

## Introduction

- During 9/11, a bunch of flights got routed to Gander, Newfoundland in Canada
- 7000 people ended up in this small, little town.
- The town was not cowed by it
  - The local populace set up shelters, let people into their own homes, fixed food, shared medicine basically took care of these people
- IT was a story of a town meeting scarcity with an outpouring of abundance.
- We too often look through the lens of scarcity at our lives
  - Right now, we've got tons of things to repair and my car's paint is flaking off faster than dandruff.
  - IT's easy to look at the bank account and see what we don't have to do it with.
- Today we get a story of God's abundance in light of our minds towards scarcity.
  - I remember in economics class that we were taught that economics is "the study of the allocation of scarce resources among competing ends."
    - We're trained to see life through the lens of scarcity and it affects our hearts.
      - They grow hard when pressed in this area.
        - We'd love to help people BUT
- Jesus' abundance should always make us question our "buts...."

## Retell the Story

- A large group of people were following Jesus after seeing the many miracles he'd already performed
  - The water into wine
  - The healing of the official's son
  - The healing at Bethsaida
    - These people following Jesus were following him because of the amazing powers that he'd already displayed.
      - So, keep that in mind, Jesus' disciples would've already seen Jesus do amazing things
- But Jesus recognizes something about the crowd – they need food
  - Now, stop for a moment and think about that.

- Jesus saw the need, even before the people did.
- That means something
  - Jesus knows our truest needs, even before we ask
    - What are your needs?
      - Do you even know?
        - Well, Jesus does and he's getting you ready for something awesome.
- Remember, this was a subsistence level life for most of these people
  - Food scarcity would've been a very real thing to these mostly agrarian workers
    - With Roman taxation, food was much harder to come by than a quick trip to the Harris-Teeter
      - Feeding was a daily necessity, a daily grind, really
        - What Jesus does for these people is truly wonderful.
- Jesus, knowing in advance what he was going to do, asks Phillip - "Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?"
  - Phillip responds through the lens of scarcity
    - Here's an economist's answer
      - It would take more than half a year's wages to give each one just a bite
        - Notice, he's computing on the lowest possible denominator
          - One bite is hardly a meal
- How often do we do this with things in our life
  - We look and see what we do not have and then just do nothing.
  - Jesus invites us to trust him when we see scarcity.
- But it is important for us to recognize in many things that we, ourselves, are limited
  - IT's when we understand ourselves as finite, created beings that we turn to the source of our life and our sustenance, GOD!
- Notice that John tells us Jesus asked this question to "test" Philip, "for he himself knew what he would do." This test wasn't to embarrass Philip but to reveal something important: before God can show His abundance, we must first honestly recognize our limitations.
  - This recognition of limitation is not failure—it's the necessary first step in the journey toward God's provision. Too often, we try

to solve problems relying solely on our own resources, intelligence, or strength.

- IT's when we're open to God's intervention that we truly get our footing right, so to speak.

### Andrew's Offering

- John 6:8-9 – “Another of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, spoke up,<sup>9</sup> “Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?””
  - Again, Andrew offers what he has but is also seeing through the lens of scarcity
    - “How far will this go?”
      - He knows these five barley loaves and two fishes aren't sufficient to the task.
- But, unlike Phillip, at least Andrew is putting in what he has into the situation even though he knows it's not enough.
- This young boy—mentioned only in John's account—becomes a central figure in the miracle. Though unnamed, he represents a crucial spiritual principle: God's work often begins when we surrender what little we have.
  - Consider this boy's offering:
    - Barley loaves—the bread of the poor, not premium wheat bread
    - Two small fish—likely pickled or dried, a common accompaniment to bread
- It was his whole lunch—not just a portion of what he had
  - The boy gave everything without knowing what would happen.
  - He surrendered his small provision into Jesus' hands with no guarantee of the outcome.
  - He might have reasoned that his small lunch wouldn't make a difference for so many people, or he could have hidden it away to ensure he at least had something to eat.
    - *But surrender precedes miracle.*
    - *The journey from scarcity to abundance requires placing our insufficient resources in the hands of an all-sufficient Savior.*
- So, I wonder, what are you holding back from God?

- What are you not thinking to bring forward to give to the situation?
  - Do you believe that God can take your limited resources and do something amazing with it.
- Application:
  - What are you holding back from God?
    - Perhaps you think your talents are too small, your time too limited, your resources too meager to make a difference.
      - The boy's five loaves remind us that God isn't limited by the size of our offering—He's looking for our willingness to place it in His hands.

### What Happens Next

- Jesus has the people sit down on the green grass
  - Sounds like Psalm 23 maybe?
- Jesus then takes those meager loaves and fishes and feeds everyone
- Not only that, there are leftovers, twelve baskets filled to overflowing left over after 5000 people get more than one bite, they got an entire meal.
  - Reminder – My first homecoming here was about three years into my ministry here because of COVID
    - Food multiplied I went outside and saw tables upon tables overflowing with food, I knew a minor miracle had happened in front of my eyes.

### Participating in God's Abundance

- This is where the rubber meets the road, really.
- Are you ready to participate in God's abundance?
  - Recognize your own limitations
  - Bring what you have to God
  - Offer it all up in faith
  - And then step forward into your new reality.
- And remember, God knows what you need.
- HE is going to meet your need, personally, just as He fed those 5000 plus people.