

## John 6:1-21

### Feeding the Five Thousand

After this Jesus went to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, also called the Sea of Tiberias. A large crowd kept following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing for the sick. Jesus went up the mountain and sat down there with his disciples. Now the Passover, the festival of the Jews, was near. When 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?' He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do. Philip answered him, 'Six months' wages would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little.' One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, 'There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many people?' Jesus 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. Then 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. When they were satisfied, he told his disciples, 'Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost.' So they gathered them up, and from the fragments of the five barley loaves, left by those who had eaten, they filled twelve baskets. When 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.'

When Jesus realized that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, he withdrew again to the mountain by himself.

### Jesus Walks on the Water

When evening came, his disciples went down to the lake, got into a boat, and started across the lake to Capernaum. It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. The lake became

rough because a strong wind was blowing. When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the lake and coming near the boat, and they were terrified. But he said to them, 'It is I; do not be afraid.' Then they wanted to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the land towards which they were going.

## **Sermon - A Little Lunch – July 25, 2021**

This morning I am going to talk about the value of sharing our lunch, as the young boy did in today's Gospel - feeding the 5000.

But first this. A friend once found something written on a tombstone which caught her attention. This happened in an old church yard she and her husband were exploring one summer.

On the tombstone was engraved

**“She did what she could.”**

Isn't there something striking in this simple statement? It doesn't even say she did the 'best' she could...she just did **what** she could. This suggests someone you could count on to be there despite limitations...rather than someone who had

fantastic gifts. And yet, it was worthy of remark on her tombstone, suggesting that 'doing what she could', was valued.

The parish of St James is small, but we put on a free breakfast once a month at St George's. St Andrew's helps us along with St Philip's and St George's. Now free clothing, is brought in - hats, mitts and gloves. socks, sweaters, hoodies, anything St Andrews have a weekly neighbourhood BBQ in the summer I believe.. Those who participate find it fun. They chat with those who come.

The people in small churches could easily say, "We can't do anything for others. We need help ourselves." Instead, some say, "We have a little bit -- and we will use that little bit for others" -- and Christ blesses their little bit to make a big difference.

In our Gospel a little bit makes a big difference. A crowd had followed Jesus to a remote place. Jesus asked Philip where they should buy bread for the people to eat.

Philip answered that six months wages would not buy enough bread for each person to get even a little. Philip was right, because there were at least five thousand people to feed.

And even if they had money, where could they buy enough bread? It would take thousands of loaves. They were in the middle of nowhere -- there was no Ben's Bread factory nearby.

Andrew, another disciple, had an idea. He said there was a boy who had five barley loaves and two fish although he realized that seemed like nothing among so many people.

But Jesus said, "Make the people sit down." That was a bold move. When you ask a crowd to sit down, they expect something to happen.

Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, his disciples distributed them to those who were seated; so also the fish. There was enough for everyone to eat their fill!

Afterward, they gathered up the leftover fragments...12 baskets full! How could that be...they had more at the end than they had at the start.

Do you wonder about the boy who had the five loaves and two fish? They were his lunch. He must have been hungry! I wonder what he thought. But mostly I wonder what would have happened if the boy had said, "No! You can't have my lunch because it won't make any difference."

The boy's sharing started the miracle; Jesus' sign. The boy's willingness to share joined with Jesus' desire to feed the crowd. This participation of someone as powerless as a young boy with a contribution so small, tells us something. Doesn't it say that no one is too small or unimportant to participate in our Lord's work? And no offering is too small either. Jesus had the power to enhance the boy's act of generosity rather than provide for the crowd on his own.

Perhaps Jesus was depending on that boy! Jesus does that, you know. Jesus depends on us! He wouldn't have to depend on us, but he chooses to depend on us because it is our purpose to work with Him, it is why we were made. He invites us to be co-labourers, working with him. He knows that we are blessed when we respond.

Each of us possesses, in some form, five loaves and two fish – our own contribution, a small gift that Christ can use for large purposes:

The world is a mess, but it wouldn't be a mess if people did what Christ calls us to do. Even those who have only a little bit to offer are important. That little bit, in Christ's hands, becomes a great blessing.

God has given each of us five loaves and two fish – our lunch – enough to feed one person but not enough for a crowd. We wish we could do more. We wish we could give big. But if we dream only of grand gestures, we may miss the opportunity to use our five loaves and two fish -- the small resource that we can actually give instead of the million that we will probably never have.

If we are ever able to give a million, it will probably be only once. But hardly a day will pass -- even if we live to be a hundred -- that we cannot give Jesus five loaves and two fish -- something like our lunch -- something large enough that it requires some devotion to give it but something too small for us to think we have done anything great. It is not the amount we give which is important but that we give at all, that we give what we can. Then our Lord Jesus chooses what to do with it. If we give to Jesus with devotion, that is what matters.

what small gifts might we offer our Lord:

-- Our gift might be the twenty-dollar bill -- that sits so heavily in our wallet when the offering comes around.

-- Our gift might be to give up the grudge we have against someone -- the grudge we have nursed for a while, which has become part of our inner being.

-- Our gift might be to show kindness to someone -- a word of praise, a smile or a phone call.

-- Our gift might be to volunteer.

-- Our gift might be a single, silent prayer for someone who is sick, lonely, or depressed.

I met a man once from the Miramichi. He told me how writing one letter to his Mla started the ball rolling to increase the dialysis unit up there. Some people had to travel to Moncton three times a week for dialysis because there was no room for them in the facility in the Miramichi. The man received a nice reply from his MLA. But that didn't seem enough. Then his friend asked him to put together a form letter which he distributed to over 300 union workers. The letter requested expansion of the dialysis unit and was to be sent to the mla. The man also contacted all the local organizations, asking them to send in the request. All this letter writing started one winter. By spring, the government announced that expansion of the dialysis facility by 6 beds would go ahead! One letter was all it took to start. Now 48 more people a week receive dialysis in the Miramichi.

The little boy gave up his five loaves and two fish -- and Jesus multiplied them -- and people around the world are still being blessed today by this story.

Look for a "five loaves and two fish" gift that you can offer.

Try to give Jesus a "five loaves and two fish" gift every day.  
Jesus  
will bless every gift given in devotion to him -- and will make  
something  
important of it.

And Jesus will bless us, too, as we give. Amen

*Little things are indeed little, but to be faithful in little things is a great thing.*

*Mother Teresa*

We can do no great things; only small things with great love.

*Mother Teresa*

Barbara Brown Taylor writes, "The problem with miracles is that we tend to get mesmerized by them, focusing on God's responsibility and forgetting our own...Remember there's no such thing as 'your' bread or 'my' bread; there's only 'our' bread, as in 'give us this day our daily bread.' However much you have, just bring it...and believe it is enough to begin with, enough to get the ball rolling, enough to start a trend. Be the first in the crowd to turn your pockets inside out; be the first on your block to start a miracle." [2]