



Pastor's Note

“Enough with More Besides”

I've always loved the story of Jesus feeding the five thousand – the only miracle, besides Jesus' resurrection, which is told in all four Gospels. In this story, we find Jesus withdrawing into the wilderness in order to find some time alone with His disciples. The crowds, however, wowed by all that Jesus and His disciples have done, follow Him out into the middle of nowhere. Jesus welcomes them, and He feeds their hungry souls by teaching and healing their diseases. As the day wears on, however, their bodies also begin to get hungry, and the twelve disciples quietly come to Jesus to talk about the logistics of feeding so many people. They want Jesus to send the crowds out into the surrounding villages to get food. Instead, Jesus tells them: “You give them something to eat.” (Luke 9:13, ESV).

Now, I don't know about you, but if Jesus had said that to me, I would have probably snort-laughed in His face. I mean – where were the disciples going to get enough food to feed all those people out in the middle of the desert? And yet, we know what happens next: the disciples tell Jesus that all they have is five loaves of bread and two small fish. Jesus tells them to arrange the people in groups of fifty, and to have them sit down. He then prays over the food, and tells the disciples to distribute it to the crowds. As they do, a miracle happens – not only does everyone have enough to eat, but they have twelve baskets full of broken pieces left over! And naturally, everyone is amazed – just as we are still amazed today!

Now again – I don't know about you, but I sometimes feel like one of the disciples. Jesus comes to me and asks me to do something that I think is absolutely impossible. I seriously questioned His wisdom when I felt called by Him to serve as a solo pastor of a church at the age of twenty-three. I mean – what wisdom did I have to share with anyone at such a young age? Lately, I've had chats with the Lord about things like grief and fatigue, and how one manages to keep ticking all the boxes on the to-do list in the midst of them. “Surely, Jesus,” I say “You can't be asking us to do things like this that just seem so impossible, can You?” Throughout time, God's people have asked these questions; we have felt that we simply *don't have enough* to fulfill God's calling – not enough time, not enough talent, not enough energy, not enough patience.

And yet, I think this passage teaches us some important lessons for these times when it seems that God is calling us to do something overwhelming and crazy. The first is pretty obvious: Whatever God is calling us to do, as crazy as it may seem, He provides in abundance for that task. When He calls us to serve, He gives us all we need – and more! From five loaves and two small fish came enough to feed five thousand men (and perhaps many more women and children, too!) *with twelve baskets full left over!* How amazing! Too often, we fixate on the fact that we have so little. At twenty-three, I felt I had so little wisdom; today, there are days when I feel like I have so little energy, and so very little patience. The five loaves and two fish seem awfully small. And yet, with our little bit, God can make a lot. He not only provides enough – He provides more than we need! Hallelujah!

But . . . we have to give it all to Him. That's the second lesson here. The disciples had to give their five loaves and two fish to Jesus before the miracle occurred. Prudent folks might have held on to some food first. They might have reasoned, “Well, these silly people traipsed out into the wilderness without thinking ahead for dinner, and they have nobody to blame but themselves. But there's no reason we have to go hungry! Let's keep some of this bread and fish for ourselves so that we can be sure we get a meal!” I don't think the miracle would have worked in the face of such selfishness and distrust. I think the five thousand ate and were satisfied because the disciples were willing to give what little they had – five loaves and two fish, taken from a small boy – to Jesus. And when we give what little we have to Jesus, even if it seems silly, and even if it seems like a huge risk, we will receive His multiplying blessing!

But again . . . we have to obey Him. We have to do exactly what He asks. Notice that the miracle didn't happen *first*. The miracle happened *after* the disciples started organizing the people into groups, and *as* they fed them from the loaves and fish. I'm sure the disciples had some side-eye glances to each other as they went out with their baskets of food to serve. They must have wondered what was going to happen when they handed out the last morsel, and people were still hungry. And yet, they never had to face that problem. Because they obeyed, they received a miracle. Again, if the disciples had not been willing to risk failure, I don't believe they would have received a miracle that day. And in the same way, if we aren't willing to listen to Jesus when He calls us to do something big, something scary, something that just doesn't make sense, then we won't receive His miraculous blessings. We have to trust Him. It's that simple.

So, what is God calling you to do this month? Does it scare you? Are you wondering if you'll have enough or be enough? Remember what Jesus could do with five loaves, two fish, and twelve willing disciples – and folks, *we serve the same Jesus, and He has the same power!* So have faith in Him. Give Him all you have, and obey Him when He tells you to step out on faith. Who knows? It could be that not only are you blessed, but many, many more will be fed by your actions! Hallelujah!

In Christ's Love,

Joshua