

Pastor Phil's E-note

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How Little Becomes Much — How Much Becomes Little

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Jesus performed many miracles, but the one that is recorded in all four Gospels and gains our attention today is the Feeding of the 5,000. Apparently Jesus fed a large number on more than one occasion. (*Matthew 15:13-21, Mark 6:32-44, Luke 9:10-17, John 6:1-13, the feeding of the 5,000; Matthew 15:32-38, the feeding of the 4,000*). A young boy made available five loaves and two fish on one occasion. In the Matthew 15 passage, the disciples were able to give seven loaves and a few fish to the Lord. In both cases, Jesus took the little that was available and turned it into plenty for everyone. Both times there were leftovers that were picked up and used to further the blessing.

This is a miracle that defies human explanation, except to say that when God is in something, Jesus puts His blessing on it and as God's people obey, adequate resources are made available. In fact, more than adequate. For He supplies all our needs according to His riches in Christ Jesus. (*Philippians 3:19*)

How Much Becomes Little

If you take the principles taught in how God takes the little and makes it much, and reverse the process, you can see how much becomes little. If God is in it, Jesus blesses it and as we obey, abundance is the result. If however, we disobey, Jesus won't bless it and God won't be in it.

The problem is not on God's end. He has made everything we already have. And it's not Jesus' problem either. He blesses us far more than we can imagine or think. No. The focus is on us — are we really obeying by bringing loaves and fishes to Jesus, or are we keeping them for ourselves, or worse yet, taking our neighbors loaves and fishes?

I have been pondering a lot on this, especially during these challenging economic times. Pundits, experts and not-so experts have weighed in to state what the problem is and how to fix the world's economic problems. I too will weigh in, with some reservation, for I know my perspective is just that — mine.



"And he took the seven loaves and the fishes, and gave thanks, and brake them, and gave to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude. And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken meat that was left seven baskets full. And they that did eat were four thousand men, beside women and children."

(Matthew 15:36-38)

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Here are the key issues to me:

1. **Entitlements and Exemptions.** An attitude abounds that has been encouraged by our government. It is that you are entitled to that which you did not work for, and you are exempt from obligations that are yours. We now have a culture that says I deserve it, even if I have done nothing to invest in it. We now have a culture that encourages irresponsible behavior. And we have a government that says we will bail you out if you get yourself into trouble.
2. **Graft and Corruption.** Call me crazy, but it seems to me the economy works best when we operate under the concept that stealing is bad and we should refrain from it. This is based on one of the Ten Commandments — *Thou shalt not steal*. I know, everybody does it; but as my parents said to me when I used that lame reason for doing something stupid: “Would you jump off a cliff because everybody is doing it”? Unfortunately and apparently the answer today seems to be yes. Where does graft and corruption take place? It must be everywhere. Consider these examples.
 - Taxpayers steal from the government by not paying what is rightfully owed; the government steals from the taxpayers by spending money they don’t have, bailing out failed businesses and creating debt for generations of US citizens, many of whom have not been born.
 - Employees steal from employers (from petty theft of paper, pencils and paper clips, to embezzlement of hundreds of thousands of dollars by writing checks to themselves); employers steal from employees (from not paying a fair wage, knowingly hiring illegal immigrants, taking employee retirement reserves to pay for operating expenses, to CEO’s taking huge bonuses while their companies fail).
 - Churches steal from paid staff (underpayment for services with the “spiritual” thought: “after all, you do this because you are called”); and paid staff steal from the church (misuse of time or using computers or the office petty cash fund for personal use).
 - But all steal who fail to tithe to God. (*Malachi 3:9-10*). It adds up to God withdrawing His hand of blessing and allowing the locusts to pick the fields clean. Then we all complain we aren’t taken care of and God gets the blame.



“Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.” (*Malachi 3:9-10*)

We’re run out of space... Check out the next E-note for the rest of this article.

Your friend and pastor,

Phil