

May 29, 2016
Creation Celebration
Matthew 14:15-21

This morning we are surrounded by God's blessings, aren't we? There's the fresh air. The birds. The beautiful clouds. The friends gathered here together. Blessings. Today, we notice them, really notice them and give thanks. For the grass and its many shades of green. The fascinating patterns in the bark on that tree. And the robins doing their worm dance. The smell of dirt and growing things. And the smiles on people's faces, the Community Garden, our animal friends, the Spirit of grace among us. Blessings, all of them.

Blessings are everywhere around us. Even when we aren't thinking about them. But think about this. Straight up above our heads, 62 miles, is outer space. And in that great expanse of space, there are over 200 billion galaxies. And in our galaxy alone there are 20 billion planets. But on this planet, this atmosphere, in the 62 miles between here and space is the perfect mix of oxygen and carbon dioxide and nitrogen for life to flourish. And this abundant life around us includes 1 million different kinds of spiders and insects; 30,000 different kinds of fish. 400,000

kinds of flowering plants. 7 billion humans, who are speaking over 6000 languages right now. And the neurons in our brains send signals at 250 miles an hour and our noses can distinguish 50,000 different smells. And a dog's sense of smell is 40x greater than that. And dogs, even your miniature, toy, teacup poodle are descended from wolves. Aren't all of these things amazing? Aren't we surrounded by wonderful blessings? Today in our scripture reading, Jesus tells us that the A number-one thing that we do as his followers is announce God's blessing of the world. We are blessed. Creation is blessed. This life is blessed. And we remember daily that we are immersed in and surrounded by this blessing and we give thanks and we testify to it. Our attitude is gratitude continually because this life is blessed.

Of course, it's not always easy to remember the blessings that surround us when we feel like there are no blessings to be had. Jesus' disciples had a hard time with that too. In our scripture today, they are facing a crowd of 5000 plus hungry people and they have nothing to feed them with and it is recipe for disaster and there is no sign of God's blessing anywhere. They need to send the crowds away immediately. But Jesus

tells the disciples to give the crowds something to eat. It's that interesting. The disciples are fresh out of picnic supplies and they know it. "We don't have anything!" they tell Jesus. There is nothing here. This place is deserted. There is not a blessed thing for us to give anyone," they say.

There isn't anything good here. There isn't anything I have to celebrate or to share. There's nothing I have to count as a blessing. Isn't that what we find ourselves saying sometimes? Just like the disciples. There's nothing here, except for a few loaves of bread and some fish. It's not enough; it couldn't be enough, could it Jesus? This little bit that we have. It's not enough to matter. It's not enough to really be a blessing.

But Jesus knows that what we have is enough. He knows we are surrounded by blessing. And he takes that little of bread and he blesses it and it is enough to feed the multitudes.

Often we do not see the blessings around us. We do not stop to give thanks for what we have. We overlook the blessings of God and take them for granted. Look again, Jesus says. Look again at this life and see that it is blessed by God. Every morning, you get up to a new day, and

you are blessed. Every meal you eat, you are blessed. Every moment you have with your kids or your parents, you are blessed. Every day you go to work or school, to learn and do something meaningful and purposeful, you are blessed. Every time you can use your body to move or sit or stand or stretch or breathe in and out, you are blessed. Every time you are loved. Every time you share a prayer or speak a kind word or receive a hug, you are blessed. Every time you are welcomed home by a wagging tail and a wet nose, you are blessed. You are blessed with this blessed, abundant life God has given you.

Our first priority, our first mission as God's people is to remember and announce God's blessing. To proclaim that God's creation is amazing. Life is amazing. And God's love of this creation cannot be stopped. Not by hate or evil or a cross or a grave. It is not based on what we have. Or what we possess or what we can acquire. There is nothing we can do to make ourselves more blessed by God. Stop and notice and consider. We have enough. We are enough. We are blessed by God's grace through Jesus Christ. And we are blessed and blessed and blessed again. What a gracious and generous Creator we have!

Take a minute and tell a neighbor about a blessing in your life. What are you thankful for? What gift is yours every day?