

## “Stone Soup”

John 6:1–14

A traveler is walking down a lonely road. He's tired and he's hungry. He comes to a fine house and thinks, "Maybe I can get something to eat!" But just to be sure, he picks up a smooth, round stone and puts it into his bag.

When the woman of the house tells him she has nothing to eat he says, "Well, then ... do you have a pot so I can make some stone soup?"

She's never heard of stone soup. Out of curiosity she lets him in, lights a fire, puts on a big pot of water, and waits for the miracle to begin.

There is miracle in the story, but it's not the kind of miracle she expects.

It makes me wonder if the miracle in this week's Gospel lesson is something other than we have always imagined. Join us for worship and find out.

For the last eight weeks, the Gospel readings have been drawn from five chapters in Mark (Mark 2–6). This Sunday we begin a series of readings, walking through a single chapter in John. This Sunday the Scripture is John 6:1–14. It is the familiar story of the feeding of the 5000.

It is a story found in all four Gospels. Each tells it with different details. In John it is seen as a “sign” showing Jesus is the Son of God. One question to ask is, “Is this a miracle of multiplication or addition?” Multiplication says Jesus took the loaves and fish and blessed them and they were multiplied (there was enough for everybody). Addition says the boy who had four loaves and two fish showed he trusted Jesus and shared out of the abundance he had been given rather than fearing there was not enough for others and keeping it to himself. By example the boy opened the hearts of others and they too trusted and learned the power and miracle of living in abundance and sharing what they had so there was enough for all. I believe it is just as much a miracle to change people’s hearts as it is to multiply loaves and fishes.

At its heart it is a story about fears that we will not be cared for; about our tendencies to see the world looking at the headlines and our own interpersonal struggles through a lens of scarcity. Rather than trusting God’s work of feeding, of abundantly providing for our needs, and at the same time calling us to help provide for the needs of others. We can learn to be grateful for what we have and to use our blessings to bless others.

The more we begin to imagine the world of this story, we see it’s about how we see the world and what we do with what we already have. God has already given us a world out of nothing, already provided sun and earth and water and seeds. Everything we have comes from God and will return to God.

The disciples can see that feeding so many people would be impossible. As Andrew points out, all they can find are five barley loaves and two fish belonging to a boy in the crowd. But then, Jesus gets them to see what’s there with new eyes. The disciples are coming from a place of fear, of scarcity: there will never be enough! Six months’ wages would not buy enough bread to feed them! What Jesus shows us is that whatever we have, whatever God has already given us, is always enough; if we look at it through Jesus’ eyes and if we decide to share. If we let go of our fear and stop holding on to what’s “ours” so tightly. We can do those things we never thought we could.

If we focus on what we have and use it to bless God and others rather than on what we do not have, we can go farther, do more, and know the joy of sharing.

What has God given you that God can multiply and use to bless the world?

Think about it – Pray about it – Live it

*Bob*