

Devotion: July 8, 2020

Matthew 14: 6-21

⁶ On Herod's birthday the daughter of Herodias danced for the guests and pleased Herod so much ⁷ that he promised with an oath to give her whatever she asked. ⁸ Prompted by her mother, she said, "Give me here on a platter the head of John the Baptist." ⁹ The king was distressed, but because of his oaths and his dinner guests, he ordered that her request be granted ¹⁰ and had John beheaded in the prison. ¹¹ His head was brought in on a platter and given to the girl, who carried it to her mother. ¹² John's disciples came and took his body and buried it. Then they went and told Jesus.

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. ¹⁴ When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick.

¹⁵ 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."

¹⁶ Jesus replied, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat."

¹⁷ "We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish," they answered.

¹⁸ "Bring them here to me," he said. ¹⁹ And he directed the people to sit down 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. ²⁰ They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. ²¹ The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children.

"You give them something to eat."

"What? Lord, we have nothing here but five loaves and two fish.!"

"Lord, we have nothing here but five loaves and two fish."

How many times have we said that?

"Lord, we have nothing here but five loaves and two fish."

How about when a parent is worried about a child. So many influences so many temptations to face... Parents hungry for answers ask "What are we to do?-- "We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish."

How about the mom and pop employers who had to lay off employees, shut down the shop, the restaurant, the gym the hair salon because of the Covid. What are they to do?

"Lord, we have nothing here but five loaves and two fish"

How about the nurse working in the ICU? Long hours, low pay, dangerous work with a family at home, an elderly mother. What is she to do?

"Lord, we have nothing here but five loaves and two fish."

It might be the response any of us offer when life seems overwhelming and we just KNOW our resources are not enough to deal with the problem. *"We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish."* What are we to do?

Jesus said to the Twelve: "You give them something to eat."

Whoa! "Don't you know how tired we are, Jesus? It's been a long few months, and we've worked hard. We've been under a lot of stress lately, too, Jesus. You just don't know how hard life can be sometimes. I'd like to help out, but I just don't have that much to help with. There's not much in the basket - a couple of fives, a twenty, some singles - a few loaves, a couple of cold fish. That's it, Lord. I'd like to help you, --but I just can't

And Jesus says, *"Bring them here to me."*---

"Bring them here to me" – bring your skills and weaknesses, your strengths and fears, your children and their futures. Bring them to me, and I will make you more than adequate for the task at hand.

Then he blesses what we have, then tells us to just give it away, because there will be more than enough. And you find yourself in the middle of a miracle. The miracle that we will see is Jesus working through the hands of his disciples to feed the hungry crowd.

And it still works that way today. God calls us and uses us to do His work in the world, to literally feed hungry people. But we are also called to be God's hands in spiritually feeding the lonely- and the depressed -and the hurting. We are called to help all the broken people who live around us. We are called to speak a word of hope and love to others.

Let's remember that we can take our little handful of loaves and fish to the Lord and in turn he can them and transform them into a feast.

Let us pray:

Loving God, we give you thanks and praise that, through Jesus, you healed the sick and fed the hungry. With a few fish and loaves of bread, you fed a crowd of hungry people, and with plenty to spare. We, too, long to be fed. We, too, call for your healing touch. We come to you in prayer now, pressing in on you from all sides, with our needs and desires — some trivial, some profound — and through it all, you love us. You are attentive to the deepest needs and the most hidden wounds of our hearts. Be with us, once again, we pray. Amen.