

Before there was Enough

JOHN 6:1-15

One detail in this morning's reading is easy to pass over.

John tells us there was plenty of grass. To have a seat, to wait for, to rest.

With thousands of people, five loaves, two fish, and twelve baskets of leftovers, the grass may not seem especially important, but it gave everyone space and, with that, a sense of belonging.

But the mention of grass, hunger, the crowd, money, and food gives the story a real-world dimension. A reality so familiar to people, no matter their origin, place, or situation. We all know that reality. Some have experienced it in real life.

People who were walking are now sitting. A crowd became a gathering of people waiting to be fed. **And Jesus was there with them.** They were included, sitting around Jesus.

The Lord is my shepherd; I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul.

Jesus asked Philip where they could buy bread for everyone. Philip looked at the people and thought about the cost. Even six months' wages would not buy enough for each person to have a little.

Andrew found a boy with five barley loaves and two fish. But he could see the problem too.

"What is that among so many?"

It is an honest question. Philip understood money. Andrew understood quantities. Both saw that the need for food was far greater than the supply.

And that is a familiar feeling.

Sometimes we look at what is needed and then at what we have, and the distance between them seems enormous. There is not enough money, not enough time, not enough energy. The figures do not work.

The story begins with people whose needs are real. And Jesus notices them. Why? Because *“the Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing.”*

Notice that the meal begins with thanks

John tells us that Jesus took the bread and gave thanks.

At that point, the crowd was still hungry. The bread was still five loaves. No one had yet eaten.

The thanks comes before there is any visible answer to the problem.

Jesus was not pretending there was plenty when there was very little.

Yet he receives the bread with **gratitude**.

That gives the Harvest Thanksgiving more meaning: it's more than celebrating a successful crop or a well-stocked cupboard. It's a thanksgiving for the future.

We recognise that life comes to us through gifts we did not create. And we give thanks before having it in front of us.

We can buy a loaf, but the label price doesn't tell the whole story of how it arrived.

Behind it are soil and rain, skill and patience, people working early and late.

A simple meal holds more lives than we can count.

Thanksgiving makes room for that larger story. It acknowledges the work of others and the generosity of God.

It does not mean everything is easy. A person can be grateful for today's meal and still be anxious about tomorrow's. Thanks and worry can sit at the same table.

So, at Harvest, we thank God for this year's supply, but we also pray for next year. For some, food brings pleasure and good memories. For others, it brings worry about prices, bills and what will be left at the end of the week.

Jesus gives thanks and blesses the food amid an unresolved situation.

This is more than a lesson about sharing

John says that when Jesus shared the food, people received as much as they wanted. Afterwards, they had enough.

Philip was right: people wouldn't have enough food, and John noticed a boy with some food, but he logically understood it was hopelessly inadequate. Jesus, however, gave until they were satisfied.

What looked illogical became part of the meal Jesus gave.

This is not only a story about feeding the hungry; this is the story about the Kingdom of God. Jesus was teaching Isaiah 55 and the reality of the Kingdom:

"Hear, everyone who thirsts; come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread and your earnings for that which does not satisfy? Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food." (Isaiah 55:1-2)

The Kingdom, however, is not only about bread falling from heaven, but it's also about someone whose gifts are multiplied. Jesus did not dismiss the boy's food as irrelevant.

There is a lesson for the church here.

We all have gifts and talents, and with God's blessing, they can be multiplied. Even a small thing you do in God's Kingdom can be multiplied.

For example, a meal on a neighbour's doorstep, a word of encouragement or support, a prayer for someone in need, or a quiet presence. Our gifts might not answer every difficulty. A contribution to a food project does not put the whole world right. A place at someone's table cannot end loneliness everywhere. Coming to Church every Sunday might not bring the solution, but it is not meaningless, especially when it carries God's presence and blessings.

In the presence of Jesus, the choice is not between solving everything and doing nothing. There is room for action: the five loaves and two fish we have in our bags.

So this story is not only about sharing bread, but about offering the little we have to God, and, with His blessing, His Kingdom grows.

After the meal, Jesus asked for the remaining pieces to be gathered.

There were twelve baskets.

The same Jesus who gives so freely also cares for what remains. Plenty does not make the bread worthless.

Jesus did not lecture the crowd about the remaining food. He simply arranged for it to be gathered.

The meal ends with attention, not waste.

Then the story takes an unexpected turn.

People wanted to make Jesus king by force, and he withdrew.

He fed them, but he wouldn't become someone they could possess. Their excitement did not give them ownership of him.

Jesus is more than a useful provider they can fit into their plans.

The multiplication of bread and fish is a sign. The meal points beyond itself to Jesus himself. He noticed hunger, received ordinary bread with thanks, fed people generously and cared about what remained.

This is the Jesus at the centre of our Harvest celebration.

Our thanks, our sharing and our gifts begin with **his** generosity. People sat down before they fully understood him. They ate before they knew where the story was going.

This morning, our Harvest celebration gathers around Jesus.

We thank Him for the food, supplies, and blessings we've received; we thank Him for what is coming, trusting in His promises and care. There is enough, there is plenty, and there is grass to sit on; there is room for everyone to wait.

There are people who do not yet understand him, but who are nevertheless fed.

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