

Ingratitude

Matthew 14:13-21 Doss/Cherry Spring 8-2-2020 Pastor Bill Mosley

In mid July of 1999, I was in a car wreck outside Lafayette, Louisiana that took my camping trailer away.

The wreck backed up traffic on I 10 for two & a half hours. People there had different attitudes. Some were trying to help. Some were mad at us for slowing them down. Some were grateful. No one was hurt in this wreck. Not us, or anyone else. And for that I am grateful.

We've all had times like this. A tornado hits. Someone dies in a car wreck. Heavy rains cause flooding. Your doctor has bad news for you. It's a kind of wake-up call. You get to taking things & people for granted. In the routine of daily living you lose the appreciation & gratitude for the good things & good people around you. & then there's a pandemic & you have to stay home & when you do go out you have to wear a mask & maybe goggles.....

You forget that life is a gift, & it can be taken away. And something happens to say, wake up & be grateful.

One day Jesus gets the news that his cousin John is dead, executed whimsically by Herod. He wants to grieve. Surely he's thinking about how he will make the same sacrifice for the sins of the world on a Roman cross. But a tragic death in a famous family renews interest. The crowd would not let him alone, even way out in the country.

There was not enough food. There were hungry crowds. The disciples complain about the isolation of the place, the lateness of the day. Send the people away, that's their solution. Let them feed themselves. Jesus says, You feed them. The disciples say, this little bit is all we have, five loaves, two fish. And then, suddenly, or perhaps gradually, there was enough food for everyone, and more. Leftovers. Abundance.

And it's not until we do like the disciples did ... obediently, even if hesitantly, bring what little we have to God, watch as God blesses it, receive it back, & give it all away that everyone is blessed & filled ...even us! Then look at the leftovers!

There wasn't enough until thanks had been given for what there was - & until everyone understood that God in Christ was in charge, that there would be enough, & that each person needed to offer what they had.

There will be enough & more. Abundance.

It's a wake-up call to be grateful for what you have, because, whatever it is, God can do wonderful things with it.

[H. George Anderson was the 2nd Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America from October 1995 to October 2001. He said: I grew up knowing that I was adopted. My parents told me about going to the hospital and seeing me for the first time. There were plenty of laughs about that first visit, because they discovered I had jaundice and looked very scrawny. But they waited until I got better--more than a month in all--and then took me to their home.

Maybe that helped me in those adolescent years when teenagers brood a lot and wonder whether their parents really love them. My parents & I had our big arguments, and I was sometimes accused of being a "smart aleck." But I didn't take refuge in saying, "They're not my real parents" because I always knew that I had been chosen--and waited for--even when I looked like a really bad choice.

Adoption has ... given me a personal experience of grace. I know what it is to have been loved before I was lovable, and chosen when I was a bad choice. If caring human beings could do that, I know that God does it even more gladly and more fully. It makes me want to pass that love along. That's why I'm sending this message from the home of my son & daughter-in-law. He's adopted too.]

Now that's an attitude of gratitude. He knows how much trouble his parents went to in order to raise him, and he doesn't take them for granted. And he's found a way to give something back. He adopted a child of his own.

When the crowds got hungry the disciples waffled. Can't we get rid of these pesky people? they said. Jesus said, "You give them something." And then, as a way of demonstrating the point, after Jesus gave thanks and blessed the food, the disciples had to feed the crowd. They had taken themselves for granted, & Jesus gives them a wake-up call. You give them something, & then HE gives the disciples something to give the people.

When the car stopped skidding that Monday afternoon, I could see my camper trailer blocking the highway. I could feel the car slanting off the ground. I could imagine the propane bottles or the gasoline tanks exploding. I called 911. I got out of the car and hugged my wife. I said, "We're alive." And we should be grateful.

God knows how he has made us. He knows we can be ungrateful. He knows we can take too much for granted, and may not give back something for all the good things he gives us. But he keeps on giving, and he keeps on expecting that sometime we'll be grateful. Maybe after a wake-up call like a car wreck, or a tornado or a death in the family. But do we have to wait until then? Can't we just look at the five loaves and two fish and be grateful for what God can do with them?

Think of life's NATURAL HIGHS

Falling in love.	The beach.	Taking a drive on a pretty road.	Hugging the person you love.
Getting mail.	Laughing at yourself.	Hearing your favorite song on the radio.	Lying in bed listening to the rain outside.
A hot shower.	butterflies	Being part of a team.	Swinging on swings.
A special glance.	Holding hands.	Playing with a new puppy.	No lines at the Super Walmart.
Giggling.	Friends	Road trips with your love.	towels hot from the dryer.
a milkshake.	Your first kiss.	Winning a really competitive game.	Nature and all it's beauty.
A bubble bath.	good conversation.	Spending time with close friends!	Watching the sunrise.
Life itself.	cookies!	Riding a bike downhill.	Running through sprinklers.
	Laughing so hard your face hurts.		

Finding a \$20 bill in your coat from last winter.

Accidentally overhearing something nice about you.

someone telling you that you're beautiful.

Making new friends or spending time with old ones.

Late night talks that keep you from sleeping.

Seeing smiles and hearing laughter from your friends...

This week, think about someone or something you have taken for granted. Be grateful for them or it. Praise God for his goodness in giving them to you. And find some way to show your gratitude, by giving what you have back to God. Even if it's only five loaves and two fish.

Running into an old friend and realizing that some things (good or bad) never change.

Discovering that love is unconditional & stronger than time.

Getting up in the morning & thanking God for another beautiful day.

How many of those things do we just take for granted? All of life is a miracle!

Lord, we give all that we have to you, in its scarcity & in its abundance, that you may multiply it to your greater glory, & that we may say no to everything that makes it more difficult to say yes to you.