

## Learning Together 9<sup>th</sup> After Pentecost Covid-19 – Loaves and Fishes

When we talk about following Jesus, we usually mean we hear or read stories about the things he did and said, and then we try to live our lives in kind of the same way. For example, Jesus said we should love God and love our neighbor as ourselves, so we try to show our love by being kind and sharing with others. Today's story is about people actually following Jesus around, up hillsides, down by the lakeshore, they were following him all over the place! Have you ever followed someone like that, or been followed? Maybe you played a game called "follow the leader" and took turns following each other?

One day, Jesus was trying to go be by himself, so he walked far away from the town to a deserted place. But the people followed him there, too! Instead of getting mad or frustrated, Jesus decided to spend time with them, healing people and teaching God's ways to them. He did this all day right up until supper time. People were getting hungry, but they were far away from any stores or restaurants. Jesus' friends wanted to eat the supper they brought with them, but they couldn't very well start eating with all those other hungry people around, so they asked Jesus to tell everyone it was time to go home.

Instead of doing that, Jesus asked the disciples to share what food they had. "We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish," they answered. They were sure that wasn't enough to feed the huge crowd of more than 5000 people. But Jesus took the food, held it up in blessing, and then broke the loaves into pieces for the disciples to hand out to the crowd. Then an amazing thing happened. Everyone ate until they were full and when they collected what was left over of the broken pieces, it filled twelve baskets.

In our Christian tradition, we call this a miracle. Jesus did something that seems impossible. He fed more than 5000 people with only five loaves of bread and two fish. I wonder how that happened? I wonder if Jesus used something like magic to turn the five loaves of bread into five thousand? Or I wonder if, when people saw Jesus and his friends share the little bit of food they brought with them, other people were inspired to share what little they had brought with them, too, until everyone had enough? No matter how it happened, it was an amazing, miraculous event!

I wonder if you have ever had someone share food with you when you were hungry and had nothing to eat? I wonder if you have ever been the one sharing your food? Maybe someone at school forgot their lunch. Maybe you invited someone to stay for a meal at your house so they wouldn't have to wait until they go home to have something to eat. Sharing a meal together can be a special time.

My challenge to you this week is to feed someone who is hungry. You can do this at home with your family – maybe make a special meal or bring someone breakfast in bed. If you feel safe doing so, you could bring a meal to someone you know who could use it, or you could volunteer with an organization like *<name your local food pantry or soup kitchen>* that gets food to those in need. Or, you could raise money or donate to a food

charity like *<name your local food pantry or soup kitchen>* or the Canadian Foodgrains Bank.

Please say this echo prayer with me:

Holy God... thank you for our food...for the farmers that grow it...and the grocery store workers who sell it....Please bless those...who are hungry...and help us...to share with those in need...Amen



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