

**13** As soon as Jesus heard the news, he left in a boat to a remote area to be alone. But the crowds heard where he was headed and followed on foot from many towns. **14** Jesus saw the huge crowd as he stepped from the boat, and he had compassion on them and healed their sick.

**15** That evening the disciples came to him and said, “This is a remote place, and it’s already getting late. Send the crowds away so they can go to the villages and buy food for themselves.”

**16** But Jesus said, “That isn’t necessary—you feed them.”

**17** “But we have only five loaves of bread and two fish!” they answered.

**18** “Bring them here,” he said. **19** Then he told the people to sit down on the grass. Jesus took the five loaves and two fish, looked up toward heaven, and blessed them. Then, breaking the loaves into pieces, he gave the bread to the disciples, who distributed it to the people. **20** They all ate as much as they wanted, and afterward, the disciples picked up twelve baskets of leftovers. **21** About 5,000 men were fed that day, in addition to all the women and children!

Leader: The Word of God for the People of God.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

From Shortage to Surplus

8.6.17

Opening remarks

scripture summary

When Jesus learned of His cousin John’s death, He retreated to a quiet place alone, where He could grieve this tragic loss. He got into a boat and crossed to the other side of the Lake.

Now when the people spotted Him in the boat, they followed Him.

While Jesus desired to be alone, He soon discovered a welcoming committee of thousands.

Though He Himself was in need (peace, quiet, healing), He had compassion for those who came to see Him. He touched them and healed them. Thousands of them.

Even when Jesus was in deep need of renewal, He had enough compassion and love to share with the crowd who sought Him out.

*Then the Disciples came and encouraged Him to let them go home,*

It could be that the Disciple really cared about the people, or maybe they cared more about their own stomachs. Their own needs. Either way, they suggested, implored, begged Jesus to send the crowd away.

But, Jesus surprised them. He had nothing to do with that thought. Instead, He had another idea.

*“You give them something to eat. You feed them.”*

Somehow, He turned their complaint and suggestion into an opportunity to serve.

*“But Lord, we don’t have any food.”*

Undaunted, Jesus surprised them again.

*“Bring Me what you have.”*

Then he blessed and broke the bread. He gave the food to the Disciples to distribute to the crowd.

Reluctantly, the Disciples passed the little food they had to the hungry mass of people.

And an amazing thing happened. As the disciples passed out the food, they never ran out. They always had more to give away.

*That is how God's love is. There is always enough.  
You cannot give away your love without having more love to give away.  
The more you love, the more you **can** love. You never run out.  
That is God's love.*

That is what happened with the bread and the fish. They kept giving it away and having more to give away.

The Gospel writer puts it this way: *"Everyone ate until they were full."* (v.20)

And then the Disciples went around and picked up all the leftovers. Twelve baskets full.  
Out of their scarcity came abundance.  
From their shortage came a surplus.

No matter what was going on, Jesus always had compassion for those around Him. In His own pain of grief and loss, He retreated for a brief moment. When He saw the great throng of people, He cared for their needs above His own.

Jesus was never in a hurry. He always took the time to tend to the needs around Him. Deliberate and intentional, He cared deeply for people - especially those who were rejected by others. He never hurried through any conversation. He gave complete attention to whomever He was with.

He never judged people. He accepted them as they were. He didn't question why they were in whatever predicament they were in. He received all openly.

Why is it, then, that we who follow Jesus seem to always be in a hurry- rushing from one thing to another?  
Why do we move from person to person without really going deeper?  
Why is it that we can't always see as God sees?  
When we see a shortage, God sees a surplus.  
When we cry scarcity, God exclaims *abundance*.  
When we say *"there's not enough,"* God proclaims *"There's more than enough!"*

What we glean from today's lesson:  
As we give, we always have enough.  
God always provides what we need.  
You cannot give away your love without having more love to give away.

As we prepare to come to the Table of our Lord this morning, we can be assured that God's love is unending. God's love is Abundant. There is no shortage of God's love. God's Love comes to All People. In God's Economy, there is always more than enough.

We can go from Shortage to Surplus. Scarcity to Abundance. Greedy to Generous. Selfish to Sharing.  
For out of our scarcity, God finds abundance. Out of our Shortage God brings Surplus. There is no limit to What God Can do. In some amazing way, ALL are fed and satisfied. Amen.