**Pastor Tim’s Message Notes from 8-27-2023
Five Loaves and Two Fish**

This past Sunday you were blessed to hear from Pastor Larry, a dear friend of mine and a faithful man of God. And I was blessed to go back to the Bible Museum - again. It was almost 2 weeks since I was last there and I figured that I was about due. 😊

Actually, as many of you know, half of my family was going to attend the bus trip to the Museum of the Bible on the 8th, but due to the severe storms in southern York County, my two older daughters were stranded at a party that they were at. The party then turned into a sleep over because of the downed trees and power lines.

But, in God’s providence, this course of events actually was a blessing. Not only did I get to go to the museum twice, but my entire household was also able to come. And even my niece, Lexi, was able to come with us as well.

For me personally, both of these trips were opportunities to grow. On my first trip I got to listen and learn from Dr. Jay Smith who gave us a tour. He is such a fountain of biblical knowledge. And on my second trip I was able to explore some places in the museum that I missed the first time.

Experiences like this are nurturing for me. My faith is strengthened. My love and knowledge of God grows.

And I believe that this is very, very important. We need to be nurtured. We need to be poured into spiritually. If we are pouring out to others more than we are being nurtured ourselves, what will happen? Eventually, we run dry.

We need to receive and grow. And we need to keep receiving and keep growing. And we are to give out of an overflow of what God has given us.

And this leads to our highlighted Bible passage for today. It is likely a very familiar story to you. In fact, it is the only story, besides Jesus’ passion and resurrection, that is found in all four gospels. It is the story of Jesus feeding a huge crowd of 5,000 people, not including women and children. It may have been 10,000 people present. And in this story, we see Jesus giving something – something very tangible. Food. He takes 5 small loaves of bread and 2 small fish and he multiplies it – He creates far more – and He gives it to this hungry crowd. And they eat. In fact, they eat until they are full and there are leftovers. Kind of like our church dinners here at Chestnut Grove 😊

But today, as we hear again from this familiar story, we are going to look at it from a bit of a different angle. Perhaps an angle that we have never looked at before.

We will be hearing from John 6:5-13

**5When 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?” 6He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do.**

**7Philip answered him, “It would take more than half a year’s wages to buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!”**

**8Another of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, spoke up, 9“Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?”**

**10Jesus said, “Have the people sit down.” There was plenty of grass in that place, and they sat down (about five thousand men were there). 11Jesus 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.**

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

I just love this beautiful story. We see Jesus as Creator and Provider so clearly within it. But today, I would like for us to think about this story from the perspective of the boy.

This unnamed boy has this food with him. Presumably, it was given to him. Maybe his mother made the bread and the fish were purchased at the fish market around the Sea of Gailee.

But likely he was given this food. He probably didn’t bake the bread himself and didn’t go fishing for these two fish. So he received this meal and he took it with him.

But then he does something very beautiful. He takes what was given to him and offers it to Jesus. He does this through speaking with Andrew, one of the twelve.

He was willing to share out of what he had in order to bless others in some way. I am sure that he didn’t think that Jesus was going to give him back his meal and then some. He did it simply to bless.

He was willing to take action by approaching Andrew. He was willing to give what he had, knowing that there would be more that he would be given, even if it meant he would eat little to none that day.

He had the mindset of blessing others out of what God had provided him. And the rest is history. Nearly 2,000 years later, we continue to read of this boy and how he took what was given him and offered it to the Lord.

I think that there is so much we can learn from the faith of this boy. When we offer our five loaves and two fish, God can do amazing things.

Some of you have watched the Christian show *The CHOSEN*. But before *The CHOSEN* came along, the creator of *The CHOSEN*, a man named Dallas Jenkins, came out with a movie called *The Resurrection of Gavin Stone*. It was given good reviews and Jenkins was hopeful that the film would be a box office success. But for whatever reason, the movie flopped at the box office.

Jenkins was devastated. He thought that his career in the movie industry was over. But then, Dallas received a message over the internet from someone that he did not know at the time. And this man told him, “It’s not your job to feed the 5,000, only to provide the loaves and fish.”

This message, which God put on the heart of the man to deliver to Dallas, was the beginning of a turnaround for Dallas.

And God did a powerful work within Dallas, setting him free from feeling like he needed to please people or earn favor with people.

And Dallas also decided that he was going to not just make Christian themed films, but to be very explicit in doing so.

And out of this came *The Chosen*. Jenkins and those working with him have been used by God to produce one of the best tools available today – this television show. Many people have come to faith in Christ through it. Many have been strengthened deeply in their walk with the Lord by it. It is a great tool that the Holy Spirit is using today.

And it is because Dallas chose to trust in God and offer his five loaves and two fish.

I want you to know, dear friends, that all of you have five loaves and two fish. God has provided for all of us in so many ways. Physically, mentally, relationally, spiritually – He is Jehovah Jirah – the Lord our provider.

But I believe that all of us are called to be like the boy is this story. And we do this by offering to the Lord out of what He has given us. We bless others around us as we give out of what God has given to us.

And this giving back can certainly take many forms, from volunteering to help with an outreach, to helping to serve within the life of the church in some way.

Today, we have a time to offer some testimonies. Testimonies are powerful. Your words encourage others. Your words strengthen others and challenge others in good ways. Your words express thanksgiving and love for God.

God does the rest. We are just called to do our part. I do not expect everyone to share today, although I would love for everyone to share eventually --- whether it is directly or indirectly.

But sharing what God has given you is part of our witness of followers of Jesus. We encourage one another as we share.

I know that Deb Bell, Blain Bargo, and Sue Mowery have spoken to me about wanting to share this morning. But please know, I would love to have a few others offer brief testimonies as well.

Let us pray and thank God for the 5 loaves and 2 fish that He gives us.