

**EXPANSION PLAN**  
**Jon 6:1-15**  
**July 29, 2018**  
**Holiday Island Presbyterian Church**

**6** Sometime after this, Jesus crossed to the far shore of the Sea of Galilee (that is, the Sea of Tiberias), <sup>2</sup>and a great crowd of people followed him because they saw the signs he had performed by healing the sick. <sup>3</sup>Then Jesus went up on a mountainside and sat down with his disciples. <sup>4</sup>The Jewish Passover Festival was near.

<sup>5</sup>When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?" <sup>6</sup>He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do.

<sup>7</sup>Philip answered him, "It would take more than half a year's wages<sup>[a]</sup> to buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!"

<sup>8</sup>Another of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, spoke up,<sup>9</sup>"Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?"

<sup>10</sup>Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." There was plenty of grass in that place, and they sat down (about five thousand men were there).<sup>11</sup> Jesus then took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed to those who were seated as much as they wanted. He did the same with the fish.

<sup>12</sup>When they had all had enough to eat, he said to his disciples, "Gather the pieces that are left over. Let nothing be wasted." <sup>13</sup>So they gathered them and filled twelve baskets with the pieces of the five barley loaves left over by those who had eaten.

<sup>14</sup>After the people saw the sign Jesus performed, they began to say, "Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world." <sup>15</sup>Jesus, knowing that they intended to come and make him king by force, withdrew again to a mountain by himself.

## **INTRODUCTION:**

**Not only is this a very familiar miracle,  
but it is al the only miracle mentioned in all four gospels:  
Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.**

**It takes place just before Passover,  
and it is speculated that a good portion of the people gathered  
may have been on a pilgrimage to the Jerusalem Temple.**

**At any rate,  
the people are there without invitation,  
driven by curiosity and eagerness to hear Jesus  
and perhaps witness a miracle or two.**

**They had heard of the things this man, Jesus, had done  
and they wanted to see for themselves  
just who He was and what He could do.**

**They have detoured from their journeys  
and begin to gather just as supper time rolls around  
they are hungry and there are no food trucks nearby.**

**Sometimes we forget just Who and What Jesus is/was.  
We know Him to be the Son of God – fully divine  
and we know Him to be fully human.**

**If we think hard enough about it,  
we will remember that He was also a great preacher.  
But how often do we think of Jesus as a pastor?**

**All you must do is to look at the way Jesus cared for people  
and you can clearly see He was THE pastor of all pastors.  
In Spanish, He is referred to as *El Buen Pastor*:  
the Good Shepherd or Pastor.**

**Jesus, as a pastor, anticipated the needs of the people  
and decided to involve the disciples  
in ministering to the crowd.**

**He delegates the responsibility for feeding the people to them.**

**“Where shall we buy food?” He asks.**

**The question is meant to cause the disciples  
to own their responsibility  
and come up with an action plan.**

**Before I began serving as your pastor,  
I told the leadership that I would be willing to do  
*anything* they asked me to do  
as long as *no one else* would or could do it.**

**A good pastor will see that the people are well trained –  
- equipped to do the ministry of the church (Eph 4:12)  
then give them the opportunity to serve.**

**So, Jesus asks: “Where shall we buy food?”**

**Phillip’s reply is that of an engineer.**

**He quickly calculates the number of people to be fed,  
the amount of food needed  
and the cost of enough food to feed the people  
and comes up with “eight month’s wages.”**

**The reply drips with pessimism.**

**No one has that much money; therefore, it can’t be done.**

**Too often I hear limiting words like “budget”  
that seem to come up too often when trying to do  
what God has called us to do.**

**I said in a staff meeting this past week:**

**The good news is that we have more than enough money  
to accomplish everything God is calling us to do.**

**The bad news,  
most of it is still in the pockets of the people.**

**Andrew, on the other hand,  
found a small boy who had 5 small barley cakes and 2 fish.**

**Even though he offered those as a solution  
he lacked the confidence that it would be enough.**

**Both these answers completely miss the point of Jesus' question.**

**The size of the problem has formed a barrier in their minds.  
There is no practical way for it to be solved.**

**Conventional wisdom cannot solve this problem.  
There is neither enough money or food to accomplish the task.  
Therefore . . . what?**

**Standing right next to them is the Son of God!  
The one who can raise the dead!  
The one who has healed and performed miracles.**

**Realizing that,  
they should have also realized that for Jesus,  
this was no problem;  
it was an opportunity to minister to the people.**

**They had not yet fully grasped  
who Jesus truly was and what He can do.**

**The proper answer would have been something like:  
"O Lord, thou knowest the answer."**

**So, Jesus acts.**

**He has the crowd sit down, a practical matter.  
That kept them from milling around  
and formed them into groups  
that could be served efficiently.**

**We are not told how the loaves and fishes were multiplied.**

**There are those who suggest  
that the willingness of the boy to share  
prompted each person in the crowd to also share;  
resulting in enough food for everyone.**

**That would be the feat of a great fund-raiser,  
but far beneath what the Son of God can do.**

**Sometimes it *is* a miracle to pry enough money  
out of the pockets of members to fund the budget;  
this is *not* one of those times!**

**I've known church treasurers who could coax dollars  
out of the tight-fisted hands of the most miserly people.  
But that is not what this is about.**

**By some miracle,  
Jesus takes the fish and loaves and *expands* them  
into enough food to feed everyone.  
Not *just* feed them,  
but with *leftovers*.**

**EXPANSION:**

**By some miracle,  
Jesus takes what amounts to a snack for a young boy  
and *expands* it to the point it feeds a crowd of 5,000.**

**No one ever expected that to happen.**

**As a matter of fact, at least two of the disciples –**

**- Phillip and Andrew -**

**couldn't see past the limitations they perceived.**

**Now, let me ask you a question:**

**If Jesus could take 5 loaves and 2 fish**

**and expand them enough to feed 5,000 . . .**

**. . . what else do you think He could do?**

**If we focus on the miracle of the loaves and fishes**

**as a way to feed the crowd,**

**we miss the true value of the miracle.**

**While it is true this is an instance of hungry people being fed,**

**it has an underlying spiritual message.**

**That message is that when we have done all we can do**

**in the service of God,**

**God will do the rest.**

**Do you suppose He could take a meager offering,**

**given from the heart**

**and multiply it into something greater?**

**Do you think He could take a broken life,**

**and expand it into something healed and healthy?**

**Do you think He could take a small, faithful church**

**and expand it into a powerful tool**

**with which to build the kingdom?**

**Do you think He could take a small amount of talent**

**shared with love and devotion**

**and expand it into a force to be reckoned with?**

**Of course He could – He has – He will continue to do so.**

**Jesus is in the “expansion business.”**

**He took a rag tag group of men  
and turned them into world-class disciples.**

### **CONCLUSION:**

**I recently received an email story I want to share with you.**

**A seminary professor was vacationing with his wife in Gatlinburg , TN.**

**One morning, they were eating breakfast at a little restaurant, hoping to enjoy a quiet, family meal. While they were waiting for their food, they noticed a distinguished looking, white-haired man moving from table to table, visiting with the guests.**

**The professor leaned over and whispered to his wife, 'I hope he doesn't come over here.' But sure enough, the man did come over to their table.**

**'Where are you folks from?' he asked in a friendly voice. 'Ft. Worth,' they answered. 'Great to have you here in Tennessee,' the stranger said.. 'What do you do for a living?' 'I teach at a seminary,' he replied.**

**'Oh, so you teach preachers how to preach, do you? Well, I've got a really great story for you.' And with that, the gentleman pulled up a chair and sat down at the table with the couple.**

**The professor groaned and thought to himself, 'Great .. Just what I need . . . another preacher story!'**

**The man started, 'See that mountain over there? (pointing out the restaurant window). Not far from the base of that mountain,**

**there was a boy born to an unwed mother. He had a hard time growing up, because every place he went, he was always asked the same question, 'Hey boy, Who's your daddy?' Whether he was at school, in the grocery store or drug store, people would ask the same question, 'Who's your daddy?'**

**He would hide at recess and lunch time from other students. He would avoid going in to stores because that question hurt him so bad. 'When he was about 12 years old, a new preacher came to his church. He would always go in late and slip out early to avoid hearing the question, 'Who's your daddy?'**

**But one day, the new preacher said the benediction so fast that he got caught and had to walk out with the crowd.**

**Just about the time he got to the back door, the new preacher, not knowing anything about him, put his hand on his shoulder and asked him, 'Son, who's your daddy?'**

**The whole church got deathly quiet. He could feel every eye in the church looking at him Now everyone would finally know the answer to the question, 'Who's your daddy?'**

**'This new preacher, though, sensed the situation around him and using discernment that only the Holy Spirit could give, said the following to that scared little boy . . . 'Wait a minute! I know who you are! I see the family resemblance now, You are a child of God.'**

**With that he patted the boy on his shoulder and said, 'Boy, you've got a great inheritance. Go and claim it.'**

**'With that, the boy smiled for the first time in a long time and walked out the door a changed person. He was never the same again. Whenever anybody asked him, 'Who's your Daddy?' he'd just tell them, 'I'm a Child of God.'**

**The distinguished gentleman got up from the table and said, 'Isn't that a great story?' The professor responded that it really was a great story!**

**As the man turned to leave, he said, 'You know, if that new preacher hadn't told me that I was one of God's children, I probably never would have amounted to anything!' And he walked away.**

**The seminary professor and his wife were stunned. He called the waitress over and asked her, 'Do you know who that man was -- the one who just left that was sitting at our table?'**

**The waitress grinned and said, 'Of course. Everybody here knows him. That's Ben Hooper. He's governor of Tennessee!'**

**If Jesus can take an illegitimate child,  
and expand that child's life to the point  
the child recognizes he IS a child of God  
and expand that child to the office of Governor . . .  
. . . what could Jesus do with your life?**

**The crowd recognizes the power Jesus has demonstrated  
and they want to call him as their Prophet  
who would lead them back to a time of prosperity.**

**They want to reduce him to king.**

**But God had other plans.**

**God was going to expand Jesus into the Savior of the world.**

**Just imagine . . . what God can do for you through Jesus!**

**PRAYER:**

**Wonderous and wonderful God, forgive us when we try to limit You to our own understanding. Instead, lift our eyes beyond the limits we have created and allow us to see what You can do in our lives. Lift us up to higher levels of spirituality and draw us closer to You. In the Name of Jesus we pray, AMEN**