

# From the Pastor's Desk

## THE GOD FACTOR

At some time in life, everyone has felt they did not have enough resources (knowledge, courage, skill, money, etc.) to do what they felt needed to be done. From a human perspective, the task seemed impossible. But, what about The God Factor?

The disciples found themselves with insufficient resources when faced with feeding over 5000 people with only two fish and five loaves of bread. So, they explained to Jesus that they didn't have enough food and the people should be dismissed to find food for themselves. Here is the dialogue:

*Jesus said, "The people need not go away; you give them something to eat." The disciples replied, "We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish." And he said, "Bring them here to me." Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.* (Matthew 14:17-21)

Humanly speaking, the disciples knew they did not have what was needed to get the job done and were ready to give up. Then they learned about The God Factor. Notice, Jesus said, "*Bring what you have to me.*" They gave it to him and found it was more than sufficient to do the job. That was an important lesson for them to learn. Later, after Jesus' death/resurrection, they found themselves in numerous situations where their minds said "You can't do it", but their faith said, "Step out with what you have and I will make it work". That's where the rubber meets the road with faith—when stepping into the unknown. Stepping into the unknown is where we often experience our greatest fears and where we need to include The God Factor in our daily lives.

Perhaps this becomes most concrete when dealing with our finances. Often, when looking at finances, we hear the inner voice, "You don't have enough". Today, we may hear, "Look at the gas prices. You won't have enough", and we grasp what we have a little tighter. But, remember The God Factor. In the above passage, Jesus said, "*Bring it to me*", and what little they had became abundant.

How much do we bring? To the Israelites, the Lord said bring ten percent: *Ten percent, whether of the seed of the land or the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's. It is holy to the Lord.* (Leviticus 27:30) What gave God the right to claim ten percent? His claim is based on one simple truth: As Creator, it all belongs to Him! *The earth is the Lord's and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell therein.* (Psalm 24:1) Another way of understanding this would be to give it all to the Lord for His blessing. He then gives ninety percent back to us and suggests we leave ten percent for his work.

Joan and I strive to apply The God Factor to our finances. If you are not already doing so, I encourage you to give it a try. Like the disciples, the words "You won't have enough" may come to mind. But, have faith and remember The God Factor. Mysteriously resources are multiplied or, perhaps, appetites are diminished. In any case, there is plenty to go around!

Our annual stewardship campaign begins soon. Please respond generously. Know that whatever time, talent or treasure your are giving our church, it is deeply needed and appreciated.

~ Pastor Bob