

Lent Devotional March 12, 2026

Scripture

Mark 6:30-46

30 The apostles gathered around Jesus and told him all that they had done and taught. 31 He said to them, "Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while." For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. 32 And they went away in the boat to a deserted place by themselves. 33 Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they hurried there on foot from all the towns and arrived ahead of them. 34 As he went ashore, he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd, and he began to teach them many things. 35 When it grew late, his disciples came to him and said, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is now very late; 36 send them away so that they may go into the surrounding country and villages and buy something for themselves to eat." 37 But he answered them, "You give them something to eat." They said to him, "Are we to go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give it to them to eat?" 38 And he said to them, "How many loaves have you? Go and see." When they had found out, they said, "Five, and two fish." 39 Then he ordered them to get all the people to sit down in groups on the green grass. 40 So they sat down in groups of hundreds and of fifties. 41 Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and blessed and broke the loaves and gave them to his disciples to set before the people, and he divided the two fish among them all. 42 And all ate and were filled, 43 and they took up twelve baskets full of broken pieces and of the fish. 44 Those who had eaten the loaves numbered five thousand men.

45 Immediately he made his disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. 46 After saying farewell to them, he went up on the mountain to pray.

Devotion

The Rev. Dr. Thomas Hoeke '03

My father-in-law always insisted that bread should be on the table at every meal. Growing up in the Depression, bread was a staple for him. Today, in many parts of the world, bread or grain is a source of food that keeps people alive. Bread is life-giving.

Disciples need to do more than lament the problem. After a full day of ministry to the crowds, the disciples ask Jesus to send the crowds away so they can get something to eat. When Jesus gives his disciples the command, "You give them something to eat," he tells them to address the concern. However, they point to scarcity, saying there is not enough available to feed the crowd. Yet Jesus points to abundance, indicating not to tell him what you don't have; tell him what you do have.

As the church or as individuals, when ministry opportunities present themselves, we often feel we don't have enough resources. We say that we would like to help, if only we had more.

We may not be called upon to save the world, but we are called to put aside our preconceived notions of what can and can't be accomplished with our resources. As faithful disciples, we cannot just point out the problem. We are challenged to tackle what may seem impossible. Trust in God and turn scarcity into abundance. Let's challenge ourselves, look deep inside ourselves, take an inventory of what we have, and bring it all to the Lord.

Jesus made it clear that the responsibility to care for others belongs to disciples of all time periods. He wants to partner with us to change the world. When the bread is blessed, broken, and given, it is up to us to also provide for others, because we are sent from the Table.

Prayer

Gracious and loving God, You make us aware of the needs in our churches, communities, and the world. May we not be swayed or discouraged by a lack of resources, or any other excuses we may encounter, not to respond. May we be open to the possibilities and new ways that we can make a difference. Open our eyes and hands, and move our feet to represent and partner with You. Amen.