

Wednesday, October 18th,

John 6:1-14- “After this Jesus went to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, also called the Sea of Tiberias. ²A large crowd kept following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing for the sick. ³Jesus went up the mountain and sat down there with his disciples. ⁴Now the Passover, the festival of the Jews, was nearby. ⁵When he looked up and saw a large crowd coming towards him, Jesus said to Philip, ‘Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?’ ⁶He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do. ⁷Philip answered him, ‘Six months’ wages would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little.’ ⁸One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, said to him, ⁹‘There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many people?’ ¹⁰Jesus said, ‘Make the people sit down.’ Now there was a great deal of grass in the place; so, they sat down, about five thousand in all. ¹¹Then Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated; so also, the fish, as much as they wanted. ¹²When they were satisfied, he told his disciples, ‘Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost.’ ¹³So they gathered them up, and from the fragments of the five barley loaves, left by those who had eaten, they filled twelve baskets. ¹⁴When the people saw the sign that he had done, they began to say, ‘This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world.’”

The Feeding of the Five Thousand is the only miracle, outside of the Resurrection, that is reported in all four of the Gospels. John’s version of the story is the only one to include where the original 5 loaves and 2 fish came from though. I have often thought about this boy. What was his name? Why was he there in the crowd, did he come

with his parents or on his own free will? Why was he the only person who had any forethought about growing hungry later in the day? I also can't help but think of my 6-year-old son, who is often found smuggling some snack food into the car when we are running errands or stashing an extra bag of pretzels for his lunch at school. Maybe this boy was just always hungry, so he kept some extra bread and fish on hand.

What was his response when Andrew brought him, and his food to Jesus, the man they were all there to see? He gave it, not just part, but the whole. That is the kind of sacrificial generosity that we talked about on Monday. This boy gave all of his food, unsure of what Jesus was going to do with it, and if there would be any leftover for him. I can only imagine the look on his face when Jesus took that gift, and after blessing it started passing out basket after basket of fish and bread. Jesus had taken his small gift and was feeding thousands with it. A miracle indeed.

This is the miracle of sacrificial generosity, because God can take any gift and do amazing things with it, multiplying the impact that time or dollar can have in the world. When our faithful charity combines with God's power, the sky is the limit. The hungry are fed, God's love is made known, and the faithful are transformed to be even more like Christ. If you want to make a difference in the lives of those around you, practicing sacrificial generosity is the key.

1. Do you believe that God can still feed 5,000 today with just a few loaves and fishes? How could that happen today?
2. How can you grow to trust God more and more, so that sacrificial giving can be a part of your life?