



St. Michael's Church
CHARLESTON, SC

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 22 2017

2 KINGS 42-44
LUKE 9:10-17]

PREACHER: THE REV. AL ZADIG, JR.

HELP US LORD TO BE SO CONNECTED TO YOU THAT WE MIGHT BECOME THE SERVANTS
OF OTHERS.

TAKE OUR LIPS AND SPEAK THROUGH THEM,
OUR MINDS AND THINK THROUGH THEM,
AND TAKE OUR HEARTS, AND SET THEM ON FIRE.



One of my heroes in faith is that Russian Poet and Author Alexander Solzhenitsyn...

At first a devoted communist, Solzhenitsyn began questioning Joseph Stalin's terror tactics,

a questioning that would land him in a prison camp where for 12 hours a day he's forced into hard labor while given a starvation diet.

One afternoon while shoveling under the blazing sun, Solzhenitsyn simply stops, unable physically to go on.

He knows it could cost him his life as he would be beaten but he just cannot go on.

But then, out of the corner of his eye, he sees another older prisoner with a cane coming toward him,

Solzhenitsyn knows him to be a Christian...the old man walks over to him-

and using his cane the man draws a cross, *two simple lines crossing each other in the sand.*

As quickly as he writes it, he erases it.

In that brief moment, Solzhenitsyn feels the hope of the Gospel flood through his veins and soul, and from that hope regains his physical courage to go on.

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My friends have there been times in your life when you have come face to face with your

- limitations,
- your own inadequacies
- and said...
- I can't do it?
- I give up?

This inability, this hard realization, if it sticks around long enough often produces an utter hope-less-ness.

Have you ever been there?

Are you there now?

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If yes, know this, you're not alone...

- I've been there
- Most clergy I know have been there
- And the disciples in today's Gospel are there.

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When we read the feeding of the 5,000, we're so taken by the power of that miracle,

we miss out on the hopelessness in the heart of the disciples.

Why? Because the feeding of the 5,000 comes right after the death of their beloved John the Baptist at the hands of Herod.

The disciples had just taken the body of John and buried it...

And then with Jesus they all withdraw to a quiet place on the Sea of Galilee.

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The disciples are just plain exhausted, the death of John the Baptist leaves them:

- helpless
- scared
- and intimidated.

They just want quiet.

Yet it would not happen that way.

We all know the rest of the story.

The crowds, thousands of them had heard of the teachings and miracles of Jesus, and they're hungry for more.

- The crowds say Jesus **teach** us,
- The disciples say Jesus **retreat** us!

The heart of Jesus is moved to compassion

and he begins to teach the crowds, a nice long teaching, so long that the Disciples have had enough and urge Jesus:.

“Send these crowds away now, we need to lick our wounds.

You've done more than expected,

it's dinner,

we're in the middle of nowhere

and it's going to take them awhile to walk to the Chick Filet down the road.”

Well buckle your seat belt, here we go.

Jesus takes what the disciples have...remember?

- 5 loaves
- 2 fish

Says grace, breaks the bread and hands over the food, which somehow feeds thousands.

It's God's economy, give Him what you have and He quadruples, and transforms it.

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Okay, put a finger in the story there, and let's jump back into the Old Testament book of 2nd Kings...written by the prophet Jeremiah..

It's a book surveying the faithful and unfaithful kings of Israel and Judah with Elisha the prophet as spokesperson.

In 2 Kings 4, Elisha is facing the challenge of the disciples, how to feed a ton of people with 20 loaves of bread.

Elisha like Jesus tells his people, distribute this food so everyone can eat...

What they say? 100 men eating from this?

Elisha says do it, just do it, and I promise you, we will even have leftovers...and that's exactly what happens!

Why are these stories so similar? What's going on?

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2 key lessons here..

God, clearly cares about our stomachs,

He cares about our mundane everyday needs,

He's not some pie in the sky Stalin like dictator,

He's right here and wants to give us hope even through our physical needs!

But secondly, God is saying that Jesus is the fulfillment of every Old Testament Prophecy and miracle!

Jesus is Lord even of the Old Testament!

Jesus is our source of hope. In other words:

JESUS IS SUFFICIENT!

For all time and in all places;

JESUS IS SUFFICIENT, say that with me.
If you remember nothing else from this sermon...remember:

JESUS IS SUFFICIENT.

He is what the Jews were searching for!

He is what every human heart longs for!

It's the reason this miracle of the feeding of thousands is the only miracle of Jesus to be included in every Gospel-

The Holy Spirit wants us to know that Jesus is the answer to our **in-**adequacies and **in-**abilities!

- Jesus cares about our mundane needs
- And Jesus is sufficient

This is what we learn in foreign mission all the time.

When we go on mission to places like India or Africa..

It's our own heart often converted...how?

We're exposed to people who have nothing

yet believe with all their heart all they need is Jesus!

It's reverse conversion,

our hearts are the hearts converted!

In fact, sometimes Jesus will send us on mission, or find another way to bring us face to face with our own **IN-ABILITIES**

SIMPLY SO WE CAN COME FACE TO FACE WITH HIM AS OUR ONLY SOLUTION.

Times where we are drawn down to the valley of the shadow of death so we realize Jesus is our only way out—

It is then Jesus becomes the very source of our hope.

Hope....

HOPE defined this way by David Jeremiah in his new book:

“Hope...an Anchor for life.”

David Jeremiah quotes former Chaplain of the Senate John Lloyd Ogilvie writing;

“It was when I gave up and surrendered the seemingly impossible circumstances to the Lord-

That I made one of the most crucial discoveries of my life...that

AUTHENTIC HOPE IS BORN WHEN WE TRUST JESUS COMPLETELY, YOU SEE...

HOPE
IS
A
PERSON.”

Hope is Jesus.

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And one word in both Kings and Luke offers proof of this, it's the word left-overs.

If you love Italian Food you know Italian left overs are better on the 2nd and third day then they often are on the first day!

The point of the leftovers in Luke is this:

Jesus is not done with us, there is more to come!

The left overs point to the Eucharist that we share every week...

It's why we have communion!

To remind ourselves that Jesus IS enough, He is our Hope!

This is my Body...I am Sufficient

This is my Blood...I am Sufficient...

Eat, Drink in remembrance:

“I am enough for you, and you and you.”

I am sufficient even in your hope-less-ness.

Communion, recreating the feeding of the 5,000 every time we worship!

With a PREVIEW OF THAT HEAVENLY BANQUET-

That through His resurrection we will eat with Jesus again in Heaven!

Doesn't this make us all love Jesus even more today!

This is the muscle behind our fall preaching series on Come to the Table.

Come to the Table:

Breaking bread in church and in homes

is the exact opposite of isolation, because isolation is the great producer of:

- **Devastation**
- **And Hopelessness.**

This is the secret behind Holy City Connects, and life groups...

Coming together in homes to realize we are not alone, that as our cooks can attest..

Jesus really is sufficient every time!

As we Come to the table, we realize food isn't just fuel,

it's that substance that keeps us dependent on God and each other!

Every time we eat, we're reminded of our dependence on God!

And when we eat in Community, it produces hope!

Sharing stories of how we've seen Jesus work over the last 2 weeks!

It produces commitment and produces in us a need for Jesus!

Therefore, when we say a situation or a person is hope--less, we are slamming the door in the face of God.

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But my friends, if I left this sermon here it would be heresy,

I would be misleading you and you could sue me for theological mal-practice.

There is one more critical element to this story of hope.

It is crystal clear from Luke 9, that we, you and I are to be vehicles of this Jesus hope to the world.

In a detail that often goes unseen, 3 times in 3 verses, Jesus says his provision of hope is to come **through**

through

the hands of the disciples:

Verse 13...Jesus to the Disciples....

- U GIVE THEM SOMETHING TO EAT!

Verse 14: Jesus to the Disciples...

- U sit everyone down in groups of 50!

Verse 16: Jesus blesses the bread and says to the Disciples:

- U give the bread to the people.

C-S Lewis, that great Anglican theologian writes:

God seems to do nothing of Himself which He can possibly delegate to His creatures. He commands us to do slowly and even blunderingly what He could do perfectly and in the twinkling of an eye.

Why? So we realize He is our only hope!

- WE FEED THEM
- WE SIT THEM DOWN
- WE DISTRIBUTE FOOD!

You see, Jesus feeds us in the Eucharist so that through that strength and hope in His Body and Blood

We would be hope bearers to the world!

So instead of coming to church only for comfort and peace,

we come to be strengthened to bring that hope to the world! It's totally counter-intuitive!

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How does this principle work?

Do what the Disciples do:

- Give Jesus what you have
- Watch Him transform it,
- And witness that hope spread to the world.

Here are some daily applications of God's Economy of Hope:

- Someone has hurt you and you say Lord take what little **forgiveness** I have...
 - Jesus doubles that **forgiveness**
 - And in going back to that person, you become a beacon of hope!
- Someone has hurt you and you say Lord take what little **love** I have for this person
 - Jesus doubles that **love**
 - And in going back to that person, you become a beacon of hope!
- Its been a long week, you have no **energy** to go to church
 - You say Lord take what little **energy** I have...
 - Jesus doubles it..
 - And in going, you receive the strength of Jesus to become an icon of hope for another!
- Or, you have no energy to go and attend your life group, your Bible Study, Holy City Connect group, youth group, choir practice..
 - And you say Lord take what little energy I have...
 - Jesus doubles it..
 - And in going, your presence becomes a huge icon of hope for another!

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- Its been a tough financial year, you seem to have no left overs, but you give faithfully 10% anyway...
 - You say Lord take it
 - Jesus doubles it
 - And it becomes a huge beacon of hope for another!

Tithing is one of the best ways to experience the Hope of Jesus.

Tithing is that discipline where we give 10 percent of we all we make back to Jesus..

To say Lord I believe you are sufficient, and out of that conviction, and to be a hope bearer-

I'm going to tithe!

God doesn't need our money,

but he wants what that money

represents, a heart that trusts him to be all sufficient!

Here is how this hope works:

- You make 20,000 a year,
 - You give 2,000 back, which is 167 bucks a month,
 - And through that tithe
 - You are being a hope-bearer to more people than you ever thought possible.

- You make 100,000 a year,
 - Give 10,000 back,
 - That's 833 bucks a month,
 - But Through Jesus, he doubles the impact for hope to the world!

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My friends, if we really believe that Jesus is the hope of the world..

And that we are each vehicles of that hope...

We can't sit out.

We have to show up.

We have to attend...

Gladly offering our talents and tithes.

As beacons of hope to the world.

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Today we are sending out 9 hearts to India.

How could just 9 St. Michaelites to India make a difference or bring hope to a land that so many have given up on?

Oh my friends, Jesus will take these hearts and do so much more than we could ask or imagine..

Over the years, St. Michaelites have offered to God what they had, God doubled that and more..., and today in this part of India, from St. Michael's, there are:

- Six new church plants
- A Safe House for young girls rescued from sex trade
- A hostel for 25 girls for those going into nursing
- Several hostels for boys and girls from slums.
- A Good Shepherd Eye Hospital
- Distribution of Thousands of Bibles in tribal languages for children and adults.

If you're here this morning feeling hopeless, do what the disciples did:

Offer to God what you have...

- Forgiveness
- Love
- Thanksgiving
- The Tithe

And watch Jesus make you a beacon of

the

hope you so desperately desire.