

“Do You Want to Biggee-Size That?”

John 6:1-15

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Stone Mountain, Georgia
July 27, 2003

I recall the first time I was asked the question in a fast food restaurant. “Do you want to biggee-size that?” It was a good thing my daughter was with me because I did not have a clue what the clerk said or meant. I was getting ready to say that all I wanted to do was eat my burger and fries when Amy came to my rescue and told her I did not want to enlarge the size of my order or cholesterol intake. Later she explained to me the meaning of “biggee-size.”

In order to feed the crowd that followed Jesus to the far side of the Sea of Galilee, he had to “biggee-size” the one order of fish and chips available to him. This miracle made an impact not only upon the crowd but also the four Gospel writers. Each of them included this miracle in his book, the only miracle that holds that distinction. Let me share the story with you, especially on this day when the campers in our summer day camp have led us in worship and our attention has been drawn to children.

Jesus was ready for a break. He had been with the masses teaching and healing and was tired. He and his disciples crossed the Sea of Galilee to get some rest only to be followed by the people. Instead of being alone, they were surrounded by thousands of needy people.

As evening approached, Jesus asked Philip a very intriguing question. “Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?” John 6:5. In total disbelief, Philip responded by saying, “Eight months wages would not buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!” John 6:7.

Andrew spoke up and said, “Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?” John 6:9. Without Jesus, not very far; however, with him as far as necessary.

Jesus instructed the disciples to have the people sit in small groups. He blessed the food that was provided by this little boy and the disciples began distributing it. Everyone ate until they were full, including the twelve disciples that served the people.

Needless to say, the people were impressed with Jesus’ ability and were ready to make him a king. Anyone that could produce this kind of miracle got their vote. However, Jesus wanted to be neither an earthly king nor a fast food cook, so he slipped away from the crowd and retreated to the mountains to pray.

There are so many parts of this story that could be dissected and highlighted. I have to discipline myself lest I try to cover too much today. I would love to probe the minds of Philip and Andrew and discover why they responded to Jesus’ challenge the way they did. That’s for another time and sermon, though. In light of our desire to be led in worship by children this morning, let’s let the little boy in this story teach us what God would have us learn by asking three questions.

First of all, if this little boy had not shared his lunch that day with Jesus, would anyone have eaten? I don’t know the answer to this. John doesn’t tell us what Jesus would have done had this child been unwilling to share. What I do know is that he was willing to share what he had and Jesus fed thousands with it.

I wonder how many needs have gone unmet because we were unwilling to share, though? How many opportunities to help others have been lost because of our selfishness, timidity or indifference?

Can you imagine how difficult this must have been for this little boy to give his lunch to Andrew? We know from the contents of his lunch that he came from a poor family, very poor. Only the poorest people ate barley bread. It was held in contempt by anyone that was able to afford better. You would think this would make him even more hesitant to share, or perhaps embarrassed to do so. But, it didn’t. He gave what he had and Jesus used it to feed thousands.

Let me encourage you to be more generous. Take an inventory of what you have and ask God how He would have you use it. When you hear of a need, instead of walking away in indifference, offer to help by sharing what you have. I think you will find a level of joy and peace you have never experienced.

When my children were younger, I wanted to teach them to be unselfish. Occasionally, when we would go to a restaurant, I would encourage them to look around to see if they felt like anyone looked down on their luck. If so, I would ask the waiter to bring me their check so that I could pay for it. We would never let the other family know what we were doing but instructed the waiter to tell them after we were gone.

Now, I did not do this often and I certainly did not do it because I had extra money burning my pockets. I did it to show them that being sensitive to others' needs and sharing can be done simply and spontaneously, like the little boy in this story.

Secondly, out of all the people in that crowd, who was the unlikeliest to be used by God that day to feed all those people? I would be willing to say that if you had scanned that hillside, this little boy would have been one of the last selected. The odds of him being the one to hold the keys to the kitchen were astronomical. Even Andrew brought him to Jesus with a healthy dose of skepticism.

How many of you chose twenty-six year old Ben Curtis to win the British Open last week? He was ranked 396 among the professional golfers and this was his first major tournament. Was he even on your radar screen? I doubt it. He certainly was not on mine!

The world is filled with people that think they have no chance of making a difference in the lives of others. They feel they have so little to offer that giving it would have no impact and withholding it would not be noticed. How sad and untrue.

Isn't there a song that says, "Little is much if God is in it?" Jesus said it only takes faith the size of a mustard seed to move mountains. The theory of multiplication makes the little things in life important.

Let me encourage you to get rid of your inferiority complex. Quit comparing yourself to others and making excuses for inactivity and start using your time, talents and resources, however small, to make the world better.

Finally, can you imagine the story this little boy had for his parents when he arrived home that evening? He had to be like my children and yours when they rushed into the house after an incredible day at school or on the ball field where they had done something unbelievable. I can hear him now as he said, "Mom and dad, you are not going to believe how a holy man named Jesus used me and my lunch!"

If you were going to tell your family of a time Jesus used you to help someone else, what would you share? I hope you don't have to think long and hard, but have many stories from which to choose. *Let me encourage you to make yourself available to Jesus daily and then to share with your family what he is doing in and through you.*

The prophet Isaiah wrote, "And a little child will lead them" Isaiah 11:6. This prophecy has come true today, hasn't it? This nameless boy has led our thoughts and given us much to contemplate. In a way, he is still giving, isn't he? I'm grateful and hope you are, too.