

## More Than Enough

I preach this morning in the name of God, the Father, the + Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

So today is the ninth Sunday after Pentecost and we continue in the Days Following Pentecost. And in these Days Following Pentecost, the activity of the Holy Spirit of God is at work in our lives and around the world. And that's good news for us today, especially when we are living in the middle of a pandemic. For the God who created us is the God who redeems us, and the God who redeems us is the God who fills us, and the God who fills us is the same God who sustains us with the living bread of God from heaven that feeds our souls.

Today, I want to talk to you about the "Feeding of the Five Thousand," a wonderful story of God's miraculous power, strength, and provision. Now in this story we'll see both the divinity of Jesus and the humanity of Jesus. For in the humanity of Jesus, Jesus is processing through his own grief having heard of the death of his family member - his own cousin, John. And if that wasn't enough, he's processing through being rejected in his hometown of Nazareth. Jesus is dealing with the realities of loss and rejection. But God also displays to us not only the humanity of Jesus, but also the divinity of Jesus. For when the disciples bring the little bit that they have and they put it into the hands of Jesus, God multiplies it, He grows it, and He feeds the multitudes.

Now, here's the great truth of our lesson today: when God provides, He provides not only enough, but more than enough. For Jesus is the God who feels deeply; Jesus is the God who responds compassionately; and Jesus is the God who provides bountifully. So let's look at our first point: Jesus is the God who feels deeply. Matthew, chapter 14, we begin in verse 13, "When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns. When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick."

Jesus is in the midst of producing and forming this wonderful miracle, operating in the power of the Father and giving the disciples everything they needed. The crowds followed Jesus in Capernaum. They are needy people: they need Jesus' healing, they need Jesus' touch, they need Jesus' heart. They are experiencing a great need for the truth and Jesus here, gathered with his disciples, fully provides for his people because Jesus is the God who feels deeply.

Jesus is the one who is going through loss himself. He is experiencing loss in his own life. He was just informed, the verse tells us in verse 13, "When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place." That is, Jesus is experiencing loss in his life. He needs some time alone with his Heavenly Father, so he withdraws from the people to get some alone time with his Father. And here comes the crowds.

Jesus is dealing with his own loss, but he's also dealing with his own rejection. For in chapter 13 we read that Jesus is in his hometown and he is rejected. And Jesus said that a prophet in his own town is "a prophet without honor" (*Matt. 13:57*). Jesus has some stuff going on and he is experiencing great emotional turmoil in his life. He's the God who feels deeply because He is the God who knows intimately.

He knows what's going on in your life today. You see, this is the humanity of Jesus. This is God's heart: that you would see a God in Jesus, the incarnate one from all eternity past who's not somewhere up there, out there in the distance, a distant God. No, He left heaven and He came to earth.

He is a God who feels deeply. He knows the point and the place of need that you are at in your life today. He knows the sickness that keeps waging war against your body when you go into the doctor week in and week out. He knows that place of isolation and discouragement as we continue to live in this

long season of quarantine in this pandemic. He knows the heartbreak in your life and the loss of that loved one that you so dearly miss. Jesus knows because He is the God who feels deeply. He knows that anxiety; He knows that depression; He knows that alcoholism that darkens your life. And He understands, He's been there. He has walked those roads of darkness and that's good news for us today! We have a God who knows us because we have a God who feels deeply, not only His own pain, but yours and mine and the crowds that come on that day. He feels deeply and he reaches out his hand and he heals them; he touches them.

First, Jesus is the God who feels deeply. And second, Jesus is the God who responds compassionately, verse 14, "When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick. As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, 'This is a remote place, and it's already getting late. Send the crowds away, so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food.' But Jesus replied, 'They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat.' 'We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish,' they answered. 'Bring them here to me,' he said. And he directed the people to sit down on the grass."

Jesus is the God who understands, He's the God who feels deeply. And Jesus is the God who responds compassionately. A compassion that when he sees the need in front of them instead of ignoring that need, he goes and offers himself to that need. The word is "*splagchnizomai*" and it's a "moving to the inwards of one's bowels." The bowels, you see, were considered to be the place of love and pity. Jesus saw the crowds in the midst of his own emotional turmoil. He saw the needs. He was not overcome by his own needs, but he saw. And, you see, *splagchnizomai* is seeing a need and being moved to offer yourself to be a part of the solution, not a part of the problem.

Jesus feels deeply; Jesus responds compassionately, and this was not the first time that Jesus responded compassionately. For earlier in Matthew chapter 9, verse 36, Jesus described them as a “sheep without a shepherd.”

The way in which Jesus compassionately led his people is the same way in which Moses compassionately led God's people. For in Numbers chapter 27, verse 17, Moses prayed that God would lead and God would fill a place in their life and would develop a leader as his successor, so that the people would not wander aimlessly out there in this world, but that they would have clear direction. He prayed that they would not be like sheep without a shepherd. The same heart that Jesus is displaying here. *Splagchnizomai* - a movement to action.

What are you seeing today that is moving you to action? You don't have to go very far: flip through your Facebook feed, flip through your social platforms. Go and see: look into the neighborhoods, go to the store. You don't have to go looking for the need, it is all around us today. Darkness is invading every corner of society. Hatred and bigotry, and politics this and politics that, but Jesus has come for all people. His arms of love are embracing all people because He is the God who is moved to action.

The need is in front of Him and I wonder what kind of need you are looking at today. It may seem overwhelming to you and if you leave it into your own hands, it will remain overwhelming. But when you take what you have and you place it into the hands of Jesus, what was once overwhelming is now light. The burden is light, Jesus multiplies it, and He delivers the power and the anointing of the Holy Spirit to give in accordance with the need. What do you see today? What is moving the inwards of your stomach? *Splagchnizomai* is a movement to action.

Jesus is the God who feels deeply; Jesus is the God who responds compassionately; and lastly, Jesus is the God who provides bountifully, verse

19b, "Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over."

Jesus is the God who provides bountifully. And when God provides, He provides what you need when you need it. One Sunday morning, little Jimmy went to Sunday worship with his mother. He was sitting there in his pew, well-behaved, next to his mother when he started to feel a little ill. He tapped his mother on the elbow and said, "Mom, I'm not feeling so great." She said, "That's all right, Jimmy, you'll get better. We're halfway through the service. Hang in there." Well, little Jimmy tried. He hung in there for a few more minutes and finally he started to feel sick even more, so he elbowed his mother once again and said, "Mom, I'm really not feeling very good. I think I have to throw up." She said, "Oh, boy! Well, go out the front of the church, go around the back, and you'll find a bush and do what you need to do there." So Jimmy got up out of the service and went out the front. Thirty seconds later, he was back. His mom was surprised, "Jimmy, did you throw up behind the church?" Jimmy said, "No, I took care of business right at the front door of the church because as I was leaving there was a little basket that said 'For the Sick.'"

God provides what you need when you need it, even for little Jimmy. It's true for you, too. Do you believe that God will provide for every one of your needs? You may look to see what you have and say, "Lord, this isn't enough. Lord, I don't have enough." There is lack, but when you put that into the hands of God, watch what He will do.

You know, I love Jesus' response to his disciples as the disciples want to send the crowds away. He says to them in verse 16, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat." They're trying to send away the very people that God is attracting to Him. I wonder how many of us are sending away the very

people that God is calling us to reach. We're too busy trying to send them away because the need is too great. "Well, that can't be met through me! That can't be met through this organization. Go away!"

And Jesus says, "No, they do not need to go away. You give them something to eat." And I love even more what the disciples say back to Jesus because I can relate. They say in verse 17, "We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish." I could hear them now, "Jesus, you've got to be crazy! Do you see all the people? Ten, fifteen thousand people including men, women and children. And do you think a little boy's lunch is going to get the job done? Jesus, you're nuts! Look again!" But may I remind you of Jesus' heart - *splagchnizomai* - he sees the need and when he knows already what is going to happen, he wants to invite the disciples into this discipling moment where he says, "You put into my hands, what you have and you watch the miracle-working power of God be released in you and through you to meet the need."

Now, that is a good message today. We need to hear that today because as we live in this world, we need the miracle-working power of God. We need the strength of the Holy Spirit. We need the anointing of God when we need to keep our mouths quiet and when we need to lift our voices to the God who is worthy of all praise, proclaiming in the name of Jesus Christ as the only way to the Father. Jesus Christ said "All come to me who are burdened and heavy-laden and I will give you rest" (*Matt. 11:28*). Only one person, only one place will you find rest in this life and His name is Jesus. And that is a message that we cannot proclaim in and of ourselves. But when you offer your voice, when you offer your life, when you give the little bit that you have, all you have to do is say, "Lord, here it is, as little as it is. I've got nothing, but Lord, when you're done with it I'm going to watch the miracle unfold right before me. I'm going to watch your strength and your power carry me. God, I'm going to watch you at work."

That's the discipling moment that Jesus is inviting you into today. Come bring your little five loaves, bring your little two fish, whatever you have. In your own hands, it's nothing, but in God's hands, if you just watch, you watch and see what God will do.

Our God is not a God of lack, He is the God of abundance. Amen? Let's bring to Him and watch Him work.