

G3 sermon for 10/2/16  
"Where I Am: My Core Position"  
From "More" by Todd Wilson

Good morning. I'm Bob Richardson, and I am the assistant pastor here at G3. Thank you for allowing me the blessing of worshipping our Lord with you today. It means everything.

Father Mulcahey (**picture**) a character on the old TV show "M\*A\*S\*H". Arguably the best line he ever uttered came after another character had complimented him on his use of a particular Bible verse in a homily. He said, "Ah yes, the Gospel of Mark. You know, you can't go wrong with good material."

He's right. You can't. Scripture is really good material. In that spirit, I'd like to go right to the verse that has undergirded my preparation of this week's discussion of chapter 11 of "MORE", the section titled "Where I Am; My Core Position" that focuses on our own mission fields. It is from the Gospel of Mark's 6th chapter, verses 30 through 44, and is historically referred to as the feeding of the 5000. I invite you to read along with me in your Bible, phone, smart device, or up on the screen. Hear these words:

**Mark 6:30-44 New International Version (NIV) (SLIDE PLEASE)**

**Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand**

**30 The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done**

and taught. 31 Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, “Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.”

32 So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place. 33 But many who saw them leaving recognized them and ran on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. 34 When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things.

35 By this time it was late in the day, so his disciples came to him. “This is a remote place,” they said, “and it’s already very late. 36 Send the people away so that they can go to the

**surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat.”**

**37 But he answered, “You give them something to eat.”**

**They said to him, “That would take more than half a year’s wages[a]! Are we to go and spend that much on bread and give it to them to eat?”**

**38 “How many loaves do you have?” he asked. “Go and see.”**

**When they found out, they said, “Five— and two fish.”**

**39 Then Jesus directed them to have all the people sit down in groups on the green grass. 40 So they sat down in groups of hundreds and fifties. 41 Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave**

thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to his disciples to distribute to the people. He also divided the two fish among them all. 42 They all ate and were satisfied, 43 and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces of bread and fish. 44 The number of the men who had eaten was five thousand.

I'd like to talk about the mission field today. For many of us the mere consideration of the term "mission field" summons images of far away lands, tribal villages, barren, obscure, no wifi. (Perish the thought!) While those characteristics can certainly apply, the mission field is not limited to them. My workplace downtown **(picture)** is potentially the mission field, as is the Starbucks where I meet our daughter for book club **(picture)**, the apartment community where we live is

certainly our mission field **(picture)**. Susan and I are going to the Sandwich Fair in New Hampshire next weekend **(picture)**.

Another potential mission field. But to return to the workplace as mission field, Stephanie asked Tammy, Brian, and Warren how they see their job sites as mission fields. Hear their thoughts:

“Live out and deliver”. Amen! Warren’s mission field is the classroom, despite the fact that he may have had other ideas.

Brian’s mission field is in his work in insurance or as a clothier, frankly a title I never thought I would apply to Brian, and Tammy’s mission field is in a hospital setting where, despite the need to be mindful of her surroundings, she nonetheless prays for that divine appointment that we considered several weeks ago, where she can offer a listening

ear, a kind word, or perhaps just a smile, but a smile that to a person who is reeling from a life altering illness and its attendant depression might mean everything. That's her mission field. Again I say Amen.

To return to the feeding of the 5000, it's helpful to and earlier section of the sixth chapter of Mark, specifically verses 7-10, where we read:

**Mark 6:7-10 New International Version (NIV) (SLIDE PLEASE)**

**7 Calling the Twelve to him, he began to send them out two by two and gave them authority over impure spirits.**

**8 These were his instructions: "Take nothing for the journey except a staff—no bread, no bag, no money in your belts. 9 Wear sandals but not an extra**

**shirt. 10 Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you leave that town”.**

These verses are the precedent to the actual telling of the feeding of the 5000. Jesus has sent his followers out in pairs with marching orders to teach those they meet what they have been taught by him. He's sending them out to the mission field. And with some pretty stern rules by which to abide as well. Nothing extra, incredibly streamlined. They couldn't even bring any snacks. I don't know about you, but I ain't doing a road trip without snacks. Ya' gotta' have snacks.

So, they've gone out, and they've returned, with all matter of news to report to Jesus. You get a sense that they're jacked up, because Jesus has to curb their enthusiasm and urge them to go with him and just chill. "Chill" is actually in the

original Hebrew text. I'm kidding. At just the time they are going to be able to retreat to a remote place the crowd anticipates their destination and meets them there. The disciples have something the crowd desperately desires; Jesus. Jesus sees the crowd there and once again responds in a way for which the disciples are not prepared. They think it appropriate for Jesus to send the crowds away, arguing that since it is late and their location is remote, the crowd needs to get a move on if they are to make it to La Carretta before closing time. Not so fast, Jesus says, telling them that they are on the hook for dinner. The disciples are not happy, and tell Jesus that at the very least they can't afford to pick up the tab. Jesus tells them to scope out what food is available. They report back a little bread and even less fish. Jesus takes the provisions, looks to His Father in Heaven, gives thanks, and the next thing you know 5000 plus have eaten, had their

fill, and settled back in the Barcolounger to snooze, so satisfied are they. Oh and by the way, there are plenty of leftovers for a midnight snack.

With the time remaining I'd like to cite a few points in this story that we might apply to our own particular mission fields.

Number one, the disciples, though eager to share of their successes, are worn out. When we moved back from Portland it took us six days to get back across America to North Carolina. At each day's close I had about enough energy to walk the dogs, find out if the hotel had a hot tub, and then decide upon dinner. If a crowd of folks had come to me asking for dinner I would not have been pleased. But I think Jesus would have reminded me that these were sheep in need of a shepherd, and I was to feed them. "I know you're tired", I can imagine Him saying, "do it anyway. Do it for me." I

don't want to tell Him I can't, because I can't is something He would never say to me.

Secondly, the disciples argue that they don't have the scratch to buy dinner for the crowd, and they're right. They simply don't have the funds. As Christ followers the same holds true for us. We simply don't have the resources to completely provide for those in need. But Jesus can take our humble offerings and bring about a miracle. Am I truly believing that this morning as I consider my mission field?

Finally, Jesus utters three words to the disciples at the end of verse 38. "Go and see". Go and see. Pastor Ron has talked about Todd Wilson's three foundational principles of a life lived in more intimate relationship with God. "Be" means that we jettison the metric by which the world views us, as products of possessions or position, and instead stake our claim as chosen

children of God. "Do" declares our inheritance in the Great Commission of Christ, where we are told to go as His followers and make disciples, assured that He goes with us in the pursuit. The last word Wilson employs is taken from Jesus: "Go". We are to go, and see. See where there is hurt. See where there is need. See where there is the promise of redemption. See the sheep in need of a shepherd.

I know how daunting this all is. But imagine what happens when we undertake the effort. To revisit the words of the psalmist, the face of the Earth is renewed. And let me encourage you with this. I mentioned the book club that Lulu and I have been engaged in, reading Ron Chernow's book "Alexander Hamilton". One of the things you realize about Hamilton is that he was born at precisely the right time, with an intellect and a hubris that served the founding of a

nation in just the way it needed to be served.

You are no different. I believe that. Wilson believes that and writes **(SLIDE PLEASE)** **(You) are born in this generation, with our native language, to a nationality, a culture, a family, and a set of early experiences that God ordained for us as a starting point."**

You hear that? You're ordained. Wilson writes that we all have roughly fifty relationships that are our mission fields. Let me lighten that load for you. There's one person who needs to hear of God's love from you, just you. You were born for such a time as this. You've been ordained. What are you going to do about it?

Allow me to close with a story of someone who showed up, of someone ordained, of

someone who brought her humble gift to Jesus and He made a miracle happen, of someone who did something about it. This is a **picture** of Kailey and Ashlyn Walkup, members of the family here at G3. Several weeks ago their mom Kristin shared a most precious story of something Ashlyn had done when they were in the checkout line at Kohls. It was just a couple of weeks after Ashlyn had attended vacation Bible school, where she learned, among other things, the song "I Have Decided to Follow Jesus". At Ashlyn's urging Kristin had downloaded the song on her phone. So, there they are in line at Kohls and Ashlyn starts to sing "I Have Decided to Follow Jesus", and behold, everyone else in the line, and the cashier, start singing along with Ashlyn. Kristin told me it was all she could do not to cry. I'm with her. For a sweet and divine moment Isaiah 11:6 came to brilliant life, for a child was leading them, and I suggest that the checkout line at Kohls was the mission

field, and Ashlyn was its most devoted disciple.

LET'S PRAY.