

2023-08-27 Feed 5,000 The Who SERMON

By The Reverend Cheryl Kester-Schmidt

Knowledge of the miraculous is not confined to Biblical times and the first century. For example, I always have a Miracle in my refrigerator - a jar of Kraft Miracle Whip, that is. I grew up on it and did not taste mayonnaise until I was in my 30's.

You may experience a miracle as you watch a movie. During a commercial, you might put a small, flat bag into the microwave, and watch it puff up. The miracle of popcorn!

You might pour Miracle Grow around your plants and they flourish giving you huge blooms. How do they know what color to be? A flower so intricate only God could make it. A miracle!

For stressed pastors, it might be moments in worship when the sermon is reflected in verses of the hymns and prayers through nothing intentional by the pastor. The Holy Surprise - a miracle. Thanks be to God!

We heard our text just a few weeks ago from St. Matthew so it is fresh. This story is so important it appears in all four of the Gospels. They are similar but some give us more details than others.

Our Generosity theme this morning is The Who. Who is to be generous? Our gospel models this theme. God used the gifts and generosity of people of every age to accomplish the impossible in the miracle feeding.

Jesus feeds the 5,000 plus crowd of diverse people gathered to hear Him preach and heal the sick among them. Jesus uses a child's simple gift of bread and fish to feed them. This morning Jesus shows what Christ the Victor is to be – a place for connecting generations. All of us together no matter our age, gather together at the foot of the cross to worship our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

We are diverse in age. The smallest of us is less than a year old and there is an elder or two among us might be in their tenth decade.

Who is to be generous? God uses the gifts and generosity of people of every age to accomplish the impossible. No matter our age each of us has the capacity to be generous. For example, we have a number of pews where the “wisdom of the elder” is combined with the “wonder of the child.”

Our smallest, Elliot and Charli are generous with their smiles and baby noises. We too, break out in smiles, laughter and wonder at the capacity of our babies to bring out the best in us. They use their gifts to make us feel delight and joy. I have seen everyone even you gentlemen line up to wait your turn for these little ones to give you a personal glimpse of the face of God.

Weekly we are given the opportunity to meaningfully engage our children, youth, young adults, adults, and elders into the life and witness of Christ the Victor. We intentionally have a diverse group of worship leaders for our worship time together. All ages are encouraged to participate. We build relationship with each other as we hear God’s stories and share one another’s sacred stories - together. We are the Who of Generosity.

We model our generosity in giving during the offering time. How did you learn to be generous of your time, talent, and treasure? Luther encouraged parents to teach their children at the kitchen table. This is most likely where you learned or did not learn about being generous.

Money is a touchy subject. It causes heads and stomachaches. Dinner time is usually the time to argue about money or the lack of it. I only have to say money, stewardship, giving, tithe, and we begin to squirm. Yet, Jesus talks about money the majority of His time on earth. His stories about being good managers of God's gifts.

Children learn about generosity at the kitchen table. Are they learning to grasp and hang on to what they have or are they learning to share it generously with others? Children and youth are encouraged to give of their allowance, a job, and special occasion gifts as well as their time and talent.

Generosity is just not for adults. It is for all generations. Elliot, Evangeline, and Charli are included. They share their gifts

of their actions, cuteness and smiles with us. They bring us joy in the moment. We are blessed by their presence and have a front row seat to their coming into their gifts. Chance, Morgan, Braydon, Madison and Taylor share their gifts with us, as they mature into young adults with generous hearts. And you adults of "wisdom," I marvel at the creative ways you find to be generous to one another and to others in the community and the world. Yes, we are the Who of generosity.

God accomplishes great wonders using each one of us – the smallest to the tallest! We need only open our hearts to allow God's will to become our will. We need only seek to accomplish His work as we allow Him to direct our lives. The Holy Surprise will happen, in astonishing ways.

In a few minutes we will gather around Christ's Table. Gathered as family just as we gather at our kitchen tables. Our lives revolve around the time we spend at the tables in our lives - the kitchen table, Christ's Table and the community table. My sisters and brothers, God wants to use **us**, the Who in generosity.

Centuries ago a little boy offered his gift of five loaves and two fish to Jesus. In the same way, we are to lift all we have to God, who will accomplish miracles through each of us, regardless of our age. Using our gifts of time, talent and treasure God makes big things happen. He combines our gifts with others to make the Holy Surprise. Each day we have an opportunity to make a miracle with God.

Sunday, September 24 you will lay your gifts on Christ's Table to be used for the Glory of God. Until then, pray around your kitchen table as the family of God to discern where you will be generous in the coming year. Remember, you are the Who in generosity. God is counting on us!

Amen

Generosity 2 08 27 23