

Enough
Matthew 14:31-21
Ypsilanti First United Methodist Church
March 1, 2009

Rev. Melanie Lee Carey

In his life and ministry, Jesus surrounded himself with disciples. Jesus called both men and women to work with him and in the three years of his earthly ministry he spent time teaching them about God's love and God's kingdom. Jesus had many lessons to teach the disciples and during the season of Lent, we will be exploring some of these lessons and how they relate to our own discipleship today. The lessons we will explore come from a book by Mary Jean Gorman called *Watching the Disciples, Learning from their mistakes*. And starting on Sunday March 15th, at 11 a.m. pastor Rey will be leading a four week class based on this Lenten sermon series. If you would like to attend this class talk with Pastor Rey today after the service, or contact the church office.

Today's lesson is about the concept of enough. "How much is enough?" We wonder how much is enough when we pack our suitcase for a trip, when we look at our retirement accounts if we are fortunate enough to have them, or when we consider the church budget or the budget for our nation, or our own personal budgets. How much is enough?

It is a difficult question to answer because the answer as to what is actually enough varies from person to person and from situation to situation. But Jesus knew that how much is enough is an important faith question so he addressed it with his disciples on more than one occasion.

When Jesus sent the disciples out to preach and heal he said: Take nothing for your journey except a staff, no bread, no bag, no money in your wallet. Wear sandals and put on tunics. Jesus assured them that what they had was enough for the journey. And Jesus encouraged them to accept the hospitality offered to them in the towns they visited. Jesus wanted the disciples to travel light, not only because it was easier to move from place to place this way, but also because he wanted to instill in them the need for community and for dependence on God.

Because the disciples needed a place to stay and food to be shared with them, other people also got involved in Jesus' ministry. Had the disciples carried enough bread, money and clothing with them, they might have missed important lessons about humility, trust and gratitude. They might also have kept the ministry to themselves and not involved the community in the ways that they did.

How much is enough?

The story of Jesus feeding five thousand men along with numerous other women and children is found in all four gospels. There are also two more stories about Jesus feeding of about four thousand people recorded in Matthew 15 and Mark 8. How much is enough? Clearly with six stories of feeding thousands of people with seemingly meager resources gives us a clue to how important this question is to Jesus' ministry.

How much is enough?

You know this story...Jesus had been teaching and healing all day and it was getting late and people were hungry. And the disciples told Jesus it was time to call it quits on the teaching for the day and how about he send everyone into town for some food. But Jesus shocked them when he said—"yes, people are hungry, but instead of going into town, you give them something to eat."

"What? You have got to be kidding."

"Jesus, come on", they say—"we have nothing here but five loaves and two fish." That's it, that's all we have. This can't be enough to feed all these people.

The text doesn't say, but my guess is that Jesus looked at them and made a motion for them to hand over what they had—And they did just they. They gave Jesus the five loaves and the two fish and Jesus

said some prayers over the food and then he broke it up into pieces and he gave it to the disciples to give to the crowds.

AND IT WAS ENOUGH! That is the story and it is also the lesson.

It was enough. How much is enough?. With Jesus what we have plus him is always enough.

Let me say that again. With Jesus what we have plus him is always enough.

This is such an important lesson for us all, especially now, here in Michigan, especially in these economic times. How much is enough? With Jesus what we have plus him is always enough. It is more than enough—remember in the story after they all ate, they still had leftovers!!

How often do we look at our own needs, the needs of our church, the needs of our community and beyond and say it isn't enough? How often do we look at our resources and say—it isn't enough. It isn't enough God—I don't have what I need. I can't possibly do it! My part won't make a difference. It's just a drop in the bucket. Why put in the little the I have when it won't matter anyway? Why even try because my boat is too small and the sea is too wide?

It isn't enough God. It isn't enough God for the all foreclosures and job losses here—We don't have enough God—and it just keeps getting worse. Have you heard the news? Have you seen the forecasts. We lead the nation God in unemployment and people in our church have lost their jobs. All we have are a few good people, a bit of bread and a little bit of money—That's it God—It isn't enough.

And like Jesus did long ago with the disciples, God also gestures to us—asking us to hand God what we have. “Hand it over to me”, God says. And when we do, then God prays over it, blesses it, breaks it and gives it back to us to share. God says, give it to me and I will show you that it is enough. It is more than enough. You'll see.

Here in this church God has shown us this lesson time and again. Remember our kingdom assignments? Remember when a couple years ago, someone gave \$5,000 to the church and we gave it out to 50 volunteers and we generated more than \$65,000 for missions and ministries. Remember when last year we generated over \$21,000 from the sale of our possessions? Let's not forget that in total during these kingdom assignments we have generated more than \$360,000! And you should also know that many of us have shared this kingdom assignment story in other churches... and people have been inspired by it. You should also know that from that original \$5,000 now other churches are doing the kingdom assignment and even more is being

generated from that original gift. Who knows how much it will be, when it is all added up—I am sure that the total will amaze us!

What did we learn from the kingdom assignment? What do we know to be true about God's ability to multiply our gifts?

I know it is hard but, let's not now, not in this economy, make the mistake of assuming that because what we have is not enough to solve that problem that we need not do anything. Let's not throw up our hands and give in to the doubt and depression that is all around us. Let us instead offer what we have to God. Let us instead trust that with God all things are possible and it will be enough. It will be more than enough. I want you now to say it with me:

With Jesus, what I have is more than enough.

With Jesus, what I have is more than enough.

I want you to write it down somewhere in your bulletin and then I want you take it home and pin it on your fridge, or you bathroom mirror or put it in your car—so that you will see it and remember the lesson.

With Jesus, What I have is more than enough.

In this economy, in this time, no matter how meager my circumstances might be—With Jesus, What I have is more than enough.

On the night he was betrayed he took bread... he blessed it and he broke it and he gave it to the disciples and he said—this is more than enough for what you need to really live—this is more than enough. Remember this, each time you eat of this bread and drink of this cup—it is more than enough. It is more than enough. Amen.