

Title: The Feeding of 5000

Mark 6:30-44

Lately, I've been praying a lot... praying for miracles... I have not been praying out of desperation, well, most of the time I have not. Rather, I have been convicted lately about asking God to work through my weaknesses. God told St. Paul

*My grace is sufficient for you. For my power is made perfect in your weakness.*

I have been convicted about asking God into my plans before I start the projects, rather than asking for his blessings after it is done. I have been convicted about asking God for His Holy Spirit before I make decisions. I have been convicted about asking God to allow me to be a part of his great miracles, rather than asking him to join mine. So, it is quite appropriate that today's gospel is about the miracle of the feeding of the 5000. It is the famous story of when Jesus miraculously feeds 5000 people with only 2 fish and a five loaves of bread. It is not by power or strength given to the disciples that this miracle was done. It was because the disciples trusted Jesus, because the people put their faith in Christ, that they were ALLOWED to be part of a Great miracle. You know, I think, we all want to be like them. We all want to be part of God's miraculous work. We all want to make a difference in this world. But I think sometimes we are afraid to fully lean upon God, to do this. The first human reaction is to rely on our own power to get his work done. But God tells us that his power is made perfect in our weakness. God will work through us when we "fully lean upon Him." This is the true nature of faith. In our Gospel lesson the disciples were always filled with doubts, especially about themselves. For sure they doubted their ability to deal with the crowds of people who had gathered around to hear Jesus. But the point of our Gospel story is though they thought they were insufficient to meet the needs of the day they overcame their fear. They overcame their fear with faith, faith in Christ. And because they overcame their fear they were allowed to become part of a miracle.

Hear this miracle in the gospel story. Mark Chap 6, verse 34 Jesus has just gone out with his disciples on a boat to find a place for quiet rest. But the crowds sees him and follow them. <sup>34</sup> When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things. <sup>35</sup> By this time it was late in the day, so his disciples came to him. "This is a remote place," they said, "and it's already very late. <sup>36</sup> Send the people away so they can go to the surrounding countryside and

villages and buy themselves something to eat.”<sup>37</sup> But he answered, “You give them something to eat.”

“You give them something to eat!”?? Imagine how the disciples felt. There were some 5000 men plus probably an equivalent number of women and children wandering about the hillside, People who had come to hear Jesus. who needed to hear Jesus, who were starving to hear Jesus whose souls needed saving. “YOU give them something to eat!” “They are hungry.” “YOU feed them.” US? What do you mean “You want us to give them something to eat?” “That’s 5000 people out there.” It would take 200 denarii worth of bread to feed them. That’s almost a year’s wages. Jesus was asking them for the impossible! Jesus was asking them to do a miracle. Sure, they were used to JESUS doing miracles. But now it sounded like He wanted THEM to do something. So, what did they do? Verse 17 They tell Jesus We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish,” “This is all we got.” “Five loaves” “Two fish” (pause) “What do you expect us to do?”

Can you sympathize with the disciples? Have you ever had a problem... a situation... you’ve lost a job,... You can’t get a job... your marriage is struggling... you have a loved one who is sick... You have a loved one who is dying... The challenge of the day seems impossible. You feel like throwing up your hands and saying “God, what am I supposed to do?” Lord, how am I supposed to deal with this situation? We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish,” “This is all we got.” “Five loaves” “Two fish” “Lord, what do you expect us to do?”

Now in defense of the disciples, you might not realize this but their response was really one of faith, weak faith to say the least, but believe it or not, it was one of faith. Think of it this way... In the light of Jesus’ command - “You give them something to eat,” - instead of laughing at Jesus as the Pharisees would have done; instead of sulking away, pouting in a corner muttering “he asks too much,” “he asks for the impossible,” “we can’t do it”; instead of giving up in despair; the disciples turn to Jesus. Their faith turned them to rely on Jesus. “All we got are these five loaves and two fish,” or in other words, “This is what we got. Tell us what to do.” They didn’t give up. They didn’t know what to do. They didn’t have the power. But they didn’t give up. They gave it up to Jesus. They gave it up to God.

So, what does Jesus do? In response to the disciples words.... Jesus commands them to give the meager resources to Him. “Bring them to me!” It is as if he was

saying to them: “I do not expect you to meet impossible challenges alone. I do not expect you to do miracles by your own power. I will help you. Give them to me.”

So, what happens when the disciples give it up to Jesus? He directed the people to sit down in groups on the grass. 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.

So, what has just happened? Jesus commanded his disciples to feed the 5000 people who were listening to Jesus. “You give them something to eat!” By their own resources, the disciples were unable to meet the needs of the 5000 people waiting upon Jesus. Jesus had handed them an impossible task. But in faith they gave everything they had to him. And because they gave everything up to Jesus, or more to the point, because they put their faith in Jesus, He took their meager resources and did a miracle. Even more than that, because they gave it up to God, they got to be a part of a great miracle. It was as if He was saying...

“You will meet challenges in your life that you cannot handle. You will have problems in your life which would take miracles to fix. You will not be able to fix them by your own power. You will not have the resources to accomplish them. Give them to me! Give them to me!” “Give them to me and I will let you participate in a greater miracle. Do not worry that you are weak. Do not worry that you are small. Do not worry that you are poor... Do not worry.... Give your problems to me... I will work through the small things of this world. I will work through the insignificant I will work through your weaknesses. I will work through YOU! And I will accomplish miracles.”

This is the message Jesus has for us today. In this world... as we face the challenges of this world... We are not alone. We do not face them alone. We do not work alone. For with us is the very one who was able to feed 5000 people with only 5 loaves of bread and 2 fish. For Him, nothing is impossible. And he tells us not to fear. Because the disciples put their faith in Christ they were able to participate in the impossible. At Christ’s command the disciples were able to take on a tasks far beyond human capability. And this applies to more than just dealing with the problems of life. There are many challenges in this world. There are many challenges in this world which are impossible by human means. And the key point of our Gospel lesson is that when God calls us, all things are possible. What God calls us to do, He will provide. Our success will not be because God has given US any special abilities to accomplish his work. We have

the same talents and resources which all other people have. The difference is that when we have given our resources and our talents to God, He will use it. when we give OURSELVES to God... He will accomplish great things. For through us God can and will accomplish great things. God invites us to be an active part in His great work.

What greater challenges has God put before us? One which is right before us is the command to go out and make disciples of all nations. This may appear to be an impossible task, but through God all things are possible. God has called us to share His love comfort and hope with the local community of West Covina. As they come to know you, and your love for Jesus they will come to know Christ. Go and make friendships with people you meet in the local community. Let them know about Jesus. Give it up to Jesus. Where your meager resources seem unequal to the task, give them up to Jesus. Let Him do the miracle. Let Him do a miracle through you - and then experience the thrill of being part of that miracle.