

May the words of my mouth and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable in your sight, O Lord our Rock and our Redeemer. Amen

I find it interesting that both our miracles stories for today share a common detail.

Both indicate that there was food “**left over**”.

Now it would have **still** been a significant miracle if God would have *provided just enough for the people*.

If God would have provided *just enough* for those hundred men in Elisha’s time.

Or *just enough* for those 5,000 men plus women and children, in Jesus’ time.

But that’s not what the text says.

Both lessons tell us that God provided **more than enough**.

In both instances, there was not only enough food to feed every last person,

There was food to spare...there were **leftovers**.

In the feeding of the 5,000, there was enough left over that the 12 disciples were each able to fill a basket with what remained.

Now you might be thinking, “SO WHAT?”

Because in our day and age, **we don’t think too highly of leftovers**.

1. the kids complaining when it’s leftover night.
2. Bringing home “doggie bags” of leftovers and then leaving them in the frig until we have to throw them out.
3. Restaraunts and grocery stores throwing away cases of items that are out of code.

That’s why the commercial with the mom and son arguing over the “leftover” cell phone minutes makes us laugh.

***We don’t think too highly of leftovers.***

And in a disposable society like ours, sometimes it is just easier to throw things away than to go to the trouble of saving leftovers.

Yet, on the other hand, how often do we end up giving our leftovers to God without even thinking about it?

Rather than making a prayerful, conscious decision about what we offer back to God.

We end up giving God our leftovers.

We end up running into church at the last minute, digging in the bottom of our purse for spare bills or coins for the offering.

We end up giving God whatever time we have left after all the soccer games and work commitments.

**We don’t think very highly of leftovers, yet we are willing to give them to God. without blinking an eye.....**

forgetting that we only have leftover because of the abundant and generous Spirit of God.

the fact that we have leftovers means that we have been given more than we need.

Our lessons for today tell us that God provides more than enough for all...

It was true in the Hebrew Scriptures,  
it was true in the New Testament  
and it's still true today.

God provides more than enough to sustain creation.

God provides more than enough to feed all the people of the world.

People are not hungry in this world because God has failed to provide.

People are hungry in this world, because we have failed to share.

The world hunger problem is a distribution problem.

There is enough food....

It's just that we have turned food into a commodity to be bought and sold,

Instead of a gift that is given for all.

When our tutor Maggie was teaching us Swahili last week,

She was teaching us words for food and drink.

she was talking about the word for coffee...kahawa...

and she said she hoped that we would be able to get some good coffee while we are in Tanzania.

She then lamented that in her home country of Kenya, all the good quality coffee was exported and only the low-grade kinds were left for the people.

The same is true with food in many developing countries,

The quality food is exported, leaving the people hungry or suffering with malnutrition

So you could say that all the people have are leftovers..

after their governments and businesses sell off the good stuff.

Yet, what I found when I visited Tanzania in 2001 is that the people were some of the most generous people I have ever met.

As our hosts, they provided all our meals for us.

Now by about the fourth day, we realized that we were being served the very same meal every where we went.

Whether we were at a local school, or the home of the retired bishop, or Irente farm, we ate the same group of foods.

Now as Americans who are used to having a lot of variety in our diets, we were wondering why this was.

It wasn't until we later asked our missionary friends, that we learned that the meal we that we were served was their feast meal.

The missionaries told us that while we feasted on our selection of chicken, and stewed vegetables, and fried plantains, the children and staff had most likely eaten ugali

A mash made out of cornmeal.

Every one of our hosts had given us their very best.

Without concern for themselves or without worrying that there wouldn't be enough,

They shared with us, even beyond their means

Our hosts in Tanzania understood, on a very deep level, the abundance of God.

They understand that an “abundant” life has nothing to do with money or possessions.

They understand that God offers us an abundant life in Christ.

A life that can be shared freely because there is always more than enough.

It’s ironic that those of us with more... (more material things that is) are the ones who are always worried about not having enough.

And those who have less (less material things) are the ones who trust, without fear, that God will provide.

Money and materials possessions may come in limited supply.

But God’s riches are limitless.

And God’s love and mercy are without end.

God provides more than enough to sustain all of creation...

Maybe it’s time to readjust our thinking and start giving thanks for leftovers! Amen