessings in his life.

Kevin:

Right before the birth of our precious daughter Brenna, Tina and I had talked about work and income. With the baby on the way and Jacob had just turned three, we both agreed that her working and trying to watch those two kids wasn't gonna cut it. That was too much for her. We decided that I would work and Tina would stay home with the kids. I asked "Lord, how are we supposed to pay our bills, credit and take care of our kids on one income?" In previous years both of us worked. And back then we wondered how we were going to make it. I couldn't imagine what living off one paycheck would be like. I figured I'd better trust in the Lord and have some faith in him. I didn't want to worry. When we worry we are telling God He is insufficient. So, I let go and said to God "you have been our provider and you have not failed us once. In your word it is written that he will

never leave or forsake us. So I'm handing this one over to you." I figured it's God's problem now. He said to bring Him our burdens. So I did.

Two months later Tina brought it to my attention that she was in need of dental work. We took her to the dentist to get evaluated. I had left and upon my return to the dentist office, Tina was walking out towards the lobby looking dejected and tears coming out of her eyes. I asked, "what's wrong Babe"? She showed me the estimate. And I thought my heart skipped a beat. It was a lot more than what we imagined it was going to be.

But that only lasted a second. I reminded myself, once again,(as I find myself doing this quite a bit) of:

- *who was in control.*
- *who has and is providing.*
- *who has not forsaken or left us.*
- *who carried us through previous financial mishaps, car repairs or any other big bill that needed to be paid.*

Somehow, He provided and, somehow or another, the bills managed to get paid. Well, I didn't see any reason why it should be any different this time. God is bigger than this whole universe. What is a dental bill to God?? And I thought, "Our God is Greater"! I looked Tina in the eyes and said, "Babe, don't sweat it, God won't let us down." So we prayed and seeked his guidance. And before you know it, I was looking down my 401k plan and decided Tina's mouth is more important than this plan. And not to worry about retirement because He is in control. My faith is in Him and not some 401k administrator. He is our provider and we have nothing to

fear. So we got the money and took care of it. And I am not sweating that I took it out. And we praised God for blessing us with it.

There were other times that I would ring up all of our monthly bills and then subtract that from our monthly income and when I saw the number I would just throw a pencil across the room. And shake my head and sigh. But once again, I reminded myself, "who is in control." "Oh, that's right...Him." And for the past two years, we have been fortunate, to keep up to date with our bills, pay our credit off completely, and move to a more comfortable home. All on one income. Isn't that amazing? Even after we struggled to make it on two incomes, somehow, one was sufficient.

And finally, earlier this year at the beginning of March, less than 1 week after finding out my Dad was diagnosed with brain cancer, I was let go by my company of seven years. Me and some other folks. It came as a very rude surprise. But one that some of us were suspecting. Some of the people were just crushed about it. Not me. I was crushed for about five seconds. Long enough to realize who was still in control. I told one of my superiors, who was bidding me farewell, that when one window closes, God is always there to open a door of opportunity. He seemed a little caught off guard by what I said. And he hesitated for a second before he responded. I don't think he was expecting that kind of an answer. But he agreed.

I was out of work for about four months. About two months of that time was due to the surgery on my wrist and the knee replacement. But it was still a good while. The severance money had just run out and we were starting to tap into our savings to pay bills. We really wanted to avoid that but you gotta do what's necessary.

I had gone to five or six interviews. I hadn't heard back from any of them. And I felt myself start to get down. But, Tina reminded me more than once that the job God wanted for me just had not been found yet. And I would realize that she was right, and pick my spirits back up. I finally interviewed with a company in Alexandria. We had prayed hard for it beforehand. I went into the interview and felt like I had knocked it out of the ballpark on just about every question asked of me. And there was just something about this job, the company and the person who I interviewed with that I liked. That afternoon, I got a phone call from them, offering me the job and I immediately accepted it.

The new job is going well. I feel like a perfect fit there. It's amazing how my job skill set is fitting just about every need this company was looking for. God is good and his ways and timing are perfect. It's really amazing.

All through these faith-building exercises, I have given back to the Lord. I know that he is our provider and no matter how much I give he can give it back to me a hundredfold. I simply cannot outgive him. He has faithfully and consistently, always provided.

Folks, I want you to keep your eyes on Jesus. You may find it hard to eke out a living in this tough economy but remember that God is always faithful. He will always provide.

Let us Pray...