

I'd Like Five Loaves and two Fish for 5000 Please

Good morning, Today we are going to have an awesome time in fellowship followed by a sermon from an amazing guy... God. What were you thinking? I am just the messenger...

This might seem like an old tale that you have probably heard many times in Sunday School. Today though, we are going to look at some things here you may not have considered previously.

As we look at this miracle this morning, I would like to draw your attention to Mark 6 verses 37 & 38:

Jesus speaking to his disciple said: "You give them something to eat". They said to him, "That would take more than half a year's wages! Are we to go and spend that much on bread and give it to them to eat?" "How many loaves do you have?" He asked. "Go and see, "when they found out, they said, "Five and two fish."

At this point all you arm chair project managers out there must be going? Uh... wait a minute.

Can you imagine Jesus and his council there and all the objections that could be swimming through their minds? That's a lot of money can we afford it? Is there enough bread made up and available to purchase in the area? What kind of distribution system can we use to ensure each person is fed if we do get the food? What is Jesus thinking? And so on as is human nature...

Before we go too far down this path let me just say that when we consider this message from the Lord in context, does the Gospel apply and serve as illustration for our need to evangelize the culture in which we live. Can we see the parallels here between the apostles struggling here and our modern evangelism efforts?

When we think of the logistics of a spur of the moment potluck for 5000, that could seem to be an immense task before us. It could overwhelm us, and yet we still have a clear mandate from scripture to get busy and feed the multitudes. But I digress...

So I ask you to bear with me for a few minutes as we look at this from three distinct perspectives.

1) Hunger and Thirst

In around verse 30 we see the apostles giving a report to Jesus about all that they had done and taught. We also see that there were multitudes of people come and going around Jesus and so He said to his disciples "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest." so they set off for a boat and a solitary place. When some of the people saw Jesus leaving however, this was not cool with them, they wanted to hear more from Jesus so they ran on foot from the local towns and got to their landing point ahead of Jesus and his apostles.

So Jesus went up on the mountain, and he sat down there with his disciples. At that time of year the Jewish Feast of Passover was near. Scripture tells us that Jesus raised his eyes and saw a large group approaching him.

Do we?

I mean do we open up our eyes and see a large group before us?

Isn't it true that when we think of church we think of declining numbers of people....

I mean, isn't it possible that we have started to think of just members and adherents when it comes to church life? Yet, when we look at none less than Jesus, He is clearly thinking in terms of those who need to be reached and fed.

I am the first to state that the number of people who need to be met and loved is an astoundingly large number. And though in our culture we don't see a lot of this kind of care from the church and a lot of this responsibility we have handed over to our government programs such as food banks, we must never ever forget that this has not abrogated our responsibility to care for these people. I would go so far as to say that everyone is precious to the Lord and he wants us to reach out to them so that they can be fed with his grace and mercy. He desires that they be completely satisfied. He want to share his truth and his love.

So we extoll the need this morning, not a division of believers and non-believers but a people who have a need for Jesus.

He is the vine and we are the branches. What does he mean? We bear fruit for him in this world. Our Lord Jesus sees this world as a mission field for us. He sees all mankind as hungry, no matter how stubborn or disobedient or lacking in knowledge they may be. He even said he came to save the sinners not the righteous. The righteous have already found him...

So we have an even harder problem in that it is a sad reality that even though we share Jesus with people and offer to feed their soul, they reject the bread of life that they will find in our churches. In fact, they may deny to your face that they are hungry for what Jesus has to offer. But here is the uncomfortable bottom line...

Jesus is our master, we are his disciples, he has said that they are hungry and Jesus asks us as his children to assist him in feeding them. So even when we see people that are against us and what we hold to be true, we can see in this text a principle that Jesus illustrates. These is a simple human problem that is universal. It doesn't matter what country you are from... People are hungry both physically and spiritually.

2) Not Enough Resources

So we see Jesus telling them to feed the people and we get a predictable response. Essentially, hey Jesus why don't we just send them away and let them look after themselves? (CF Mark 6:36)

But Jesus didn't let that slide. He answered "You give them something to eat." So they argued with Jesus about the cost, instead of following God's instructions and without even knowing what resources they had. True they found out they had little. In fact only 5 loaves and two fish.

That's like saying we have about \$25 worth of food to feed 5000 people... What was Jesus lesson on church vision to his disciples here? God will provide. To feed them all would cost about two hundred days wages. They don't have a lot, but they have something...

I acknowledge that there is a human tendency to be overwhelmed. Let's be practical here for a minute:

The stock market is up and down and all over the place. It seems lately that every number we want to be up is down and every number down is up... Hum, maybe I need a new stock broker.

Anyway, we live in a society where in we see a cultural war constantly raging around us. It is not a simple thing but it is hitting us on multiple fronts:

There are all kinds of issues around sexuality and gender dysphoria, which bathroom will be used and what kind of problems will arise, to marriage and family issues, discipline strategies, family issues, life issues, impingement to Christian religious freedoms, terrible bullying and behaviours in our schools, church attendance, secularism and atheism. We see people questioning what is right behaviour in light of the constantly changing standards of this world. We see people not understanding person responsibility, self control and honour.

This is only a partial list but it serves to illustrate how things are far more complex than ever before in that which wages around us, this cultural war.

Without belabouring the point, I am trying to illustrate that there is much that is wrong in society today and the "simple" task of evangelism probably seems far more difficult to each person here than a simple cost of 200 days wages. But I ask us all to remember we are not in this battle alone as individuals, or even as a member of a church, we are in this battle together with our heavenly Father.

There is a place where we can get enough resources to solve these problems. For it is not laid only on us as Christians to solve these seeming insurmountable problems...

Our Lord God wants to work with us. If God is for us, who then can stand against us? IT is GOOD news!!! We have God with us in the battle. Now we can make a difference.

3) The Immensity

So what did Jesus do?

- He told them to have the people relax on the grass in groups
- he blessed the food
- he distributed the food
- he asked to gather up the left overs so that they wouldn't be wasted

Note the 12 baskets left over...

If we saw this today would we be astonished? Probably not... we have probably heard this outcome many times from Sunday school and other sermons etc. I wonder why it has lost its wonder? Have we come to have somehow reasoned more food was suddenly produced, have we come to think of it as a fable or do we hold fast to the truth of the scripture.

I am sure our food banks would love to know how to feed 5000 people with 5 loaves and 2 fish... But there is a truth, a truly astonishing truth that we need to understand.

Faith changes circumstances. I will say it again! Faith changes circumstances.

If you have your bibles with me this morning, turn with me to 2 Corinthians 9:10

Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness

In Mark 9:23 we read that all things are possible to him who believes and we are even reminded in Philippians 4:13 that we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us. So Ya, it is scary, the world is changing, but the principles of God hold fast.

This world and this culture we live in may seem overwhelming to us. Especially in light of how big the problems are and little the resources available. But our Lord moved forward and fed 5000 hungry people with his word and 5 loaves and 2 fish.

Jesus commanded us to bring the hungry to him so this morning I ask that we look inside and consider our loaves and fishes...

You might be asking yourself, that is all well and good but how?

Here is a partial list of suggestions:

- I will commit to praying for this world and these situation that people are struggling with
- I will love my family
- I will look to those less fortunate around me and how I may serve them with talents I possess:
 - Tutoring
 - Counselling
 - Money or Money Management
 - Music
 - Listening
 - etc.
- I will integrate the Lord more into our family life
- I will attend and encourage my brothers and sisters
- I will call a person who is suffering
- I will work on me and getting to know Jesus through reading and prayer
- I will be a witness for heaven and heavenly things
- I will share the good news of Jesus and look for opportunities
- I will be a good example to those who are younger

It is the easy way to simply feel overwhelmed by this world, this is when like the disciples we need to approach Jesus. Jesus will ask you what you have and tell you what to do with it. Then if you are obedient Jesus will multiply it and you. People today are bringing what they have, whether it is love, time, listening, or resources to the table and he is multiplying his love into this world through you.

Just as that little boy had 5 loaves and 2 fish, bring what you have to Jesus and watch the miracles happen. Jesus will not fail us, already in many churches I have seen revival and renewal of faith in Jesus.

There is an old cliché and I like it because it means something to me and I have found it to be true...

If it is to be... It is up to me...

But... once we decide we can bring our willingness to Jesus and see the world change.

The world tells us line upon line precept upon precept. If I may paraphrase this to simply:
One thing at a time

We must simply decide to take the steps one at a time, with what we have available to us in the moment and thanking God for what we have, ask him to provide and help. If we give God the willingness and the obedience, he abundantly blesses us.

You see we can look at this miracle from the miraculous work of Jesus on earth as we learned in Sunday school or we can embrace that and also decide to look further at Jesus actions and the principles involved and understand the implications for each of us as disciples of Christ.

Today we looked at:

- Hunger and Thirst
- Not enough resources
- The Immensity

The world is hungry... what will we do.

I close with the following scripture from Matthew 25:40:

The King (Jesus) will reply, Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.

Where we read "Least of These" it does not mean less. It is specifically referring to those who are socially, psychologically, or economically disadvantaged. It speaks of the sick, the poor and the mentally or physically disabled.

Selah.

Prayer