# Congregational-Presbyterian Church

 **“We Give – God Blesses”**

**John 6:1-13**

**October 20, 2019**

I hold in my hands a golf club. If you’ve ever seen my golf swing you will know that in my hands it can’t do much, but in the hands of Tiger Woods a set of these has produced fifteen major championships. Or take this paint brush. The best I can do with it is to touch up the trim on my house, but in the hand of Rembrandt it produced incredible works of art. In my hands, these are normal, everyday things. In the hands of a master, they are transformed into something special.

What happens when something of ours is placed in the hands of the master of the universe? I invite you to turn with me to John 6:1-13 and we will see what a few loaves of bread and a couple of fish can become when placed in the hands of God

After this, Jesus crossed over to the far side of the Sea of Galilee, also known as the Sea of Tiberias. A huge crowd kept following him wherever he went, because they saw his miraculous signs as he healed the sick. Then Jesus climbed a hill and sat down with his disciples around him. (It was nearly time for the Jewish Passover celebration.) Jesus soon saw a huge crowd of people coming to look for him. Turning to Philip, he asked, “Where can we buy bread to feed all these people?” He was testing Philip, for he already knew what he was going to do. Philip replied, “Even if we worked for months, we wouldn’t have enough money to feed them!” Then Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, spoke up. “There’s a young boy here with five barley loaves and two fish. But what good is that with this huge crowd?” “Tell everyone to sit down,” Jesus said. So they all sat down on the grassy slopes. (The men alone numbered about 5,000.) Then Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks to God, and distributed them to the people. Afterward he did the same with the fish. And they all ate as much as they wanted. After everyone was full, Jesus told his disciples, “Now gather the leftovers, so that nothing is wasted.” So they picked up the pieces and filled twelve baskets with scraps left by the people who had eaten from the five barley loaves.

I wonder what that day was like for the young boy. When he got up that morning, he may have been planning to spend the day fishing. I can imagine his mom asking as he’s on his way out the door: “Did you pack a lunch?” “Aaaaaw, Mom.” “Get right back in here, young man. You know you can’t be out all day and not have anything with you to eat.” She pulled out his little lunch basket and prepared him a meal of five small barley loaves and two fish.

Finally he was on his way, but he was soon sidetracked from his plans for the day when he saw a large crowd of people. “What’s going on?” he asked. “See that man up there? That’s Jesus of Nazareth. He is an amazing teacher and he can heal people.” Fascinated, the boy joined the crowd following Jesus.

Soon, the man’s followers began walking through the crowd as if they were looking for something. The boy felt a touch on his shoulder and turned. There was one of the followers, the one named Andrew, pointing to his lunch basket and asking, “What is that you have there?” “My lunch,” the boy replies. “Would you be willing to give it to the master?” Andrew asks. Very much in awe of the circumstances, the boy merely nods, and Andrew takes him to meet Jesus.

“Jesus, this boy has five barley loaves and two fish,” Andrew says. “May I have them?” Jesus asks. The boy gives his meal to Jesus. Then, amazingly, Jesus takes his lunch and turns it into food for the thousands of people gathered on the hillside. The boy can hardly wait to get home and tell his mother what happened.

What did happen? A simple meal was placed in God’s hands, and he used it to care for the needs of many and thereby reveal his glory. In God’s hands, the ordinary things of life are blessed that they may be used to further the purposes of his will here on earth. You are I are fairly ordinary people, but when we place the time, abilities, and possessions that he has blessed us with in his hands and allow him to do with them as he desires, they become a blessing to others.

The simple act of giving on the boy’s part brought about a great blessing for the people who were fed. It also blessed the disciples, for in this act they witnessed the ability of God to take what a person offers and do amazing things with it. Later, after Jesus had returned to his Father in heaven, they were left to continue his ministry. Clearly, they were not Jesus. But, what they were and what they had they offered to God, simple as it was, and God blessed it. They preached the Word and God blessed it in the hearts of people who came to faith by the thousands. They prayed for people in need and God blessed their prayers and people were healed, even raised from the dead. They were the humble beginnings of the church and God blessed them, and the church is still with us today.

What if the little boy had refused to give up his lunch? Little boys are always hungry, and I can imagine he worried a little about what he was going to eat if he gave his lunch to this important man. After all, perhaps Jesus only wanted it because he was hungry. Jesus would have a nice meal and the boy would be left with nothing. Or, in a hungry crowd like that, the boy could have sold his lunch for many times what it was worth. He could have made a nice little profit on his investment. From a worldly point of view, giving his meal to Jesus was foolish. From God’s point of view, it became an opportunity for God to bless the meal so that it became a blessing to many.

During this season of stewardship, we consider our current giving to the ministry of this church and determine our response to the financial commitment card for the coming year. What are we willing to give to God so that he may bless it and cause it to bless others? God does not demand nor does he coerce. But he does invite us to join him in the work of his Kingdom, asking us to give him our ordinary things that he may bless them and make of them something extraordinary.