

The Lord of the Leftovers

Luke 9:1-6, 10-17

Thanksgiving Eve, 2016

Don't get too close to Jesus. You'll end up with a job.

Look at those ditzzy disciples. They came to bask in Jesus' brilliance. They coveted admiration by association. They applied for upper management positions in "Jesus, Incorporated."

Instead, they got grunt work in the Kingdom of God. Leave your bags at home! Live off the land! Forsake friendship! Preach the Good News. Declare war on demons. Dispose of disease.

And, wonder of wonders, it worked! But no good deed goes unpunished.

They went to Bethsaida for a few days at the seashore. Instead, word got out. And, hi-ho, hi-ho, it's back to work they go!

The disciples clocked out at the end of the day. No overtime for this bunch! Send the crowds home. Let them fend for themselves. Local innkeepers and pub managers will smile at the profits. Jesus, haven't we done enough?

Apparently not.

"You give them something to eat." When push comes to shove, Jesus is short on tact. No please and thank you. Not so much as a "By your leave." Just an order. *"You give them something to eat."*

This disciple business is all well and good until a clamoring crowd appears. Five thousand hungry men—not to mention the women and children. Five loaves and two fish. The math doesn't work out. Things were going to get ugly in a hurry.

Don't get too close to Jesus. You'll end up with a job. But the disciples misunderstood their job. They thought they were in charge of production. In fact, their job was distribution. Jesus blessed and broke the loaves and fish. The disciples handed out the feast. The leftovers were enough to send a basket home to every tribe in Israel!

Jesus blesses and breaks the bread of his body. Jesus pours out the wine of his blood. There is more than enough for all. There is more than enough mercy, grace and hope for the entire universe. So we give thanks.

Many will gather tomorrow to congratulate themselves on their power and privilege, their health and wealth, their serenity and security. That's Thanksgiving for many people. They will assume that they are in charge of production...and consumption.

It shall not be so among us.

Jesus says, *"You give them something to eat."* So we do. We distribute the good gifts we receive. We don't worry about running out. After all, we follow the Lord of the Leftovers—twelve baskets full! Many of us have worked in the chain of Divine Distribution this week, giving gifts to sisters and brothers in need. Many of us will continue that work in the days and weeks to come.

We follow the Lord of the Leftovers. We are drowning in a flood of anxiety, surrounded by cries of "Not enough!" We do not fear. Instead, *"in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God."* Then give them something to eat.

It's good work if you can get it.