

## EAT AND BE SATISFIED

Excerpts from a Sermon by Rev. Frederick M. Chapin

*You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, And praise the name of the Lord your God, who has dealt wondrously with you... (Joel 2:26).*

*Reading: John 6:1-14*

Many times, we face situations that we feel inadequate to deal with. The complexity and confusion makes the perfect solution seem impossible to achieve. No matter what we do or how we respond, someone will be hurt, or some negative consequence will result. The correct decision is not clear from the choices that are available to us. These dilemmas exist in all aspects of our lives.

Thankfully, the Word assures us that the Lord can take what appears small and weak and give maximum results. One place where we can see this is in the story of the Lord's feeding five-thousand people with just five loaves of bread and two small fish.

The Lord had just taught the people in Judea that all life came from Him. Afterwards, He went across the Sea of Galilee into the countryside. A great crowd followed the Lord because of the miracles He had performed. When the Lord saw the great multitude, He took the opportunity to illustrate how all life does come from Him and what we must do to receive such life.

The Lord asked His disciples where they could buy bread for the multitude. Philip reported that the money they had was not nearly enough to feed all the people. Andrew, another disciple, said that a young boy had five barley loaves and two small fish, but that these were also inadequate to feed all the people. The Lord then made all the people sit down. He took the five loaves and two fish and blessed them. He gave the food to His disciples to be distributed to the crowd. And, surprisingly, that little amount of food was able to feed a multitude of five thousand people. Furthermore, when the people were finished eating, each disciple had a basket full with the fragments or leftovers. Those who were aware of what had happened were convinced that the Lord was indeed sent from God.

Initially, the resources the disciples had seemed insufficient to solve the problem. How could they be expected to feed such a multitude with only five loaves of bread and two small fish? However, when the Lord blessed the food, it was able to feed the crowd, with twelve full baskets leftover.

The bread that was blessed by the Lord pictures the good that is from Him. If we receive this good as the people received the bread from the Lord, then we will have the

inspiration and desire to do good to others. We will have a love to allow the Lord to govern our lives. We will love to do things that will help and benefit those around us. And we will love to dedicate ourselves to fulfill the purpose for which the Lord created us.

The fish illustrate the truths we receive from the Lord through the Word. These truths teach us who the Lord is: He is the one God of heaven and earth; He is a God of infinite love and mercy; He desires the salvation of all people. These truths also show how we can love the Lord, and how we can love and serve others, and so have a healthy spiritual life.

When the Lord blessed the bread and the fish, and distributed them to the people, the food represented the spiritual good and truth from the Lord, which He offers to every man and woman. Even though initially it was a small amount, the Lord enabled it to fulfill everyone's needs.

Likewise, when we face problems that we feel inadequate to fully solve, we are to take both our knowledge and our affection for truth, which seems so small, and offer them to the Lord. We must allow the Lord to bless the good and the truth that we do have. We do this by acknowledging that He alone can bring a healing and deliverance to any trouble, regardless of its magnitude or complexity.

After this acknowledgement, we are to do the best we can to make the decision that will lead to the greatest good that we can see. What we know seems so small compared to the enormity of the issues we face. Yet, if we strive to apply the principles that we do know from the Word, we can have confidence that the Lord can eventually bring order to the problem from our sincere efforts to promote what is good.