

Aughnacloy, Ballymagrane, Clogherney & Sixmilecross Presbyterian Churches

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Matthew 1:22-23 *All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had said through the prophet: "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" which means "God with us".*

Dear Friends

As your minister, it is a great privilege that I have in bringing this weekly devotion to you. This weekend will be the first opportunity many have had to gather together in the Church building to worship as a congregation since 15th march. We remain mindful for the many who feel that they are unable to attend public worship at present, that is ok too. We prayerfully hope, that with the passage of time your confidence in this ever-changing situation will grow and we look forward to welcoming you to public worship again at some point. Your safety is important to us. However, as we return to Church, we are unable at present to continue with weekly worship online, but we plan to pilot a voice recording of the service and provide this in digital and on CD. In the coming weeks. Let us know if you would like this delivered, if you cannot receive it with Email. Our theme today is 'Jesus – Lord of the Little'.

Scripture Reading – Mark 6:35-44 *By this time it was late in the day, so his disciples came to him. "This is a remote place," they said, "and it's already very late. Send the people away so that they can go to the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat." But he answered, "You give them something to eat." They said to him, "That would take more than half a year's wages! Are we to go and spend that much on bread and give it to them to eat?" "How many loaves do you have?" he asked. "Go and see." When they found out, they said, "Five—and two fish." Then Jesus directed them to have all the people sit down in groups on the green grass. So they sat down in groups of hundreds and fifties. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to his disciples to distribute to the people. He also divided the two fish among them all. They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces of bread and fish. The number of the men who had eaten was five thousand. **Amen.***

Prayer – heavenly father we rejoice in our hearts as we return to your house to praise and to worship you. As we look around ourselves, so much has changed since we have last been here on the 15th March, not only this place, but every aspect of life has changed, however You our almighty God remains the same yesterday, today and forever. Your redeeming love endures all the challenges we face in life.

You have been present with us on this journey - sometimes guiding reliably, like pillar of cloud by day, sometimes spectacularly illuminating, like pillar of fire in the night; always providing like you did daily manna in the wilderness, drawing forth faith one day at a time. At times we have looked for you, in earthquake, wind and fire, but like Elijah at Horeb, mountain of God, you have spoken in the gentlest of whispers, and we have found it enough. Like Samuel in the night, or Mary in the garden, we have known you speaking our name, calling us to learn from you, to follow you to places to which we have never been before. And you will be present with us as future days unfold. You say, 'Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you', and we reply with fresh confidence, 'The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid.' God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant, brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, continue to equip us with everything good for doing your will, keep on working in us what is pleasing to you, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. **Amen.**

The Lord of the Little - When we think of our great God, we often think of Him in terms of the *grand*, the *great* and the *glorious*. After all, He is the God of creation. He stood in the middle of nothing, took nothing, and created everything. That's big!

He is the God of revelation. He sent His perfect Word through human instruments, giving us a perfect, inspired record of His words to man. On top of that, He has perfectly preserved that Word to this very day. That's big!

He is the God of salvation. God sent His Son Jesus into this world to die for sin and for sinners. When Jesus went to the cross, He opened a way, that all that would come to Jesus at God's invitation would be saved. God even set it up so that those who came would have all their sins forgiven; they would be adopted into His family; and they would all go to Heaven to live with Him when they leave this world. Now, that's big!

There is no question that we serve a God Who specializes in the spectacular; He is a God Who moves in big ways, but He is also a God Who is able to take the small, insignificant things of this world and use them for His glory.

The passage reveals The Lord Of The Little in action. As we watch Jesus feed the multitudes, we need to remember that the One Who accomplished this miracle is our Lord today.

Let's look in on this special miracle today. It is the only miracle of Jesus that is mentioned by all four Gospel writers. The miracle is told with beautiful vividness and simplicity. Mark's picturesque words show the groups sitting by companies of hundreds or of fifties. What would come next would be in the people! Many of them would be saying in their hearts, and perhaps some in words, as psalm 78:19 records: 'They spoke against God, saying, "Can God spread a table in the desert?"'

In that small matter Jesus shows that He is 'not the Author of confusion,' but creator of order. The rush of five thousand hungry men struggling to get a share of what seemed an insufficient supply would have been unseemly and dangerous to the women and children, but the seated groups become as companies of guests.

All four Gospels tell of the command to gather up the 'broken pieces' (not the fragments left by the eaters, but the unused pieces broken by Christ). Unused resources are retained. After the feeding of thousands more remains than was possessed before.

Action Steps - You would think that this miracle of multiplication would have really rocked the disciples' faith. Actually, they missed the magnitude of what had happened. We read in v 52: "For they had not understood about the loaves; their hearts were hardened." Let's make sure that we don't let that hardness happen to us today. Allow this multiplying miracle to go from your head to your heart to your hands.

Do something with what you have! - It might be helpful to just admit that you don't have much and then give what little you have. What do you have to offer to the Master? E.G. Oh, I only have this **little staff**... "hold it up **Moses**, & I'll part Seas with it!" Oh, I only have this **little rock**... "place it in the sling **David**, & we'll slay giants together!" However, little it is, placed in the hands of Jesus, he can make a whole lot out of it! Little is much when God is in it! *Do what you can with what you have. Do something!* A little in the hands of Jesus is always a lot. Jesus doesn't ask us to go and get more before He goes to work. He didn't tell Andrew to go find 50 more loaves and a bucket of fish before He went to work. All He wants is what we have right now.

Someone has said: "As long as we keep what we have in our own hands, we are limited to what we can do. But when we transfer what we have to the mighty hands of Jesus, there is no limit to what He can do." The key is to make sure we give ourselves first to the Lord. Yes, there are many problems, all around us, Jesus tells us we are part of the solution. We were to be participants in the miracle that Jesus was going to perform. When we serve Jesus, we will be more than satisfied. The disciples who thought they didn't have enough had more than enough. They had more after giving away what little they had. Jesus gives us much more than we need when we give our all to Him. "*Ephesians 3:20 Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us.*" If you want to be fulfilled, then follow Jesus. God always gives more because He is a giving God. *God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him.* Is the Saviour your satisfaction today?

Surrender to the Saviour - Jesus does some miracles *because* of people's faith. He did this one to *cause* people to have faith. Jesus asks, "**How many loaves do you have?**" There's another question from Christ inherent in this one, He asks: "*How much of your life do I have? That's really what I want. Surrender to Him today.*" Jesus told them not to focus on food but on eternal life. I don't know where you're all at today but if you've never put your faith in Jesus for forgiveness of sins, it's time to believe and be saved. If you're saved, then make sure you've surrendered fully to the Saviour. Then make sure you share what you have for a little is always a lot in the hands of the Lord.