

# Wheelersburg Baptist Church

## “When Little is Much”

Luke 9:10-17

### LUKE 9:10-17

<sup>10</sup> When the apostles returned, they reported to Jesus what they had done. Then he took them with him and they withdrew by themselves to a town called Bethsaida, <sup>11</sup> but the crowds learned about it and followed him. He welcomed them and spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and healed those who needed healing. <sup>12</sup> Late in the afternoon the Twelve came to him and said, “Send the crowd away so they can go to the surrounding villages and countryside and find food and lodging, because we are in a remote place here.” <sup>13</sup> He replied, “You give them something to eat.” They answered, “We have only five loaves of bread and two fish—unless we go and buy food for all this crowd.” <sup>14</sup> (About five thousand men were there.) But he said to his disciples, “Have them sit down in groups of about fifty each.” <sup>15</sup> The disciples did so, and everybody sat down. <sup>16</sup> Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke them. Then he gave them to the disciples to set before the people.

<sup>17</sup> They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over.

**The Main Idea:** *When you are overwhelmed with needs, Jesus wants you to give the little you have to Him and observe how He takes it and abundantly meets people’s needs for His glory.*

### **INTRODUCTION:** “Example: The Typical First Counseling Session”

Many of you have struggling family and friends. It seems that on every turn, there is someone else needing help. If you engage and listen to people’s struggles, it can become quite overwhelming. Perhaps you know someone who has recently received a medical diagnosis that is not good. Maybe you are the primary caretaker for an aging parent. Maybe your job places you with needy people. Perhaps your children are a concern. We are surrounded by need.

So how does our Lord want us to respond when needs seem to overwhelm our limited capacity? My aim is for you to be encouraged this morning with this truth; Jesus wants you to give the little bit that you have to him, and then watch as He takes it and uses it to abundantly meet needs for His glory.

#### **I. Jesus wants you to meet needs, and they are everywhere (10a)**

The apostles had just returned from ministering to the multitudes. We see from the first part of Luke 9 that they were reporting to Jesus on how they had preached the good news of the kingdom and many people had been healed and set free. Jesus came to this earth to do His Father’s will. At this point in His earthly life, it was the Father’s purpose to display His Son’s glory, identity and deity through miracles and preaching. Jesus was also teaching, training, and empowering His apostles to do the work of the kingdom. Today, Jesus has sent us as His people to preach the gospel and make disciples, all in the context of serving people and meeting

practical needs. Much like the apostles, we have been sent to a needy world to serve, meet needs, and proclaim the good news of God's salvation.

The Lord wants all of us to work diligently to find and meet the needs of people. We certainly don't need to look far. People have financial needs, physical needs, emotional needs and certainly the need to be reconciled to God through Christ. If you are Jesus' disciple, Jesus wants you to meet needs, and they are everywhere. As you go out to meet the needs of others.....

## **II. You will get tired and weary in ministry and need some rest. (10b-11)**

The apostles were rejoicing in the evidence of the Lord working through their ministry, but they were also tired, hungry, and grieving. John the Baptist had been recently murdered by Herod. Jesus recognized the need for them to all come apart and be refreshed and encouraged.

Verse 10 says *Then he took them with him and they withdrew by themselves to a town called Bethsaida,*

Jesus took the disciples with him to come apart by themselves to a remote place. We learn from the account in the gospel of Mark that Jesus had them go with Him in a boat, but the crowds saw what they were doing and followed him on foot from the towns. Mark's gospel says they *"ran there on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them."*

I want you to not just picture what was happening, but also feel it. Jesus and His apostles have been healing the sick, casting out demons, and preaching incessantly. They haven't had even enough time to pause to get something to eat. Their dear friend, John the Baptist, has just been brutally murdered by Herod. Jesus feels the need for them to get in the boat to go to a remote area to rest. But the crowds saw them leave, and figured out where they were going, and ran on foot to that place to beat them there when they arrived.

Are there times that you give, and give, and then give even more, until you are exhausted? As disciples of Jesus, He has given us this mission to go into the world, and preach the gospel, and take His love and care and compassion to the world. It begins by loving and caring for our own church family, and their families, and then reaching out to our community and beyond. As we work hard to fulfill that calling, we will see even more needy people. They are everywhere!! At times you will feel a need for a break and some rest. We are not super people. Sometimes you will get to rest and take a break. That is healthy and a good thing. But at times it will not happen, and we must persevere. That was the case on this particular day. Jesus intended on providing some care and rest for himself and his apostles, but the crowds outwitted them and beat them to the other side of the lake.

Now take a close look at how our Lord responds to these needy, presumptuous people. Luke 9:11 says

*He welcomed them and spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and healed those who needed healing.*

This word welcome means to “receive kindly or hospitably.” Matthew’s gospel says that when Jesus “saw a large crowd, and had compassion on them and healed their sick” Mark tells us that Jesus’ compassion welled up because they were like sheep without a shepherd.

Jesus’ intension was to take his apostles and get away from the crowds for some food, rest and recharge. But as he landed the boat, and saw the crowds, He was deeply moved by their need and their desperation. His compassion moved Him to welcome them and love them.

Aren’t you thankful today that we have a Savior that cares? How wonderful and beautiful is our Lord and Savior! What love towards needy sinners! Think of how presumptuous we have been, how often we have treaded on the mercy and grace of Jesus. Aren’t you glad that He doesn’t treat us as we deserve, that he sees our desperate need, and He gave Himself to meet it? And He didn’t just skip a meal, or work some extra hours for us. He came and took the wrath and punishment of a holy God for our sins, so that we could be set free and rescued from eternal destruction!

What a challenge for us to pray that God would change our hearts to be like His. While we were his enemies, He gave Himself completely to purchase our salvation. This love of Christ compels us to do the same and lay down our lives for each other as well. As we and face an endless line of needy people, and we are not sure if we can keep going, we need to look to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, and not grow weary in doing good. As you go out to meet the needs of others....

### **III. You will feel that you have little compared with the needs that you see. (12-14)**

*<sup>12</sup> Late in the afternoon the Twelve came to him and said, “Send the crowd away so they can go to the surrounding villages and countryside and find food and lodging, because we are in a remote place here.” <sup>13</sup> He replied, “You give them something to eat.” They answered, “We have only five loaves of bread and two fish—unless we go and buy food for all this crowd.” <sup>14</sup> (About five thousand men were there.)*

It’s late in the day. The disciples are tired. There are 5000 men (probably around 20000 total people) in the crowd, and they are hungry. They are in a remote place. What to do? The disciples have an answer...send them away. Let them take care of themselves.

Do you relate to that solution? Turn off the phone, retreat, and let people take care of themselves. This is our struggle, and this is also where the proverbial rubber meets the road. It’s when it’s late, and you’re tired, and there is an overwhelming need. You just want to send them away.

And then Jesus responds; “You feed them”. In fact, He asks Philip, “Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?” Seriously???? Come up with a plan to feed 20,000 people?

So the apostles did a quick inventory. They pulled out their calculator and assessed the situation. Philip calculated that it would take about 8 months wages to provide a small bite of food for each

person. Don't you see the obvious, Jesus, we just don't have enough. Ever been there? Maybe you're there right now. It seems the Lord has thrust you into a situation where you don't even begin to have enough to take care of the needs.

Then Jesus asks another interesting question, "What do you have?"

Andrew speaks up and says, "We have a boy that has a small lunch of five loaves and two fishes, but how far will that go with a crowd of 20,000! It's probably not even worth mentioning! We have a little bit, but almost nothing in comparison with what is needed. We've looked at the situation, and we see the needs of those around us, and there is just too little to take care of too many people.

You're tired and wish that people would just go away and take care of themselves, and Jesus is telling you to feed them. You have next to nothing. What are you supposed to do? Too many people. Too much need. Too many problems. Too much drama. Too little food and money. Too little energy. Not enough help. And what does Jesus do? He welcomes them, and He tells them to come and He will teach them and heal them and bind their wounds and fill their bellies. And He wants us as his disciples to feed them, and we have almost nothing. So what are we supposed to do?

#### **IV. Jesus wants you to give him the little that you have to Him and watch how He takes it and abundantly meets needs for His glory, often through you. (14b-17)**

*But he said to his disciples, "Have them sit down in groups of about fifty each."<sup>15</sup> The disciples did so, and everybody sat down.<sup>16</sup> Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke them. Then he gave them to the disciples to set before the people.<sup>17</sup> They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over.*

So what do you do when you are tired, overwhelmed, and surrounded by needy people? Jesus wants you to take the little bit that you have and give it Him. He always has a plan and the sovereign power to execute it. He will take care of everyone and meet the needs as He sees fit. He is sufficient, and we are not. He is in control, and sovereignly organizes and orchestrates the solution. It is a grace and a blessing that He includes us by taking the little that we give Him, and with thanksgiving and gratitude, He blesses it and creates more than enough to meet all of the needs and more. He even gives it back to us so we get the joy and blessing of handing it out to people in His name. He provides more than we could ever ask for or expect. And even the extra is by His design, to use wisely and meet even more needs.

To get the most from this passage, I have four final questions for us to consider.

#### **APPLICATION:**

- First, what do we learn about Jesus from this passage?
  - a. He is the sovereign and sufficient Lord
  - b. He cares about lost and needy people

- c. He always knows what He's going to do
- Second, what do we learn about ourselves?
  - a. We are limited and have limited resources
  - b. Even though we are limited, the Lord wants to use us and what we have
- Third, what do we learn about kingdom ministry?
  - a. What Christ commissions He supplies
  - b. Christ uses weak, limited followers to do His work and build His kingdom
- Finally, what needs to you see?