

Sermon for August 9, 2026  
"Being Blessed, Broken, and Given"

Matthew 14:13-21

Jesus fed over 5,000 hungry people with five loaves and two fish. This is one of the most important miracles that Jesus performed. This is obvious from the fact that it is recorded in all four gospels. This miracle played an important role in the early Christians' understanding of communion.

There is a lot to be learned from this event. There is the attitude of the disciples in the face of the people's needs. There is the role of the small boy, who John tells us about, who gives what little he has. There is the ability of Christ to supply the needs of the hungry masses with plenty left over.

There are a lot of ways to understand this miracle. Some people say that we are like the disciples who are concerned for the people's hunger and yet feel helpless. Some say we are like the crowds fed by Christ the bread of life. Some say we are like the little boy who gives all he has even though it is so small. However, today I want to say that we are like the bread. Like those 5 barley loaves, we who have given our lives to Christ are taken, blessed, broken, and given.

When the boy gave those loaves and fish to Jesus, he took them and then blessed them. He broke them and gave them to feed the hungry people. Like those loaves we are taken. Like that small boy, we who have given our lives to Christ have given all we have, and Jesus accepts that gift. Someone lesser than the Son of God would disdain such a small gift. They would sneer at it and say, "Don't you have anything more?" "How do you expect to heal the suffering of the masses with only this," but Jesus just smiles and accepts the gift.

Once we have been taken, Jesus blesses us. When we come to Christ we are just sinners. We are dirty from a life of sin and spiritual neglect, but Jesus cleans us up. He blesses us with forgiveness. Like a potter he remolds our distorted wills into a usable shape, and he gives us the Holy Spirit, God's living presence with us, as a counselor and provider.

Then Jesus breaks us. Christians used to talk about being broken, but we don't do that much anymore. Because people already feel broken so they don't want to hear that God will break them, but this is an important part of the process of being used as part of Jesus ministry. If Jesus had not broken the loaves they could not have been distributed to the hungry people. In order to be tools for God's kingdom we must be broken. Our

spirits and pride must be broken. We must be brought to our knees. Because the truth is that we can't minister by ourselves. Like the disciples we don't have the resources. It is only when we are on our knees, looking to Christ, that we can be useful to God.

Once we are broken, Jesus gives us. He gives us in service. Some people have the mistaken conception that just being saved is the sum total of the Christian life. It is a very important part, an indispensable part, the beginning of the Christian life, but Jesus didn't save us to make us forgiven bumps on a log. He saved us so we could follow him, and Jesus is always going out to minister to the sick and needy and lost and oppressed. We are not what we once were. Jesus has drastically transformed us by blessing us and breaking us, and because of what Jesus has done we are useful tools.

Look around you. We are surrounded by hungry people. People starving for love and companionship. They need the love of their Heavenly Father. People are hungry for forgiveness of their sins. People are dying for lack of bread, and medicine, and justice, and there are so many lost and hungry souls and their suffering is so great.

Why don't you help them? Begin by giving yourself to Christ. "But how can someone like me make a difference. Jesus can't do much with little old me. I barely have enough to live on myself." Just come as you are to Jesus. Come as a weak helpless individual. You may be much like those who are lost and dying around you.

I promise you Jesus will accept you, and he will bless you. He will bless you with his love. He will bless you with forgiveness. He will give himself to you as spiritual food and drink, and then he will break you. As you follow him as a disciple you will learn. You will learn that the way to be larger than your foes is to fall on your knees. You will learn that the greatest disciple is the one who bends the lowest to help another, and Jesus will give you. A new you: new and improved by the hands of God's Son. God will use you to minister to others.

You may not be moved by the suffering in our world, in our very community. If you aren't, I pity you and I pray for you, because your heart is indeed hard, but if you are moved and wish you could do something, listen. Give Jesus what little you have: yourself, and let him transform you, then God can make a difference through you.