

What If I Give It All?
John 6:1-13

I am sorry to inform you that James, your boyishly handsome and *young* pastor, cannot be here this morning
-but fortunately for you, he's asked me to speak this morning
--oh, my name is Andrew...you might know me as one of the 12 closest friends of Jesus...a disciple...or you probably know me as Simon Peter's brother
-please understand that *I'm* no preacher
--in fact, I've never shared anything like this in public
-my ministry is that I am an "inviter"
--I kinda' have this knack of just bringing people to Jesus
---I don't think it's anything that terribly special
---but evidently Jesus thinks it's pretty cool because a while back He called me to follow Him...that's what I was doing that day

That one particular day started off like most of the rest
-I woke up before the sunrise and, as usual, Jesus was already awake...off by Himself somewhere...praying
--when He returned to the house where we had spent the night, He said, "Let's leave now and go to the other side of the lake."
--with that, He was off...and so were we, scrambling to catch up

We walked for miles along the rocky shore of the Galilee
-as always, Jesus spoke quietly as we walked...continually teaching
--he'd stop occasionally and talk to the fishermen working their nets
--and He never passed up a chance to talk with the children who were constantly flocking to Him
---between you and me, I never understood why He'd *bother* with them...it's not like *they* were going to do anything to help *us*
----but you should've seen their eyes light up when He'd tell a joke...and, boy, would they giggle...and He'd laugh that belly laugh of His...they'd get the biggest kick out of that
---then there were plenty of hugs to go around...He'd tell them that He loved them, and we'd finally be on our way again
-as you might imagine, at *that* pace it took us a good part of the day to make it around Galilee...Jesus always did things with a purpose, but it's funny: I can't remember a single time when He hurried

Well into the afternoon, and without explanation, Jesus turned away from the water and trekked up the grassy mountainside
-we sat down with Him and talked about the events of the day
--I remember giving my brother a hard time when his stomach growled so loudly that we *all* hear it over our conversation
---Simon had *slept* later than the rest of us and hadn't had a chance to get any breakfast before we left
--now, about 8 hours later, we were all *more* than ready to eat, but ol' Simon's grumblin' tummy was especially empty (much to our entertainment!)
-and none of us rocket scientists had thought to bring any lunch

About that time, Jesus looked up...and then looked down the hillside
-and we turned and saw them, too, thousands & thousands of them
--in those days Jesus had a crowd with Him pretty much all the time
---many of them were your typical miracle-seekers, those wanting Jesus to perform some kind of magic act
--our journey that day had been so enjoyable, almost leisurely, that I hadn't even missed the crowds that thronged around us-OK, they were actually thronging around Jesus
-but now there were hundreds from all the villages around the lake were joining them...and they were making their way up the mountain toward us
--OK, technically, toward *Him*

I suppose we were all thinking the same thing at the same time
-"Uh, Jesus, if we are famished and don't even have any trail mix, then what is the world are we going to do with these people?"
--then, like Jesus could read our minds, He turned to Philip and asked, "Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?"
-"Uh, good question, Jesus...You know, we were kinda' hoping *You* were going to answer that one for us."
--that's pretty much about what Philip said..."You know, someone who worked for 8 months wouldn't earn enough money to buy an adequate amount of bread for this many people to even have a bite!"
---Philip wasn't being sarcastic, just realistic...the rest of us nodded in agreement

Jesus just smiled

-looking back, I suspect Jesus already knew what He was going to do and He was just testing Philip (and the rest of us)

That's when Simon jumped up and suggested that some of us try to head off the crowd and break the news to them: "Hey, folks, Hardee's is closed...you might as well go back home. No miracles today...please try again tomorrow."

-so John, James (John's brother, not your witty pastor), me, oh yeah, and I think Nathanael, tried to disperse the crowd

"Sorry, but we *have no food*. Nada. Zilcho."

That's when I felt this tugging on my robe

-expecting a beggar, I turned to find a boy about the age of Ben Griffin... "Sorry, son" I said in my best "Jesus" voice... "but we simply don't have anything to give you."

--that's when he opened his little knapsack and showed me the treasure he had hidden inside

---I tried not to laugh-I really *did* try-when I saw what was inside: five little barley bread cakes and two pickled fish

----a nice lunch for a poor boy, but not much more

I said, "That's awfully kind of you, but you don't need to share your lunch with me. Really, that's nice, but no thank you."

-he replied, "But sir, you don't understand, I want to give these to Jesus."

--yeah, *right*, kid...honestly, some people will do just about *anything* to get to see Jesus...now children are bribing Him with food...I'm telling you, this country's going to the dogs

-but he insisted, "I need to give these to Jesus. He can use *these*."

With *much* reluctance, I agreed

-we fought our way through the increasingly *restless* mass of humanity until we finally made it back to where Jesus was seated
--man, talk about embarrassed!

-"Uh, Jesus, here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish...but how far will *they* go among so many?"

--I'd hoped showing some logical thought would impress Jesus and minimize the utter humiliation I was feeling at the moment

Yeah, I heard the other disciples snickering: “Gee, Andrew, that’s like bringing a cup of water to try to irrigate 100 acres of wheat! Nice try there, bud.”

Jesus invited the boy to sit beside him, then he asked, “What do you expect Me to do with your lunch? This isn’t enough to fill *Me* up!”
-the boy replied, “Teacher, I *know* it isn’t very much...and I don’t know what You can or even *should* do with it. All I know is that I just want *You* to have all that *I* have.”

To our amazement, Jesus accepted the boy’s gift, and said, “Thank you.”
-then He looked at *us* and commanded, “Have the people sit down.”
--so we did...and *they* did...just sat down in the grass...well over 5000 of them when you count the women and children

Jesus took the loaves and prayed, “Father, thank You for meeting our every need, just like You promise. Your faithfulness to us is more than we could ever deserve. We offer to You our heartfelt gratitude as we eat of this bread.”

As He prayed, *that’s* when we realized something special was about to happen...I wish I could explain it, but the only word that’s adequate is “miracle”
-as He passed the bread around, and people took as much as they wanted, the bread never ran out
--it was no magic trick...Jesus couldn’t have had *that* much bread up his sleeve
--plain and simple, it was a miracle...a big one
-and then He did the same thing with the fish

The entire crowd-perhaps as many as 10 or 12 thousand-ate as much as they wanted
-I heard many comment that that was the first time in their whole life that they’d ever known was it was like to have a full stomach

When everyone was stuffed, Jesus commanded us disciples to gather up all of the leftovers...He wanted nothing to be wasted
-tough to believe, I know, but there were 12 baskets full of bread
--all of that from 5 small loaves

I've had a few years to reflect on the events of that day...

You know...no one asked this boy to give up his lunch

-how could *I* have known that one boy in a group of some 10,000 or so had some lunch with him?

-let me tell you, the only way I found out is because the boy offered it

The thing is, looking back on it, the boy *could* have given part of his lunch...certainly nothing wrong with keeping some for a little snack for the long walk back home

-it would only make common sense to hang on to part of it, really

--I mean, what if Jesus took it all and kept it?

-and surely Jesus could have done the miracle with only part...

say, 2 loaves and 1 fish...

-but the miracle wasn't for Jesus' benefit...and I'm not even sure that, in the big picture, Jesus did the miracle for the *crowd's* benefit

--but *I* sure learned a lesson that day...one I'll never forget

-and that *boy*?

--do you think that *he* will ever be the same again?

--someone who stepped out in faith and gave everything to Jesus

--someone who gave in complete faith and trust?

--someone who gave unconditionally? He didn't say, "I'll *give* this to you but only as long as *I* get to eat, too."

---but instead of all of that, this poor little boy simply gave

The way I figure it, that's exactly what you and I are called to do

-give joyfully, not because we *have* to, but because we want to

-give sacrificially, not because we expect to get something in return

-give unconditionally, not placing restrictions on our gift

-give freely...not holding anything back

Bring what you have-however much *or little*-and lay it at the altar

-do it in faith, in complete trust in God

--and see how He will multiply it and use it to reach and to minister to others

Am I talking about your money? Yes

Am I talking about your time? Yes

Am I talking about your gifts and talents? Yes

But more than anything, I'm talking about your heart and your life
-cannot be a Christian by giving part
-trusting Christ means surrendering everything...all that you have
and all that you are

[**SCOTT TOMLINSON** will sing this Ray Boltz song →]

*He heard the preacher say a single dime can feed
A hungry boy or girl with nothing to eat
So he pulled a dollar from the pocket of his jeans
And he asked his mama how many will this feed
She just smiled and when she told him ten
He reached back again*

CHORUS: *What if I give all I have?
What will that gift do?
My child a gift like that could change the world
It could feed a multitude
He didn't close his eyes or turn away
He saw the need and I can hear him say
What if I gave all*

*Three birthday dollars could have bought a special toy
But he reminds me of another little boy
Who gave to Jesus a gift of fish and bread
I wonder if he said*

REPEAT CHORUS

*And long ago a Father and a Son
Saw the children lost in sin
Can you see the tears in the Father's eyes
As Jesus says to Him*

*What if I give all I have?
What will that gift do?
My Son, that gift will change the world
It will free the multitudes*

*What if I give all I have?
What will that gift do?
My child, a gift like that can change the world*

*It could feed a multitude
We cannot close our eyes and turn them away
When we hear His Spirit call
We see the need now, let us hear us say
What if I give all?
What if I give all?*

How could He change & multiply your life if you'd surrender it today?
-I'm sure that some of you have been struggling with this decision for quite some time...just never able to work up the courage to take that step of faith...

- *To admit that you've sinned, that you've failed God
- *To express your trust in Jesus' death to pay the penalty for your sins
- *To declare your belief that God raised Him from the dead
- *To invite Jesus to be the Lord, or the Leader, of your life
- *To receive the forgiveness, new life, & eternal life that He gives you

And just like the boy came to Andrew...and then Andrew brought the boy to Jesus...this morning you can go to your "Andrew," your friend who brought you here...and you can say to him or her, "Would you lead me to the cross, to the Savior? Would you take me to Jesus?"

And if you are privileged enough to have someone ask you that, then let me remind you that you can pray with them right there where you are...you can come to the altar or these front pews and pray...or you can meet me down here...and we can pray together