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Matthew 14:13-21

MEAGER RESOURCES

Jesus' feeding of the multitudes is the only miracle story, besides the Resurrection itself, that is found in all four gospels. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John all tell some version of this story of Jesus taking the most meager of resources, just five loaves of bread and two fish, and miraculously transforming them into enough food to feed thousands of hungry people. In Jesus' hands, these meager resources are transformed into an abundance.

What if, however, our focus in this miracle story has been misplaced? We see the obvious miracle—how Jesus took a mere 5 loaves and 2 fish and turned them into an abundant meal for thousands of hungry men, women, and children. But what if there is another transformation taking place that we fail to see?

When this story takes place, Jesus has been healing the crowds of sick people way out in a deserted place away from towns and villages. And the day grows late. So the disciples come to Jesus and suggest he send the crowds away so they can go to the villages and buy some food to eat. But Jesus says to the disciples, "You give them something to eat." You give them something to eat.

The disciples realize this is something they are not able to do. How could they possibly feed so many people when all they have are five loaves and two fish. They aren't capable of doing what Jesus asks of them. When Jesus says, "You give them something to eat," the disciples know they can't.

What if the story isn't about the meager food supply—those five loaves and two fish that Jesus miraculously transforms into an abundance. What if the disciples *themselves* are the

meager resources that Jesus transforms into an abundance? What if *we are* the insufficient resources in the story? We, fallible, flawed, imperfect people. We inadequate, weak, inconsistent, disciples. We are those meager resources in the story. Jesus places his trust in us humans, as unreliable and flawed as we are. Even though we will disappoint and let him down, Jesus has faith that in his hands we are capable of being transformed into an abundance of goodness.

You give them something to eat, Jesus tells his followers. He invites them to place their lives in his hands and to join him in sharing the abundant love of God. And when they do, when they cooperate with him, they become part of a miracle.

This story is about the miracle Jesus can perform with meager resources. And those resources are you and me.

We are very aware of our inadequacies. When confronted with life's challenges or problems or needs, we can list how we are insufficient. We don't have enough money, or the right education, or the proper training. We aren't qualified. We aren't talented. Or we lack power or influence.

But let us not forget who the disciples were. They were uneducated, blue collar, working class guys. And in Jesus' hands, their meager lives and gifts were more than sufficient to carry out acts of goodness and love.

That's what Jesus asks of you and me in our lives. And that's what Jesus asks of the Church as a whole. To place our lives in his hands. To let him use our meager resources to make miracles happen.

The miracle is what Christ can make of you and whatever resources you have to offer: your friendship, your compassion, your concern for justice, your financial gifts, your ability to

listen, your time, your talents, your love, your forgiveness. No act of kindness is unimportant. No effort to help another person is insignificant. No generous offer is irrelevant. No effort to forgive is worthless. We may not always see the fruits of our efforts. But in Christ's hands, our meager resources can be transformed into good in ways that we cannot always understand or see.

In front of us here today are rather meager resources. These small bits of bread and this little bit of juice are really not much at all when you think about them. They are not a full scale banquet. But over the centuries, these meager resources offered here at the communion table, have abundantly sustained Christians with the love and grace of God. And we come today trusting that these meager resources, when placed in Jesus' hands, will once again transform us with their power. From them we are filled with the knowledge of God's love and God's forgiveness and God's power to raise us to new life.

There is no telling what miracles can happen when you and I place our lives in Jesus' hands.