

“NEVER ENOUGH”

Pastor Mike Corwin

Text: Mark 6:30-44 God’s Word: Exodus 16:1-3 & 11-15

I - MOSES:

How would you have liked to have had Moses' job? There you are, 80 years old, semi-retired, tending a flock of your father-in-law's sheep. Just kicking back watching the animals graze and watching the side of a mountain as the clouds went by. How many of us would take that position in a heartbeat? But while he was day dreaming, he saw that pesky burning bush on the side of the mountain and went to check it out and found himself in a discussion with God about going back to Egypt, the land he fled from before he got his present position, and leading all the Israelites out of slavery, through the wilderness, and to the promised land.

Moses took inventory of his resources and abilities and decided he didn't want the job, wasn't qualified for the job, and wouldn't take the job. But God is pretty persuasive when he has something for you to do and Moses ended up doing what he was told. He went to Egypt, talked numerous times to a hard-headed pharaoh who had to be convinced by God to let his people go. Moses led them out of Egypt and the whining and rebellion started immediately. God answered it all whether he was leading them by a cloud or a pillar of fire, or protecting them by opening the sea and letting them pass through and then drowning Egypt's army when they tried to follow.

In the Scripture read from Exodus they are whining again because they're a little hungry and now think they would have been better off dying in Egypt. Moses checks his resources and finds he has no meat packing plant or bakery in his possession. The resource he does have is his relationship with God and his faith. God blesses these and provides meat and bread to the people.

II - TODAY'S MOSES:

We are today's Moses. Not our individual selves...but all of us together. The minute we acknowledge that we are the Church of Jesus Christ, that we profess our faith and belief in him, that he is our Lord and Savior, then we take on the chore of taking care of his people. He is the Great Shepherd, and he's made us one of his Shepherds to feed and care for his sheep. The Bucyrus United Methodist Church is called to lead God's children out of the wilderness and into the promised land. No matter how whiney or stubborn or needy they are, we are called to do it.

You want to get your eyes and heart opened up a little. Come spend a day in the food and clothing pantry at the church. Come and spend a day in the office and see the parade of people who come in needing some kind of help. Listen to the stories they tell us about utilities being turned off, no food in the house, no place to live with heat and running water, or even a roof over their head. Listen to their stories of addiction and abuse. We seem to always look at our resources and decide

whether we can or can't help. Each and every day at the church we run into people who have needs greater than our resources and it's not always about money. You run into them outside of the church too. They need more love than we have to offer, more help than we can offer, more wisdom than we know, and more handouts than we have hands. We are like Moses at the job interview...who looked at what his resources were and acted on that. We are like the people in the wilderness who looked at the resources they didn't have instead of the ones they did have. We do the same at all of our church meetings. Can we afford this? Where's the money coming from? How will we get enough workers to staff that? Who's going to lead it?

As we do this, we forget what our greatest resources are...our Faith and our God. The same one who took care of Moses and the Israelites still takes care of us today.

III - TEXT:

I want to look at a familiar Scripture with you this morning. It's referred to as The Feeding of the 5,000. It's also called the miracle of the loaves and the fishes. I want to look at it again with the mindset that it's about resources and what God can do with them if we let him. That even when we don't think it's enough, God makes it enough.

Mark 6:30-44 (NLT)

³⁰The apostles returned to Jesus from their ministry tour and told him all they had done and taught. ³¹Then Jesus said, "Let's go off by ourselves to a quiet place and rest awhile." He said this because there were so many people coming and going that Jesus and his apostles didn't even have time to eat. ³²So they left by boat for a quiet place, where they could be alone. ³³But many people recognized them and saw them leaving, and people from many towns ran ahead along the shore and got there ahead of them. ³⁴Jesus saw the huge crowd as he stepped from the boat, and he had compassion on them because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things. ³⁵Late in the afternoon his disciples came to him and said, "This is a remote place, and it's already getting late. ³⁶Send the crowds away so they can go to the nearby farms and villages and buy something to eat." ³⁷But Jesus said, "You feed them." "With what?" they asked. "We'd have to work for months to earn enough money to buy food for all these people!" ³⁸"How much bread do you have?" he asked. "Go and find out." They came back and reported, "We have five loaves of bread and two fish." ³⁹Then Jesus told the disciples to have the people sit down in groups on the green grass. ⁴⁰So they sat down in groups of fifty or a hundred. ⁴¹Jesus took the five loaves and two fish, looked up toward heaven, and blessed them. Then, breaking the loaves into pieces, he kept giving the bread to the disciples so they could distribute it to the people. He also divided the fish for everyone to share. ⁴²They all ate as much as they wanted, ⁴³and afterward, the disciples picked up twelve baskets of leftover bread and fish. ⁴⁴A total of 5,000 men and their families were fed from those loaves!

The Apostles have been out on a mission trip. They had been sent by Jesus to preach, to teach, and to cast out demons. They came back, probably a mixture of excited and exhausted. Jesus wants to rest with them and hear the stories of all that they had done and experienced but they

couldn't do it with the large crowd pushing in on them. So they get in a boat and head across the lake to get away from the people and find a quiet spot for themselves. The trouble is the people see them leaving and word travels along the lakeshore and people are running to get to the other side of the lake faster than their pleasure cruise can get them there. By the time they arrive, a huge crowd is waiting for them.

Now...if I'm Jesus I'm probably a little perturbed at this turn of events. I went seeking peace and rest...I arrived to find noise and chaos. If not out and out irritated, I would at least be annoyed. But not Jesus. He sees people who are in desperate need of someone to lead them. Lost sheep in need of a shepherd. He looks on them not with anger or disgust, but with love and compassion. He puts his plans on the back burner and began to teach them about God's Kingdom.

The Apostles had some compassion in them too. As the day wears on, they know that darkness will soon be there. They see these 5,000 men, plus women and children, and know that they ran there to get to Jesus and didn't take the time to pack a lunch or bring a snack. They are going to get pretty hungry as the supper hour comes and goes, and there are no stores in sight. They suggest that Jesus needs to wrap up the lesson and send them on their way so they can get home and get food while it's safe to do so.

Jesus simply looks at them to feed them. They do the human thing and tell Jesus they don't have the resources to carry out this mission. It would take an impossible amount of money to provide even a meager meal for the people there. But Jesus doesn't let them get away with this cop out. Jesus tells them to go and take an inventory of what resources were available to be used to care for the people. They came back with five loaves of bread and two fish. Not even enough for them, let alone the mass of people around them.

But it's here I see the start of a lesson we miss and the church needs to remember. They took their meager resources and put them into the hands of Jesus! He said grace and then began distributing the bread and fish to the people. Everyone ate their fill, some probably put some in their pockets for later, and the leftovers were more than what the meal started with.

No doubt it was a miracle...Jesus tends to do such things when we trust in him instead of ourselves.

IV - NEVER ENOUGH:

Have you looked outside lately? Have you seen the people who live in our community and beyond? Have you see the hurt, the hunger, and the humiliation? Have you looked into their eyes and seen the shame, the judgment, the lack of love? I have. I've been preaching it and teaching it to you for the last six years. And a lot of times the reaction I get is...we don't have enough resources to do anything about it. All we have is five loaves of bread and two fish!

Folks I agree with you. We don't have the resources to do it on our own. We will:

- never have enough food...
- never have enough money...
- never have enough wisdom...
- never have enough workers...
- never have patience...
- never have enough time...
- never have enough love...

Sometimes the cupboards of our souls are tired and bare. Sometimes I can't even muster up enough of the Fruits of the Spirit to fill a little tea cup. Sometimes our breadbasket is empty!

How can we ever live out our church mission to be GOD'S LOVE IN ACTION?

V - PUT IT IN JESUS' HANDS:

The answer is to carry out the message of this morning's Scripture. No matter what we have, it is NEVER ENOUGH to do God's work. But when we put our resources into the hands of Jesus, he multiplies them, does miracles with them, takes care of the people with them, and always has leftovers for the next mission of need.

I don't need to have a full breadbasket. I just need to have a soul and heart full of faith and love that will enable to trust what I do have to the miracle worker of the universe.

We will never have enough to do God's work based solely on our own resources and abilities. We are not smart enough, wise enough, loving enough, funny enough, patient enough, or rich enough. But with Jesus, never enough is always enough.

AMEN