

LCMS Stewardship

Newsletter Article

May 2017

“It is more blessed to give than to receive,” said St. Paul, quoting our Lord (Acts 20:35). How can this be?

Jesus and His disciples withdrew to a mountain by the shore of the Sea of Galilee. The crowds followed them, for the Lord had just showered upon them the gift of His teaching, the gift of His Word. But the day was waning; the sun was setting, and it was getting late. Looking upon the crowds, Jesus had compassion on them and asked, “Where are we to buy bread, so that these people may eat” (John 6:5)? Philip said that two hundred denarii (a day’s wages for two hundred men) could not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little.

But Andrew, Peter’s brother, brought a young boy forward, who had five barley loaves and two small fish. “But,” Andrew asked, “what are they for so many” (John 6:9). Jesus replied, “Have the people sit down” (John 6:10).

Then Jesus, the Son of God, gave them a second gift, a gift from what only He could give—a gift from above. He took the bread and the fish, gave thanks, blessed them, and distributed them to the crowd. Then came the miracle. As these five loaves and two fish were given out, they multiplied. He fed the hungry crowd until they were all full. And twelve baskets full were left over.

But Jesus was not the only one who gave that day. There is one person who also gave from what he had. It was the boy with the five loaves and the two fish. All the others, including the boy, received the gift of a miraculous feast. And they would look back on it with wonder. But the boy, when he would look back on it, would look back and remember not just what he received. He would look back with wonder and delight when the Son of God made his gift into something miraculous. For it is more blessed to give than to receive.

This our Lord does for each of us. He presses our gifts, no matter how big or how small, into His service and works wonders with them. He provides through what we give: water for baptism, bread and wine for the Lord’s Supper, a man called and sent for the preaching of the Gospel and Absolution. He provides a building in which we can gather as His children, lights so that we might not gather in darkness. He provides funds for the care of the poor and struggling, for missionaries who preach and teach beyond our borders. He makes Christians, disciples of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ in our midst by bringing them to faith and nurturing them in that faith. He takes our gifts and turns them into something miraculous.

Indeed, it is more blessed to give than to receive. Thus we give. We give of what we have. And the Lord works His wonders.