

“How To Use What You Have”
John 6:1-14

At the beginning of my freshman year at Wake Forest College in the fall of 1955, I attended a required orientation session led by Dr. J. Allen Easley. During that session, Dr. Easley said: “Some of you are more than likely going to fail your college work and have to go back home. Some of you will make excellent grades and graduate four years from now with honors. I am here to challenge you to wisely use what you have. If you will use wisely the talents and abilities that you have, you may not be at the top of your class, you probably will not fail, and you will be doing what your teachers and more importantly what God expects of you.”

Down through the years of my ministry, I have thought a great deal about the meaning behind what Dr. Easley shared with us. All of this came back to me again some time ago as I was reading John 6:1-14. Look with me at the boy who had such a vital role in this event in the life of Jesus. This young boy made wise use of what he had. In the example of this boy we can learn how to wisely use what we have.

The question, then, is this: How can I wisely use the talents and abilities I have?

- I. First, accept the talents and abilities you have and be grateful for them.
The boy pictured in John chapter 6 did not have much food, but we do not hear him complaining about that. He had only five barley loaves and two small fishes. In this day, barley bread was the cheapest of all bread. It was despised by the wealthy people of the day. It was considered as food for beasts and was used for bread only by the very poor. The two little fishes were what we would call “pickled fish” and would compare to sardines today. Scholars say that the little fishes were plentiful in the Sea of Galilee and when caught and pickled were useful to help make the barley bread go down.

The food which that boy had was not much, but he accepted it as his lunch for that day and the implication is that he did so with gratitude. So it should be with whatever talents and abilities God has given us. Accept them and be grateful.

- II. Second, we must bring our talents and abilities to Jesus and commit them to Him. Our talents are gifts from God. And if we follow the example of the boy in John chapter 6, we will learn a valuable lesson in life. Just a little is enough in the hands of Jesus. Jesus can and will take our talents when we commit them to Him and use them in a mighty way. With just five barley loaves and two small fishes, Jesus fed over 5,000 people and had some left over.

One more very important point needs to be added to this message. One day God will judge us for the way we have used our talents and abilities. Read Matthew 25:14-30 and ask yourself: “What will God say to me on judgment day?”

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