

Led by Rev'd Mark Robinson

Message

May the words of my mouth and the meditation of all our hearts be acceptable to you, O Lord, our rock and our redeemer. Amen **Psalm 19:14**

Have you ever had the feeling of not having enough to carry on?
Feeling that you were just unable to do the things you needed to do?
Or that events were just too much to handle?

In our reading today we see that Jesus wanted some time to reflect and refresh. Imagine two significant life events happened earlier, he was rejected by the people of his home town, and Herod had just had John the Baptist beheaded. Jesus was looking for time away. Maybe Jesus was hoping to withdraw to a lonely place in response to the news of John's death. Maybe to grieve, maybe to think about his own future. But whatever his reason for pulling away, the crowds continued to follow, and press him. They were hungry for healing, hungry to hear his words of grace and justice and action, the people were hungry and he had compassion. He responded to the people's need.

But time drew on, and when evening came, and the people found themselves physically hungry, Jesus again, had compassion and responded to the people's need. He produced a meal. He took the little that they had, five loaves of bread and two fish and he looked up, he said words of blessing and broke and gave and gave and gave, and he continued to give.

The feeding of the 5000 plus didn't come out of a vacuum, it was a major teaching event for all who were there and to all who would hear, listen and pay heed to it.

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Earlier on Jesus taught in parables, he spoke about what the Kingdom of God is like. And one of the reasons he used the word kingdom is because for centuries the Israelites wanted a king to rule over them like other nations had a king and so they did have a succession of kings who in their own ways mismanaged and made a mess of things.

But Jesus taught that God's realm God's kingdom is not like anything that we have set up for ourselves.

So he gave examples of what the Kingdom of God is like.

He spoke about hidden things and little things he spoke about potential and the use of resources he spoke about looking at what you have rather than focussing on what you do not have. He spoke of little things that are found inside, inner things that contain within them, the potential to make the seemingly impossible happen.

Like the treasure hidden in the field that he spoke about, or that one fine pearl, hidden away among basketful after basketful of pearls, like the net full of fish in which the good fish is hidden amid the rest of the catch.

Or the tiny mustard seed which is difficult to see and yet it can grow into a huge plant with branches that birds can find rest and shade. And a small bit of yeast that is all but hidden within the dough, works it's way throughout to produce enough bread to feed an entire village.

The kingdom of God may start small, barely perceptible, but the result it causes is a spectacular transformation.

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How many times have we made decisions based on what we didn't have? Or on what we couldn't achieve? Instead of looking at what we do have, and what our limited resources would allow us to start?

For years I dodged answering a call to ordained ministry because I just don't have the voice for it. Then in reading about Moses I realised he had a similar issue, his voice. God said to him "who made voices" Don't look at what you lack, look instead at what God can do with the little you do have.

Jesus listened to the stories of those in the crowd and he responded to them in helpful and restorative ways. And as it was then becoming late, his disciples urged him to dismiss the crowd, so that they may go away and find food, but Jesus told the disciples, "you give them something to eat" In other words, use what you have to feed the hungry.

So the disciples must have been scratching their heads saying, 'where does Jesus expect us to get the food that's needed to feed so many?'

The disciples must have been bewildered. Their starting point was to look at what they did not have. But Jesus never asked them what they don't have. He said 'you give them something to eat'

Their hunger forced them to look at what they lacked.

So Jesus continued 'Bring what you have.' He said.

This is an example of the kingdom of God.

And with the little they offered, He looked up, he said words of blessing and broke and gave. Jesus didn't so much bless the bread, as he blessed

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the giver of the bread and gave thanks for all that we are able to do with the little we may have.

And those that ate ate only what was needed so there was plenty left over for Jesus and the disciples to eat as well.

It was the very little that they had that was used to do the job.

Trust in God is the message. Trust the one who has compassion for our basic needs. The one who offers nourishment for the journey ahead. The one who offers peace and wholeness to the entire community.

So have you ever had the feeling of not having enough to carry on? Feeling that you were just unable to do the things you needed to do? Or that events were just too much to handle?

Remember what the kingdom of God is like and you yes you give those who need it something to eat.

Thanks be to God. Amen