

## SERMON : 9TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST 2020 (*Matthew 14:13-21*)

MAY the words of my mouth and the meditations in our hearts be acceptable in your sight O Lord, our strength and our Redeemer. <Amen>

There are only two miracles that are recorded in all four of the gospels. The Resurrection and the feeding of the multitude (often recorded as a counting of “5000 men”). So, let’s make no mistake - today’s gospel account MUST be recording something of great significance.

While a four gospels describe this miracle of Jesus feeding the multitude in slightly different ways, they all of them describe the outcome in a similar fashion:

The multitude ALL ate, and ALL were filled.

<PAUSE>

Today, I would like to speak about the importance and significance of this miracle of Jesus in terms of it **teaching us FOUR, vital, basic principles for our own ministries.**

### (1) Motivated by Compassion

Jesus wanted to be alone, probably because he was tired, but he had compassion for the crowd the moment he saw them because they were like sheep without a shepherd. He immediately taught them many things and healed the sick. Following in the footsteps of Jesus, OUR service too should be motivated by compassion.

### (2) Depend on God for Wisdom and Power

The huge crowd were starving and the disciples wanted to send them away. Jesus told THEM, the disciples, to feed the crowd and they freaked out! Their natural minds couldn’t grasp the power of God. Jesus, however, knew what to do - call upon God! Following in the footsteps of Jesus, we too must totally depend on the wisdom and the power of God because Ministry presents us with challenges we can’t handle on our own. God always has the answers and knows the best course of action for every situation.

### (3) We need to share our Resources

The five loaves and the two fishes belonged to a young boy. I suppose he could have put that meal up for auction and sold it to the highest bidder! But he shared his meal and masses of people were nourished. Likewise, WE - the Church - will be able to influence and nourish the world on a much broader scale if we share our resources with each other. Following in the footsteps of Jesus, we too must welcome ALL and share what we have with ALL. For in Christ Jesus there is neither Jew nor Gentile, slave nor free, male nor female ... WE ARE ALL ONE.

#### (4) We need to be Team Players

The late Bill Shankly is widely regarded as one of the greatest football (soccer) managers of all time, turning Liverpool FC from a second division team in England to - still today - one of the greatest teams in the world. Mr Shankly once said this about teamwork, “The players that play on this football team will play for the name on the badge on the front of the shirt and not the name on their pay-slip.” In other words they play together for Liverpool and not as individuals who get paid at the end of the week.

While preparing this sermon, I asked myself the question, “If Jesus could multiply 5 loaves and 2 fishes, why did he need the disciples to distribute the food?”

The disciples often attempted to outsmart each other and Jesus intended to teach them the power of teamwork. Many believe that teamwork is a modern concept. That’s not the case. The concept of teamwork is as old as the Bible:

- (a) In Exodus 31:1-6 individuals who possessed various skills worked as a team to build the tabernacle.
- (b) Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 emphasises the benefits of teamwork and the possible pitfalls of not working as a team.
- (c) 1 Corinthians 12:20-25 Paul teaches us the importance of teamwork in the body of Christ.

Our ministries are not one-person shows. Our ministries are tasks that require teamwork. Our ministries require an understanding that the team may well, for the greater victory, do things in a way that is not our personal style or preference.

Ministry without teamwork will always fail.

<PAUSE>

Maybe you are already doing all of these things in your ministry and may God continue to bless you for it.

I want to urge us ALL to keep these lessons from Jesus at the forefront of our ministries:

- Compassion
- Dependence upon God
- Sharing what we have
- We are NOT in this alone

I runga e te Ingoa o te Atua, te Matua, te Tama me te Wairua Tapu.  
In the name of God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit <AMINE>