



## Hoarding

*They said to Him, "We have here only five loaves and two fish." And He said, "Bring them here to Me."*

*Matthew 14:17-18*

I have a tendency to hoard. I like to have plenty of whatever it is I think I need on hand. When I use some of whatever it is, I feel the need to replace it, so I always have a certain amount. When levels get low, I get anxious. I feel the lack of the item even while I still have some. Then when I am able to replace what I've used, I don't feel like I have enough. I do the same with emotional and spiritual resources. I hoard. When my time is stretched thin, I hyperfocus on the lack of it and bemoan its scarcity. I become short-tempered and ungenerous with what I do have. I hoard until I feel like I have enough, but in that mindset, I *never* have enough.

I love the brevity of this account of the feeding of the five thousand found in Matthew 14. The meager details brought my attention to something I believe my Father wanted me to see. What stood out to me is the word "only," the emphasis being on the sparseness of the resources compared to the enormity of the need. The disciples "only" had so much (and we know from other accounts that what they had wasn't even theirs), but Jesus wanted them to bring it to Him.

That has not changed in the centuries since. I only have so much...so much care, so much kindness, so much compassion, so much tolerance, so much forbearance, so much faith, so much willingness. And yet what I have He asks me to bring to Him. I can choose to hold on to it, logically (in my mind) believing that if I use it I will no longer have what I need. Two minus two equals zero, after all.

So could the boy who donated his lunch, the disciples who were likely also hungry. They could have held on to it. They could have said to Jesus, "it's not enough, even for one person, much less whatever You have planned. So no, I'm just going to keep it." There's a couple of things there that I think I needed to see. One thing is the lack of faith I often have regarding what Jesus can and will do with the little I have to offer. All I see is the smallness of the resource. He sees the willingness to let Him have it.

The other is the lack of faith that Jesus will feed me *along with* the five thousand. The boy got his lunch, after all. He was one of the many in the crowd. He didn't give it up and go hungry. He got fed. How often do I feel like I won't get fed if I give Jesus the little I have?

When I give to Him what I have, He multiplies and uses it to bless me as well as the others He has His eye on. To have what I need, I must give it away, not hoard it.

*Father, thank You for Your patience with us short-sighted and selfish people. Help us to believe You, to trust that You can do the miraculous with the little we have to offer. Help us to give it freely and trust that You will supply all our needs.*