

Pastor Jon Strasman's sermon from August 2, 2020.
Text: Matthew 13 – The Feeding of the 5000

“You are Enough!”

How often do you think about food? If you are like me, once every few minutes. And maybe even more as we live in a pandemic. It seems like after each meal you can take a breath. Now that live sports are back on for the time being, I am reminded of something Tiger Woods said earlier in April. When asked about how he is handling Covid-19 with his kids at home, he said, “His dad, a former marine, always taught Tiger, to take it one meal at a time.”

Food security is an issue in our world, for some more than others, especially those who are losing their jobs in America or soon to lose their extra unemployment benefits.

Food security was a problem in our Gospel for today. The disciples recognized that the crowds were going to start to get hungry... or hangry soon.

To set up the feeding of the 5000, Jesus retreats by himself in a boat to a deserted place. The reason Jesus retreated was because he heard about his cousin and friend John the Baptist beheading by King Herod. Jesus just wanted to get away. Perhaps he needed rest and time to think. Crowds were constantly following him and demanding his time. Perhaps he was grieving the loss of a friend. I know many of you are grieving many losses right now. You just want things to go back to the way they were.

But Jesus couldn't get away for long. The crowds found him. When Jesus came to shore, the scripture says, Jesus had compassion for them. Compassion in the original Greek is the word *splagisomai*. Which means Jesus felt their needs deep inside himself... in his entrails. How would you feel if you were trying to get away and the people you were retreating from found you? Not too thrilled. But Jesus saw their needs and brought healing and wholeness to them.

It was getting late and the disciples wanted Jesus to send the crowd away so they could eat. Not a bad idea. But then Jesus says, “They need not go away, you give them something to eat.” Ouch, Jesus. “We have nothing here but 5 loaves and 2 fish.”

We have nothing here but...

Have you ever said something like this? What I have isn't enough to make a difference. My contribution is small, let someone else do it who has more.

Brene' Brown, world renowned shame researcher, says in her book, 'Daring greatly, would describe this as scarcity thinking. Scarcity thinking is the “never enough” problem. We are never good enough, perfect enough, thin enough, nor do we have enough time, money, or knowledge.' Her research suggests scarcity thrives in shame-prone environments that are steeped in comparison and fractured by disengagement.

But our Gospel moves us from a mindset of not enough to more than enough. With Jesus in our lives, we should never have the experience that we are not enough, or what we have to offer isn't enough. Even the smallest gifts when given over to God can spark a miracle where all are filled. Without those seed gifts of 5 loaves and 2 fish there would be no miracle.

With those 5 loaves and 2 fish, Jesus looks up to heaven, Blesses and breaks the bread. This reminds me of Holy Communion or the Last Supper. It also reminds me of the Lord's prayer petition “Give us this day our daily bread.” Luther says, “In fact, God gives daily bread without our prayer, even to all evil people, but we ask in this prayer that God cause us to recognize what our daily bread is and to receive it with thanksgiving.”

What does this mean? Luther continues, Daily bread is everything included in the necessities for our bodies, such as food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, farm, fields, livestock, money, property, and upright spouse, upright children, upright members of the household, upright and faithful rulers, good government, good weather, peace, health, decency, honor, good friends, faithful neighbors, and the like.” Well, if you put it that way, Luther, pretty much everything is our

daily bread. Think of all these things, when we pray this petition in The Lord's Prayer. Not just our food and drink, but our shoes, our clothing, our house, our children, our health. I will especially think of good government when I pray for our daily bread.

Then Jesus enlists the disciples to feed the people. I see this as our role in the church. Jesus calls his followers to care about others physical needs, not just their spiritual needs, but their health and addressing hunger.

In the end, all ate and were filled. Everyone had enough. And there were leftovers. Twelve baskets full. And maybe that 12 represents that there is enough for everyone and a little more. Twelve was an inclusive number. In Christ all can be filled.

This week, remember that you are enough. God's work on the cross says you are enough. Communion says you are enough. Your gifts are enough to make a difference. Don't be afraid to step forward and offer what you have. You could spark a miracle.