

Faith In the Home

Tenth Sunday After Pentecost: Matthew 14:13-20, "You Give Them Something to Eat."

Being called to faith by God is glorious because in that call to faith we are granted salvation through His Son. The assurance of the salvation and forgiveness that we have in Christ is wonderful, but where our faith can be intimidating is the call of God for us to share our faith with others. Where sharing our faith in Christ can be downright scary is doing that in time and place where there is hostility towards God, His teachings, and His followers. The other question that we must ask when we deal with God's call to action to share the Gospel is, "How do we effectively share the Gospel of Jesus with others?" The text from Matthew 14:13-20, helps us and gives us hope in our call from God to share our faith.

This story of the "Feeding of the 5000" is familiar. All four Gospel accounts share this story with different aspects highlighted, but all of them focusing on Jesus' miracle of feeding so many people with so little food. Here are the highlights from Matthew's account: Jesus hears of His cousin, John the Baptist's death. Matthew writes that Jesus went by Himself, but we know that His disciples were with Him. Perhaps the intent is for Jesus was to have rest, and His disciples to needed some as well. However, on the lake shores Jesus was spotted and crowds gathered and followed Jesus on foot. When Jesus reached the shore, He saw the crowds and had compassion on them, and healed their sick. When evening came the disciples came to Him and urged Jesus to send the crowds away so they could go buy something to eat. But Jesus said, "You give them something to eat." Then the disciples looked at this impossible request and told Jesus we only have five loaves of bread and two fish.

It would have been impossible for the disciples to feed such a large crowd with five loaves of bread and two fish. Guess what, it is impossible for us to share the Gospel with out Jesus as well. Jesus tells the disciples to bring what bread and fish they had to Him. He gave thanks to God, His Father, broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. All ate and were satisfied, and there was enough for the disciples as well. Jesus telling the disciples to feed the crowds was a teaching moment to get His disciples to lean on Him. Our task of sharing the faith is not about us going out by ourselves and plotting ways to entice unbelievers to believe. It's about us leaning on Jesus.

That's what we do in every aspect in our lives. We walk in a relationship with Jesus. He will build His Church. We need only to understand that in every aspect of our lives we are to posture ourselves in a way where we seek to glorify God in what we do. God will do the rest.

How do we posture ourselves in a way for God to use us? By realizing that God has placed you where He wants you to be. He placed people around you that He has called you to love as you love yourself. We also posture ourselves through seeking God through prayer, and receiving His Word and Sacraments. The disciples went to Jesus and said we don't have enough, and today

we go to Jesus for help to. Not only will God use for His glory when we seek to serve others, but He will satisfy our needs as well, too.

How do we apply these things at home and model these things to our children?

1. Martin Luther, in his studies of Scripture, came to understand and teach the doctrine of vocation. Your vocation is not just a way to make a living, but it is the role that God gave you in regards to those you are in relationship with. A woman's vocation could be daughter, sister, wife, mother, friend, cousin, and job/career. It is not limited to these. In the same a man's vocation could be son, brother, husband, father, friend, cousin, and job/career. Who you are surrounded with in these vocations are your mission fields. If we can apply our joy that we have in Jesus our roles and vocations, then the quality of what we put into our roles will increase, and then so will the quality of our Christian witness.

2. Spend time with God for your edification. The more you read Scripture and pray the more you will start to care about what God cares about. My own personal testimony is that when I started to read my Bible out of a desire to grow closer to God, I started to care about His desire to save the lost, meaning I started to care about other people's eternal destination.

3. Remember that God does the heavy lifting and the work of building His Church and saving people. However, we get the privilege and the excitement of being part other's salvation story. He may say to you, "You give them something to eat," but that is when you lean on Him in prayer and trust that He will provide the means.

4. A good prayer to posture ourselves in a position to be open to God's use is this part of St. Patrick's prayer, "The Breastplate":

Christ with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me,
Christ in me, Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
Christ on my right, Christ on my left,
Christ where I lie, Christ where I sit, Christ where I arise,
Christ in the heart of everyone who thinks of me,
Christ in the mouth of every one who speaks to me,
Christ in every eye that sees me,
Christ in every ear that hears me.