

“You Give Them Something To Eat”

Every time I come before you to share God’s word, I am humbled and grateful for this calling. May the Holy Spirit fall a fresh on us today as we look at God’s word together. Please be seated.

I have heard many sermons on the feeding of the 5,000 emphasizing the generous and sacrificial heart of the boy giving up his lunch to Jesus to feed the crowd; as well as the miraculous multiplying of the fish and bread. I did not want to emphasize this part of the feeding of the 5,000. I didn’t want to talk about the feeding of the 5,000 at all. Before I go any further, I want all of you to get involved in this scene. Lisa Gonzalez is going to read the Matthew account once again. Before she does, I want us to remember that Jesus has just heard

about the death of John the Baptist. Put yourself in the scene. What do you smell, see, hear, what's the weather like; how do you feel, what is the atmosphere, is there conversation? Who do you relate with the most and why? I will give you a chance to share if you want to. (5 minutes and sharing)

When I first looked at the gospel reading, I just knew how I was going to delve into all the ways we take care of ourselves, just as Jesus went away many times to rest, restore and refresh usually alone in a solitary place. There is a lot of emphasis these days on taking care of ourselves. After all, we are commanded to love our neighbors as ourselves. If we don't love ourselves, then how can we love others? I belong to a program that emphasizes "just as flight attendants tell us to put on our own

oxygen masks before we can help others” we must help ourselves first.

Then last Saturday I was with my 11year old grandson in Buena Park. We were going to get something to eat at Wendys. He wanted to walk across the parking lot and sit down together to eat. He noticed a man sitting on a curb. He asked me if we could get him something to eat at Wendys. I really didn't want to and he said he had money at home or he would give him his food. Needless to say, I let him ask the man if he was hungry and what he wanted to eat. I was a little irritated and put out because I wanted that time with my grandson. It is not often that he wants to sit down and eat without a phone in his hand.

Later that evening when we were in our cozy hotel, I thought of Jesus and how he desired to

just get away where he could grieve for his cousin. But, instead, he had compassion for the crowd. Not just for their physical hunger but for their physical, emotional and spiritual hunger. As stated in verse 14 “When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd, and had compassion for them and cured their sick.” And in Mark 6:34 it says “As he went ashore, he saw a great crowd, and He had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd, and began to teach them many things.” It is interesting that each gospel writer shared the account of the feeding of the 5,000. That made me think that this incident or story must have some important lessons to teach us. Each gospel writer emphasizing something that touched them. In each account, Jesus’ compassion is mentioned. He also emphasized in 3 of the accounts “You give them something to eat.”

I am not advocating to feed every person that may appear hungry or to neglect ourselves when we need rest. I am just asking all of us to take another look at the “miracle of feeding the 5000.” Is this passage teaching us more than the miracle of Jesus multiplying the loaves and fish? Maybe there is another miracle here. Is it possible that God is showing us by Jesus’ example to be open and flexible to those around us that might be in need of something we have to offer? Is the miracle, God uses us to share with others peace in a world that is in turmoil? Physical help for those in need? A listening ear? How do we know when to rest, recover and restore and when to interrupt our rest? There have been times when I was tired and didn’t want to answer my phone because I knew it was from a needy person. Our priest has said at the end of our services that “we may

be the only Jesus our neighbors ever see.” How do we know what and when to share with someone in need?

How do we discern when we need to hold a boundary and when the Holy Spirit is nudging us to be interrupted?

There is a small chorus that shares it better than I can express. I will sing it one time through and then please sing it as a prayer with me.

Spirit of the Living God Fall afresh on me

Spirit of the Living God Fall afresh on me

Melt me, mold me, fill me, use me

Spirit of the Living God Fall afresh on me.

Will we hear the call when Jesus says “You give them something to eat”. How will we answer that call? Amen

