

Generosity Replaces Fear With Faith

Written by Bill Perkins

I had a Zoom meeting today with three pastors. They're talking with people who have lost their job, or may lose it soon. People fear they won't be able to pay their bills.

More Empty Stomachs Than Money

While the disciples of Jesus never faced a pandemic, there was a day when they had more empty stomachs than money for food.

Yet, Jesus said, "You give them something to eat," (Matthew 14:16).

The question took the disciples by surprise. The Lord had just asked them where they could get bread to feed 5,000 men, plus women and children--that could be 15,000 people.

Poison-Tipped Thoughts

That may not be the exact question you're asking, but maybe you're asking a similar one . . . where will I, or a friend I know, get money for the mortgage? Or, the car payment? Or, health insurance? Or, my deductible. Or, food? Or, taxes? Or, utilities? Or, gasoline? The list is endless. And the enemy of our soul will shoot these poison tipped thoughts into our mind paralyzing us with fear.

Philip Did the Math

In response to the Lord's question the disciples looked for money to buy bread. Philip, a little known disciple, but a skilled mathematician, calculated they would need over 200 days wages for the purchase.

When the idea of buying enough food waned, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, brought forward a boy with five loaves and two fish. But then he realized he hadn't thought that through and said, "What good will that do for such a large crowd?"

Send the Crowds Away

Without enough money or food to meet the need, the disciples gave Jesus a unanimous recommendation: "Send the crowds away so they can go into the villages and the surrounding area to find some place to stay and eat."

In light of available resources, their advice seemed sound. But the Lord had a resource they hadn't considered. "They don't have to go away, you give them something to eat."

Looking at a dozen dumbfounded faces, Jesus took the fish and bread, gave thanks to God, and handed the food to his disciples, who passed it on to the people. This they did over and over until everyone was full. Afterwards, they collected twelve baskets of leftover bread and fish. Is it worth noting that Jesus didn't ask the disciples to provide the food, but to give it away?

I see two lessons here:

Number One — Look to God

Number one: When we don't have enough, instead of fearing, we must look to God. We must dispel every thought that generates fear and replace it with thoughts that bring peace. Paul exhorted us to do in Philippians 4:6-7: "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." What good does it do to obsess on what you fear? Instead, obsess on the faithfulness of God.

Number Two — Share

Number two: Those who have extra, need to share with those in need. It clear we're not to let an enormous need intimidate us, especially when God assigned it. While we may not be able to help everyone, couldn't we help someone? Can't we give what we are able to give and trust God to fill any gap? How about if we give Jesus what we have and let him turn it into a miracle. A miracle which, and this blows me away, we get to give away.

I would love to hear your stories of God given generosity and provision. Please share them with me.