

## Sermon Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> November 2021

### Reading John 6: 5 – 14

The reading from today's Gospel is probably the most well-known miracle from the Bible and one which I cannot count as to how many times I have heard it or read it, as part of my daily worship.

During the lockdowns the Community Project supplied upwards of 500 food parcels per week to members of our local community who needed them. We had the backing from charitable foundations and donations from far and wide in our community and wonderful volunteers to be able to do this but above all we did it with faith and prayer.

Jesus feeding the 5,000 make our efforts almost pale into insignificance over lockdown. However, God was there providing grants, volunteers and donations and enabled the vital work to be done, a miracle I believe. It shows when we seek God's guidance and help, He can and will provide.

Jesus is showing to His disciples by this miracle the power of faith and how when we follow God's way, we can overcome the difficulties we face. Why does Jesus, pick on Phillip by asking him 'where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?' This miracle took place in Galilee at a place called Bethsaida. Jesus knew Phillip came from Bethsaida and he would have known where they could buy a great quantity of bread but what was Phillip's reaction; he started to work out how much it would cost and replied 'eight months wages would not buy enough bread for each one to have a bite.'

Jesus knew the answer but he was testing Phillip's faith and show him that financial cost and resources are not the most important ones. How often do we assume what is and what is not possible and place a financial cost on it? By doing so we are trying to limit what God wants us to do and financial cost is the classic limiter and we say it can't be done.

Some years ago, in the Community Project, the Trustee's met the day before the wages had to be paid. We were owed money from various funders but it had not arrived. We prayed and laid the situation before God and asked

for His help. After prayer, one of the Trustee's said that he would cover the wage bill but this was not needed because the next day all the money we were owed came in and the wages were paid. God answered our prayers by making sure the money arrived and placing on the heart of a trustee, after prayer, to cover the wage bill. It was a miracle!

This example and the miracle of feeding the 5,000 shows that we must never apply human limits on what God can do. God can do the miraculous, trust Him to provide the way forward and the resources.

The provision of the 5 loaves and two fishes by the young boy was Jesus once again showing the disciples what you can do with faith. The boy gave up his lunch to Jesus without question but when they presented the boy and his lunch to Jesus they said 'but how far will they go among so many?' They immediately applied a human context to the situation. The food offered, no matter how small, was enough for Jesus to use. If we offer nothing for God to use, He will have nothing to use. However, when we offer even a little to God, He can turn it into something great, financial or otherwise; we all have

something to offer God which He will use for the greater good.

Look at the figures from Compassion and what they do with individual sponsorship monies given monthly, in three countries. They teach young people about God, help them and their families with food and resources for education for the young people and keep the youngsters out of trouble. I know the young man Jeril I have sponsored in he was 4/5 is now 18 and preparing to go to university, to study civil engineering so that he can work in his country to make it better, his words not mine. My £28 sponsorship will continue till he is 22 and qualified. A small amount in real terms which is going so far to help him and his family and to know Jesus in his life.

A small amount, just like the five loaves and two fishes given by the boy, but one which with God's guidance provides so much. So have faith in God and do not apply human limitations on what He can achieve for you and for others. Amen