

## July 31 "We Only Have Loaves and Fishes"

I read a story about a town in New Mexico called Portales. The town sign welcomes people to a town of "12,493 friendly people and 8 or 10 grouches." It seems one day a young boy was going from house to house to collect old bottles to earn some money. Stopping at the home of the "town grouch" he asked if she had any coke bottles. "No!" He asked if she had any Whiskey bottles. "Do you think I'm the type who would have old whiskey bottles?" Thinking about it for a moment he asked, "Do you have any old vinegar bottles?" How sad if we as God's children give the impression to others that we are only negative, and bitter. When Jesus and His disciples faced thousands of hungry people the disciples saw the negative side; it can't be done, but thankfully, Jesus focused on the positive and knew He would help these people..

From time to time we are all negative people saying to ourselves like the disciples, "all I have are a few loaves and fishes." Life can get that way. As parents we want the best for our family but it seems all we have are some loaves and fishes. Kids want all the new stuff they see on T.V. but get depressed because all they see are some loaves and fishes. Our jobs can get us down as all we believe we make loaves and fishes. People who are hungry, sick, and lonely only see a few loaves and fishes around them. A "loaves and fishes" mentality can cause us to be filled with self-pity, selfishness, low self-esteem, and a self-contained lifestyle.

Chuck Swindoll writes about a story from Massachusetts in the 1920's. A man had tripped and fallen into the ocean. He couldn't swim so he called for help. His friends were far away and they couldn't hear him. A young man, a good swimmer, was sunbathing nearby. He heard the drowning man's calls for help but decided to just watch as the man drowned. The family of the deceased was so angry they took the young man to court. They lost the case because they said the young man had no legal responsibility to help the drowning man. Living for ourselves in such a short-sighted way is what the sinful nature is all about. Thankfully we see in Scripture that Jesus is a Giving God in spite of our "loaves and fishes" mentality. We see our little lives from the wrong side of binoculars, but Jesus sees so much more. Jesus always wants us to have more. In John 10:10 He tells us that He has come to give us life, life in abundance, life to the full, here and eternally for those who trust Him as Lord and Savior. Looking to our Giving Lord Who gave His life for our salvation, we, like the pity party loaves and fishes disciples, can turn to Jesus in faith and now find a pleasurable party, a playful party in the hands of our God. Faith looks to Jesus and away from our loaves and fishes to and real hope and joy.

So, which do you want? Do you want to live as a "loaves and fishes" disciple focusing on the have-nots of life or a disciple who looks to Jesus Who has the answer for us? Because God is Good.. All the Time, He wants you to have that abundant life with joy and hope eternal. Just as Jesus showed the thousands Who He really was and the joy He could bring, you can live with your faith shining through and a heart filled with an attitude of gratitude to God and I can assure you that no one will ask you for an old vinegar bottle. Amen.. .pastor matthews