Bring Me What You Have

Matthew 14:13-21

Last winter we had difficulty getting in and out of the driveway in back of the personage. One day we were coming home and got stuck in a rut just before we got to the garage. We tried rocking the car a bit, but only got stuck deeper in the snow and ice. We knew we needed more leverage for the tires to work. Salt didn’t work, pieces of cardboard didn’t work, pushing didn’t work. Finally we went into the house and retrieved a couple of rugs and after a series of strategic placements and struggle we found the right combinations of placement to get the car to move. We used what we had on hand to solve the problem of being stuck.

Jesus sees the crowds hungry and in need. The disciples wanted to send the people home, but that was not what Jesus wanted. He wanted them fed. So he told the disciples to feed them. He knew they had very little to eat themselves, but organized the crowd, blessed what little was available and fed the entire crowd. He used what human resources were available at the time to accomplish God's miracle.

We are called to bring what we have to the table when it comes to doing God's work in this world. We are not called to be superhuman very often. But we are called to use what we have to accomplish discipleship. Sometimes we don't think we have much to bring to the table when we are called to respond to the world's needs. And these days those needs seem pretty monumental. We might not be able to solve border problems or ease conflicts around the world, or even save very many children who are starving. We are not able to "cure" Ebola, or even do much about terrorism. We may not be able to stop persecution of Christians in hotspot areas. But there are a few things we can do right around us. We have resources that may be needed in dealing with those needs we see in friends, family, and circumstances we encounter in our lives.

The trouble is we sometimes think we have very little to bring to the table of need. Like the disciples, we see the problem being that we only have a few fish and loaves. It seems too little to deal with the problems at hand. Perhaps our answer is to turn the people away, suggest that they fend for themselves. Rather than see our potential to help we give up, or turn away from the problem. For example, we may not feel that we can do much to help some of the people we pray for on Sunday morning. But most of us can put a signature on a piece of paper we call “touch letter” and bring a word of comfort or encouragement when a sick one is feeling down. A simple gesture becomes God's voice of hope to someone in need.

Likewise, there are times we can help someone half way around the world. We might be good at sewing, so we can make a very simple dress for a young lady to wear who may not have many clothes. Little dresses for Africa does that. And we may actually make an impact on disease epidemics when we give to “Nothing but Nets”, reducing the damage malaria does to children living in mosquito infested areas.

What gets a little more tricky is believing that we can make a difference in our witness to our faith. We may feel we don't know enough to share our faith, or have words to express what it is we believe, or have the courage to speak up when someone needs support or comfort or courage. But it might just take a person being told that we are praying for them or letting them know an entire church is praying for them. Perhaps it means sharing a story of a faith experience, or telling others that we believe prayer is effective. I wonder if anyone told someone else about the video and our reaction to it last Sunday. And look at these brave singers who had the courage to share their faith through song.

And can we do anything about the persecutions happening around the world? Some of us have the capacity to write a simple editorial, but most of us have the capacity to learn all about our faith so that when push comes to shove we can make sure and certain statements about what it means to follow Jesus. We can also make sure that our children are taught the stories of faith.   
We can provide books, stories, and other experiences that teach them about our faith. Some of us can provide supplies, snacks and other things to help that learning experience be more fun and meaningful.

We all can do something that helps God share the Good News of the Gospel.

In just a little bit we will come to the table to share at the table of the Lord. We will come bringing all that we have. And God will accept and use what little we feel we bring.