

June 1, 2003
AM Service
Patchogue Church of the Nazarene

“You Feed Them”
Mark 6:30-44(NLT)

30 The apostles returned to Jesus from their ministry tour and told him all they had done and what they had taught. 31 Then Jesus said, "Let's get away from the crowds for a while and rest." There were so many people coming and going that Jesus and his apostles didn't even have time to eat. 32 They left by boat for a quieter spot. 33 But many people saw them leaving, and people from many towns ran ahead along the shore and met them as they landed. 34 A vast crowd was there as he stepped from the boat, and he had compassion on them because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he taught them many things.

35 Late in the afternoon his disciples came to him and said, "This is a desolate place, and it is getting late. 36 Send the crowds away so they can go to the nearby farms and villages and buy themselves some food."

37 But Jesus said, "You feed them."

"With what?" they asked. "It would take a small fortune to buy food for all this crowd!"

38 "How much food do you have?" he asked. "Go and find out."

They came back and reported, "We have five loaves of bread and two fish." 39 Then Jesus told the crowd to sit down in groups on the green grass. 40 So they sat in groups of fifty or a hundred.

41 Jesus took the five loaves and two fish, looked up toward heaven, and asked God's blessing on the food. Breaking the loaves into pieces, he kept giving the bread and fish to the disciples to give to the people. 42 They all ate as much as they wanted, 43 and they picked up twelve baskets of leftover bread and fish. 44 Five thousand men had eaten from those five loaves!

Can you picture it? Thousands of people perhaps 10, 000 or more (for it mentions 5,000 men, but there were also women and children), all of them hungry. And here is what is available for them: 5 thin wafers and two small sardines - 5, 000 men and 5 biscuits to feed them with. The difference between the amount needed and the amount available to give is enormous. But Jesus is equal to the need. Think about Patchogue, Medford, Suffolk County, Long Island. There are thousands, millions of people in need; physical needs, emotional needs, spiritual needs. We have a tendency to say, “ Send the people away so they can buy themselves some food." But Jesus says, "You feed them."

1. Then we say to the Lord, “With what?” Like the disciples who said, “We would need \$30,000 to feed all these people!” You see, we tell the Lord what we don’t have. We tell the Lord of the little we do have. We bring up our limited resources. When the disciples saw only 5 loaves and 2 fish they said, “What is so little among so many?” There are so many poor, hurting and lost what can I do with so little. Maybe the young boy willing to share his lunch was excited about being able to help. He didn’t refuse to give his food to Jesus and certainly Jesus would not have allowed it to be taken by force. I wonder if the apostles discouraged the young man by saying, “what is so little among so many?” Don’t let people discourage you by saying, “The need is great, what can you do?” And don’t tell yourself, “the need is great what can I do with the little I have?” And don’t be tempted to think, “When I have more money or more time or more Biblical knowledge or more... it can go on and on ... then I will serve the Lord, then I can act like a Christian.” The boy could have eaten his lunch and that would have been the end of the loaves and fishes. But by bringing the little he had to Jesus thousands were fed, Christ was glorified and you know of this boy today. Anything you take away from yourself and give to Christ - no matter how small it is – is a good investment. So my first point today is ***Don’t Get Discouraged*** with the little you have, no matter what the situation but...

2. Expect (and Look for) God’s Provision

You *did* notice that there was a young boy there with 5 loaves and 2 fish? Why was he there? Jesus tells His followers to go and see how much food is available. And with all the thousands of people, there was only one boy with food. No one else brought food. When they started out that day they didn’t think to bring any food. They didn’t know they would need it. But this young boy was there that day and is the only one with food. Do you think he was there by chance? Do you think it is just a coincidence? No, it was the providence of God that the boy was there. We don’t know the boy’s name, we don’t know anything about his family or about him. But God had appointed the boy to be there that day. When there is a need Christ has someone near by to supply that need and you may be surprised at whom God might use ...it may even be you! But, Christ will find people when He wants them. And it will be by divine appointment that they are there with what God needs to work in that situation. It was God who made sure that boy was there that day with his few biscuits and a two sardines. You can be sure that if you have the Bread of Life and are willing to serve God He will have you where He can use you. And you can be sure that when you are in need God has someone near by to help you.

People are hungry, hurting and/or lost. I want to get a hold of you this morning and say give whatever you have, no matter how small it might be. You who think you have little ability...give it to Jesus. You who say to the Lord, “send those in need away to get help,” to you the Lord says, “you feed them!”

3. In v 41 we read that Jesus took the loaves and fish. From the trembling hands of the boy they were placed in the blessed hands of Jesus. Without Him we can do nothing but with Him all things are possible. A moment before the loaves and fishes belong to the boy, now they were given to Christ and belong to Christ. ***Give All You Have To Jesus*** and it will be blessed. Let Jesus have it. Only then can He really use it. Needs will be met through you only after you have given all you have and all you are to God. Do you

think of all you have as belonging to God (money, home, car, all possessions, position, abilities etc.)?

Jesus not only took the 5 loaves and 2 fish but He blessed them. May God bless all you have as you give it over to Him. And when the loaves and fish were blessed the next thing was that Christ increased them. Jesus gave thanks and broke the loaves and divided the fish and handed back to His disciples. Then His disciples gave it out to one and then to another and then to another. And no matter how much they gave away there was more to give. The disciples kept taking bread and fish out of a basket giving it out as fast as they could yet there was more in the basket for the next one in need. If you will serve God you will never run dry in what you can give to others. Each time you give – give your all don't reserve some for another time. Each time you are called on to serve, give like it is the last time you will. Take what you have, give it completely to the Lord, He will bless it and multiply it. There is no limit to what the Lord can do. He fed 5,000 it could have been 5 million. What does the Lord want to do through you – through us – through our church? More than we can imagine!

Finally, what was the **result?** (v42) They all ate and were satisfied. A great deal of ***misery was removed***. People were hungry/famished now they were satisfied. I see people (like those on this morning's video) who don't know how to fill their emptiness and my heart breaks. YOU feed them!

Don't dwell on what you don't have – don't dwell on your limited resources. Look for the provisions of God. Take what you have – which in reality He has provided, give it completely to the Lord, for His blessing that He might multiply it and give it back to you to give away to others. You, Feed them!