

When you can't provide

Written by Bill Perkins

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

The question took the disciples by surprise. The Lord has just asked them where they could get bread to feed 5,000 men, plus women and children.

Where indeed? The disciples looked for money to buy food. Philip, a little known disciple, said they would need over 200 days wages for that much bread.

When the idea of buying enough food waned, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, volunteered 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?"

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, just to give it away.

It seems clear we're not to let an impossible job intimidate us, especially when God assigned it. Instead, we're to give Jesus all we have and let him turn the impossible into a miracle. A miracle which, and this blows me away, we get to give away.