

Scripture: Matthew 15:32-38

Sermon Title: "Mealtime Miracles"

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"God is great. God is good. Now we thank Him for our food. Amen." This was the blessing that my brother and I were taught when we were just young kids. We were taught this blessing by our parents to bless our food and give thanks for all that was placed before us as we sat around the table together for dinner. And each night, I remember the table having an abundance of food on it, I remember saying this blessing, and I remember digging in. Most nights, we even put some leftovers away in the refrigerator after we had all been filled and satisfied for the evening. There was enough food that there was even some left over. What a blessing that was! However, it was several years until I truly learned to appreciate the true blessing, the true miracle in those meals.

Every Friday night as a young child, I looked forward to the weekly visit by my grandparents on my mother's side. They would come once a week and spend time with us and it was always so much fun to see them and spend time with them. And every week when they arrived, they came with bags of food from the grocery store. Now, being so very young at the time, I didn't really think anything of this. I didn't question why and, looking back, I don't know if I ever said "thank you" for all the food that they brought us. To me, it seemed normal. I thought everybody's grandparents brought a carload of food each week to their home. I don't remember my parents or grandparents ever making this delivery feel out of the ordinary - they simply showed up week after week, brought in the bags of groceries, and helped my parents put them away. It was only as I was getting older, entering my teen years, when I realized that this was not the norm. They were bring us food because we couldn't always afford it. We needed help supplementing our meals and my grandparents were doing that for us. And with that realization, I came to see the true blessing, the true miracle in all of those meals and I was thankful to God for my grandparents and their willingness and ability to help feed

us. That without them, the abundance would not have been there, no leftovers would have likely been put away at the end of the night, and I would not have ended every night feeling filled and satisfied. There was a miracle there.

Today in our scripture reading, we hear of yet another miracle – this one is of Jesus feeding the four thousand – not the better known miracle of Jesus feeding the five thousand which also happened – but today we hear of Jesus feeding the four thousand. We hear that after teaching and healing among a great crowd, he had compassion for them as they had not eaten for days. They were there feasting on the words of Jesus, feasting on the miracles that they were witnessing before them, but now they were to feast on bread and fish. And so Jesus took the little that they had, made it an abundance, filled and satisfied all who were gathered, and even put seven baskets of leftovers away. But you know, I wonder if the crowd that was gathered with Jesus, was like me and was oblivious to the mealtime miracle that was taking place. I mean, they had been seeing many miracles, they had witnesses and heard wonderful and glorious things, but did they see the miracle in the meal or did they come to expect it? They, the crowd that was gathered, certainly knew that they were fed, but did they appreciate the miracle behind it?

Last evening, we had the Feed Our Scholars potluck and recipe auction – a true miracle in action. When one casserole dish turns into a banquet table where all are fed and nourished, filled and satisfied. And then the auction began and through the funds raised for the evening, many more kids in our community will be fed and nourished, filled and satisfied. What a miracle! A multiplying that continues to spread so that more people can continually be fed.

Today, we have the opportunity after worship to make our voices heard through the Bread for the World letter offering to support legislation that will help feed those who are hungry – calling for the resources that we have shared with one another to be used to perform a mealtime miracle and fill empty bellies.

And in just a moment, we will partake once more in the simple, yet sacred meal of Holy Communion. A meal that will not fill us physically but will overflow us spiritually - where our minds and hearts will be nourished by the love and grace of God, where we will know the extents to which God was willing to go so that we could experience such love and cherish such grace. A multiplying of love and grace to be spread so that more people can spiritually be fed.

Do you see the miracles in the meals that you share? Whether it is the miracle found in the presence of the food, the preparer of the food, or in the company in which you partake the food? Do you see mealtime miracles in your own life? Do you see the miracle in the meals that you help set before others? Do you see the miracle in this simple meal laid before us today? And, are you willing to help perform yet another mealtime miracle to strengthen others for the journey of life? May mealtime miracles continue to flow from this table and beyond. Amen.