

There was a man who got lost in the desert.  
After wandering around for a long time  
his throat became very dry,  
about that time he saw  
a little shack in the distance.

He made his way over to the shack  
and found a water pump with a small  
jug of water and a note.

The note read: "pour all the water into the top  
of the pump to prime it, if you do this you will  
get all the water you need".

Now the man had a choice to make,  
if he trusted the note and poured the water in  
and it worked he would have all the water he needed.  
If it didn't work he would still be thirsty and he might die.

Or he could choose to drink the water in the jug  
and get immediate satisfaction,  
but it might not be enough and he still might die.

After thinking about it the man decided to risk it.  
He poured the entire jug into the pump and  
began to work the handle, at first nothing happened  
and he became a little scared but he kept going  
and water started coming out.  
So much water came out he drank all he wanted,  
took a shower, and filled all the containers he could find.

Because he was willing to give up momentary satisfaction,  
he got all the water he needed.

Now the note also said: after you have finished,  
please refill the jug for the next traveler."

The man refilled the jug and added to the note:  
"Please prime the pump, believe me it works"!

We have the same choice to make,  
do we hold on to what we have because we don't believe  
there are better things in store for us,  
and settle for immediate satisfaction?  
Or do we trust God and give up all that we have  
to get what God has promised us?  
I think the choice is obvious.

We need to pour in all the water,  
and trust God with everything.  
Then once we have experienced what God has to offer,  
the living water, we need to tell other people,  
“Go ahead prime the pump, believe me it works”!

In the lesson of the feeding of the 5,000  
a young boy also has the experience of more  
than enough after giving all that he has and  
receiving abundance in return.  
Notice how this all begins.  
The crowds had gathered and it was time to eat.  
The crowds numbered about 5,000 men  
not counting the women and children.

And Jesus says to Philip,  
"How are we to buy bread so that these people may eat?"  
And how does Philip respond?  
Probably how many of us would respond not  
by faith but by our pocketbook.  
He looks in the money bag to see they have  
only two hundred denarii and ends by saying  
there is little that can be done because  
they don't have enough money.  
Did you notice something?

Philip never once asks Jesus what he  
can do about the situation.  
Philip never turns to Jesus and  
asks him to do something,  
he relies on his own resources  
and because of that he fails.

Philip is like many of us,  
we rely on our own resources  
we rely on me, myself and I.  
So when the tough situations of life come along  
we have a difficult time coping with them.

Philip viewed the situation as hopeless  
And even though Jesus was right there,  
he didn't turn to him.  
Philip could not see that Jesus could  
have helped this situation.  
Philip could not see beyond his own power to do something  
with the physical resources he had.

Many times you and I are like Philip.  
We see need, we look at our resources,  
and we decide that we are powerless to help,  
so we don't do anything.

We never think of turning our resources over to Jesus,  
we never think that maybe he can do something  
with our little gifts in a way we would never think of doing.  
Our faith and Philip's faith in the power of Jesus  
to change situations is often lacking.  
We would rather trust our own resources,  
our own power, our own pride and maybe even fail,  
instead of turning everything over to Jesus  
and letting him be in charge.

We do this in the church as well when we  
focus more on scarcity than abundance.  
We of course need to be good stewards of our financial resources  
but we also need to be able to see the vision of ministry beyond dollars and  
cents.

Now let's look at Andrew.  
Andrew saw the same problem;  
he saw all the hungry people and he knew there  
wasn't enough money to buy food.  
So Andrew went out among the crowd to see  
what could be done.

He found a boy who had a picnic lunch,  
a soggy sardine sandwich,  
the Happy Meal of his day.  
It was only enough food to feed  
one hungry, growing boy,  
but Andrew decides instead of this being  
a hopeless situation, he would go and tell Jesus  
what he had found.

Andrew said to Jesus,  
"There is a lad here who had five barley loaves  
and two fish; but what are they among so many?"  
But what are they among so many,  
isn't that the age old question.

We look at what we have then we see the many  
who need more than we can possibly give so we ask,  
but what are they among so many.

I can't possibly help.

This lad didn't realize how much he had  
until he gave it over to the Lord.  
Sure he saw he had only 5 loaves and 2 fish,  
but the Lord saw it as a gift to be  
used to feed the hungry people.

The Lord made much of the little  
the boy was willing to give.  
I would imagine Andrew might have had thoughts similar to this:  
"Well, this boy has only a limited amount of food?  
but maybe Jesus can do something with it.  
Yes, I will tell Jesus, if he can heal people,  
if he can turn water into wine,  
surely he can do something with this bread and with this fish."

So, Andrew takes his knowledge,  
his resources to Jesus.  
He turns over to Jesus what he has found out.  
He lets Jesus be in control of his resources.  
He doesn't know or understand or even fully  
believe that Jesus can do something  
but he has faith that bringing his resources  
to Jesus is the right thing to do.  
Many of you have done that before.

You weren't sure exactly how your resources  
would be used but you saw a need,  
a ministry and you started it.  
Look at our Good Neighbors Child Care.  
The Mother's Day Out program.  
I was impressed when I saw those things happening here.  
Those kinds of ministry are important ways  
that we go out to our community.  
They began as an idea that grew from little.

Or take our Angel Food Ministry.  
Do you realize that we are now the learning center  
for other churches wanting to do this?  
Not only do we feed hundreds of people  
especially the working poor  
but we are empowering other churches to do the same.

Or what about the FUEL program  
that is getting ready to begin again.

We are providing bread and fish to children who would not eat on the weekends if it wasn't for you. And how did these things happen?

Because when an opportunity for ministry arose you acted out of abundance and not scarcity. You gave your resources.

Then notice what Jesus does with the resources that were brought to him, he turned the little into much. Jesus takes the 5 loaves and 2 fish and he turns it into enough food to feed 5,000 men plus their children and wives with 12 baskets of food left over. Notice there was plenty left over.

Andrew chanced that Jesus could do something very special with the limited resources that were present. But who really did the action in this lesson? Was it Philip? Was it Andrew?. No. It was Jesus and the boy. This is an interesting lesson because it shows the faith of the boy and the power of Jesus to use our gifts for a greater purpose.

In England during the 1900's, George Muller founded several orphanages which cared for as many as 2,000 children. One night Muller was informed that the supply of food was gone at one of the houses.

The next morning he joined the children at the breakfast. There was a bowl, and plate and glass in front of each of the several hundred children, but all were empty.

Mr. Muller asked the children to bow their heads as he prayed. His words included "Father, we thank Thee for what Thou art going to give us to eat." After he ended the prayer there was a knock at the door. A baker was standing there who said, "I couldn't sleep last night.

I felt you didn't have any bread and the Lord wanted me to send you some, so I got up at 2:00 this morning and baked some fresh bread for you."

George Muller not only thanked the baker,  
but also said a prayer of thanksgiving to God.  
Within a few minutes there was a second knock at the door.  
There was a milkman standing at the door.

He explained that his milk cart had broken  
down right in front of the home.  
The milk had to be unloaded and he wanted to  
give it to the home for the children.  
"Could you take it?" he asked.  
Now Pastor Jeremy those are nice stories  
but that doesn't really happen.

Don't believe it?  
Let me tell you the story of a man who decided  
in the middle of his life to leave as one of the  
top restaurant executives at Rio Bravo Cantina.  
He was making more money than he knew what to do with  
but his life was unfulfilling.

He had a vision that God wanted him to help feed  
the rural poor in America.  
He saw that was a need that was unmet.  
He left his job almost lost his house  
and changed his family's life forever.

He created Feed America First  
which is based in Murfreesboro in a warehouse  
and distributes food from donations to over  
160 food agencies in small towns and rural areas.  
He has no idea what food is coming or when or even if.  
But since June of 2000 they have distributed  
18 million pounds of food that would have been thrown away.  
And he has always had more than enough to give away.  
His name is Tom Henry.

Andrew knew that Jesus could do something very special  
with the limited resources of bread and fish.  
George Muller knew that if he would turn over to the Lord  
the problem of the hungry orphans,  
the Lord would provide.  
Tom Henry knew there was a need and  
if he was faithful God would fill it.

Visionary people in this church knew there were needs

that we could meet in our community.  
There is a lesson in this for all of us.

When we turn over to the Lord  
the resources he has given us,  
he will use those resources to further God's kingdom  
in ways that we cannot understand.

Andrew really wasn't quite sure what Jesus could do,  
or how this could help the crowd,  
but it is important to note even with his doubts,  
even with his wondering he still gave this resource over to Jesus,  
he still surrendered his own will to the will of Jesus.

You and I are called upon by Jesus to do the same thing.  
Even if we cannot understand what Jesus  
will do with our resources,  
even if we think what we have is very little,  
we must have faith that Jesus can do  
something special with our gifts.

It is this kind of faith and trust in God  
that we are called upon to possess.  
To believe : that everything we have is a gift from the creator,  
and that it is our responsibility to give to him  
those resources which he has given us  
to be used in his way to further his kingdom.

Is it then not appropriate for us who have been given  
so much to in some way thank the provider?  
Isn't it appropriate for us to give back to him  
some of what he has so generously given to us?

That is what this lesson is all about.  
Giving back to God what he has given to us  
so that God can make out of our little much.  
Philip saw the hungry and didn't know what could be done;  
Andrew saw the hungry and brought a little boy  
to the Lord hoping that the Lord could do something.

And then there was a boy who had a Happy Meal  
that contained the poorest bread and some picked fish.  
He wasn't sure how the Lord would use his gift, his resource,  
but he gave it the Lord, anyway.

He turned over to Jesus not only his bread and fish,

but his entire life.

He turned over to Jesus his physical resources  
and then himself, he turned his life over to Jesus  
at that moment for he trusted Jesus to take care of him,  
to not let him go away from there hungry.

And Jesus provided, didn't he?

He provided for this boy and for more than 5,000 people.  
What if all of us turned over our resources to Jesus,  
what if we surrendered to him our entire lives,  
what if we trusted him to provide for us,  
can you imagine what he could do? Amen.