

Sunday 29th July 2018
2 Kings 4:42-44 Ephesians 3:14-21 John 6:1-21

Intro

2 similar stories this morning, different contexts but the same elements

20 barley loaves and some fresh grains of wheat feed 100 people

5 barley loaves and 2 fish feed 5000+ people

We are going to look briefly at what happens in each story, how the different people see the same situations and then how these stories could challenge and encourage us

Elisha feed 100 men

The setting for this story is a time of famine and war between Israel, Judah and this time the Moabites, food is scarce and resources low

A man brings to Elisha - the man of God - 20 loaves of bread

Barley was the first crop to be harvested in that region

The gift was his first fruits - the first gathering of his hoped for harvest

He didn't gather in all his harvest and then give Elisha some from what he could spare

Remember this was a time of relative scarcity of food and resources

He couldn't be blamed if he was cautious and prudent and saving for the days ahead when he might not have quite enough to eat!!

But no - in faith and thanksgiving he gave of his first fruits to the man of God, trusting that God would provide for him

Elisha's response - give it to the people and let them eat

The man was shocked, maybe even horrified and said - but how can I set this before 100 people

Unsaid - there is not nearly enough!! The need is great and what good is this!!

Elisha replies - give it to the people and let them eat - Thus says the Lord!!

What happens? The people eat and they had some left !!

Elisha saw things differently

He saw the opportunity for God's blessing in the midst of the need

He had eyes of faith - in the resources of God

I am sure the man saw things differently after that

Feeding of 5000+

This much more familiar story

Another crowd had gathered - up the mountain - and Jesus having compassion on the people and wanted to feed them

Philip gave a financial assessment of the situation and didn't answer Jesus question of where could we buy the food

He replied by exclaiming that even 6 months wages would not buy enough even to give a tiny amount to each person

Andrew had found a boy with 5 barley loaves and 2 fish

I wonder how he did actually reply? If there was an element of possibility and then as he said the words he doubted his stupidity

There is a boy here who has 5 barley loaves and 2 fish. :-)

But what are they among so many people? !!! :-(

Or

There is a boy here who has 5 barley loaves and 2 fish but what are they among so many people?!

But - as we know Jesus took the loaves and fish, gave thanks, distributed them
Everyone ate as much as they wanted until they were satisfied
The disciples gathered up the left overs - 12 baskets in fact

Philip saw the financial constraints of the situation
Andrew saw the constraints of the few resources available
Jesus saw the hungry and the chance for God's mercy and glory to break forth

Which one of these various people do we most relate to in terms of our thinking?

When there is a need and someone gives of their limited resources to God, He can multiply what is given beyond our wildest dreams, beyond what we might ask or imagine

Examples

Back on February we, as a church, gave to a need. The need for a water filter in Rwanda
You gave quickly and, in the grand scheme of our wealth, it was relatively little
But what we gave God used and is blessing in abundance hundreds of school children watch day
with the availability of drinking fresh, clean water. The only clean water that some of them have
access to

Last year as a church we gave 2% of our income away to mission. 2% is little when you think we
spent the other 98% But God has blessed it and is using it in amazing ways
We gave the money to Every Life Charity that Georgie works for
It has been used to enable 2 things to happen
Solomon - a new, local worker
Food packages to widows - Claris and her grand daughter
Also 2 others, one started just this week
Needs to be local people who take it ...

For us...

When God calls us to something and we give of our best, he will multiply it beyond all that we may
ask or imagine
The man who gave his loaves to Elisha had to trust that God would provide for him in the rest of
his crops
When we agreed to give 2% of our income away it was a big step of faith for some of us

How much do we dare to believe that God will provide for us and bless all that we give to him?
How much do we dare to trust Him?
Cally... Living by faith

It is exciting... and scary
But as we come to believe more and more the depth of God's love for us, it becomes easier
As Christ dwells in our hearts and we become rooted in God's love, it is easier to trust Him

The weeds in my 'lawn' have remained green even when the rest is straw

Why? Because their roots go deeper than the grass

Paul prays that those in Ephesus reading his letter will be rooted and established in Christ, that Christ may dwell in their hearts

Dwelling is different from visiting

At the moment I have people dwelling and visiting in my home

It is different...Dwelling housemate necessitates changes that 'accommodating' a guest brings

The boundless riches of Christ's love and God's grace cannot be measured

When we surrender ourselves and our resources to Him he can accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine

And it will bring glory to him and his church for ever and ever

Ready for the ride??

Pray from The Passion version