

**Welcome:** Welcome to Germantown Church of God. I am glad you are here with me today. We are glad that we can provide this ministry to our community today. We hope that this time together will be helpful and meaningful for you. God loves you and delights in you. He is ready to bring blessing to you today.

**Opening Scripture:** Psalm 103:1-6

**Opening Prayer:**

**Scripture** Mark 6:30-44

**Message:**

Whenever two people are in a relationship, as that relationship goes forward and develops, there are going to come times when they discover their differences. Each person has a set of beliefs, a way of thinking, certain behaviors that have been shaped by their past, by their family and friends who have been a part of their lives. Sometimes that will result in a difference of opinion or a conflict with the other person. Let me share an example from my marriage. (I have permission to share this!). In the family that I grew up in we sometimes would use the oven for storage. If my mom baked a cake and we didn't eat it all, we would cover it and put it in the oven to store it until we wanted to eat it again. My wife's family did not do that. One day Sue was preheating the oven in order to bake something. As the oven heated, she began to smell something and saw smoke coming out of the oven. When she opened the oven door, she discovered that I had put a silver cake safe in the oven. That's what we did in my family. But that wasn't what they did in her family. So now we have a "teaching moment" or a "change moment". One of us was going to have to change their behavior, so we wouldn't have this same disaster again in the future. We recently celebrated our 47<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary, so we made it through that crisis. Cakes now get stored on the counter, and not in the oven.

So what's the point? Last week we looked at a story of some men who began to follow Jesus. They lived with him, ate with him, travelled with him, watched him interact with others. As you can imagine these followers of Jesus brought their baggage from their past into this new relationship with Jesus. They had certain behaviors, certain assumptions, certain beliefs about God and people that shaped who they were. And as they continued to follow Jesus there were some times when who they were "clashed" with who Jesus was, and what he taught. Those "clashes" became teaching moments or transformation moments for the disciples.

Last week I began a sermon series on the subject, **Becoming the Image of Jesus**. I believe that it is God's plan that our lives would be brought into conformity with the character of Jesus. Romans 8:29 says: ***29 For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.*** The people that God has brought to salvation, that He has brought into His family, are to be changed into the image of Jesus. This experience of being changed into the image of Jesus is sometimes referred to as **Spiritual Formation**. Spiritual Formation is the process of being transformed into the image of Christ, for the sake of others. (Mulholland). Robert Mulholland says that this process of transformation occurs at those places in our lives where we are "un-like" Jesus. As we look at the lives of the disciples who followed Jesus, we learn that the change or transformation did not occur all at once. It took place in those moments and situations, where who the disciples were clashed with who Jesus is. When those moments happen in a marriage, they become "learning opportunities" or "change moments". And that is what the disciples experienced as they followed Jesus. I want to look at some of those "change moments" as the disciples learned who Jesus was and began to change the way they thought, felt, behaved or believed to correspond more with Jesus.

Today, I want to look at a familiar story in the gospels that became a transformational moment or change moment. It is this story of the feeding of 5000. On the surface it may not appear to be a significant clash between the disciples and Jesus. But as we look at it more closely, we see some differences between Jesus and his followers, and we learn what it would look like for us to be like Jesus

The story is recorded in all four of the gospels – Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. It is the only miracle that is recorded by all 4, which indicates the importance of the event for Jesus' followers. I have chosen to look at the story as it is recorded by Mark. He gives us a little different perspective on the story than the other 3 writers. The story begins with the disciples gathering around Jesus. Jesus had sent them out on an evangelistic mission. As they travelled about, they preached the gospel, they cast out demons, they anointed people and prayed for them and many were healed. Now they are back together with Jesus and they are telling him all that they had experienced. I'm sure it was an exciting time – everybody talking all at once, laughter, rejoicing. The story also takes place after Mark tells us about the death of John the Baptist. John had been a preacher whose ministry was closely tied to Jesus' mission. As Jesus learns about John's death by beheading, I'm sure that he began to reflect on his own mission, and his upcoming death of the cross. So the disciples are overwhelmed with joy, and Jesus is struggling with his emotions of grief and anticipating what was to come. And there is the ongoing swarm of the crowds who were coming to Jesus for healing. Jesus discerns that they all need to get some rest. Mark tells us that they had no time for themselves, not even any time left to eat. **"Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest" (vs. 31)**

So, they went by boat to a solitary place for rest. However, Mark tells us that the crowds of people who were following Jesus found out where he was going and went there. Mark says that they got there ahead of Him. Jesus would have had every reason to be angry or distressed that His "rest time" wasn't going to happen. But as Jesus looks at the crowd and had compassion on them. He says that they were like sheep without a shepherd. Instead of revealing his impatience, Jesus began teaching them. As the day wore on, the disciples came to Jesus and told him to send the crowd away. Send them to the surrounding villages so they could buy themselves something to eat. This is where the "clash" occurs between Jesus and his disciples. Matthew's account says that Jesus said, **"They do not need to go away! You give them something to eat."** So NOW we have the clash –

- Send them away – They do not need to go away!!"
- They need to find food – You give them food!
- We don't have enough – Bring me what you have?

When the disciples suggested to Jesus that He send the crowd away so they could buy food, we may understand that they were concerned about the people. They need to find food. BUT, perhaps there were other reasons. They may have also been starting to feel the fatigue that Jesus noticed. They wanted to rest. Maybe they wanted some alone time with Jesus. Those are important things and necessary. But right now there was something else needed. Maybe they were feeling "We're not responsible for them." These people needed food. So Jesus challenges them – You give them something to eat. By raising that challenge, Jesus is teaching some important lessons.

- **Compassion.** Jesus is showing them what Compassion looks like. One of the lessons that Jesus teaches and that is in fact taught throughout the Bible is that "We are our brother's keeper." One of Jesus' most popular stories that Jesus told is the story of the Good Samaritan. The story tells about a man who had been attacked by robbers and left to die along the side of the road. A priest and a teacher of the Bible walked by and saw the man laying there and walked on by. A Samaritan saw him and had compassion on him. When we see someone in need we must not turn them away or ignore them. We should consider what we can do to help.
- **An abundant supply.** The disciples protested Jesus' challenge. A half year's wages would not be enough to buy sufficient food for this many people. The text tells us that there were over 5000 men there along with women and children. The disciples inform Jesus that they only have 5 little loaves and 2 fish. A little loaf about the size of your hand. Certainly not enough for this crowd. But Jesus invites them to bring it to Him. He breaks it, blesses it and gives the food to the disciples to pass out. The food miraculously is multiplied and everyone eats until they are satisfied. Then the disciples take their baskets and gather up the left overs. 12 lunch pail size baskets full. Remember what we saw at the beginning of the story – The disciples didn't even have an opportunity to eat! And now they will eat.

The disciples had a learning opportunity. This was a change moment for them. They learned from Jesus that when others have a need that we should look for opportunities to meet that need. In the early Church, the followers of Jesus made it a practice to collect food for those in need – especially widows in the Church. The disciples learned the lesson.

We also learn that no matter how limited the resources we have are, when we give them to Jesus, He will use them to accomplish His work.

What are the opportunities that Jesus is bring you to show compassion to others. Are you worried about having enough resources. Give what you have to Him and He will take it and use it.

Amen.