God Multiplies

November 4, 2026

Members and Friends of Calvin Church:

Among the most famous of Jesus' many miracles is the multiplying of the fishes and loaves. As thousands of hungry people crowded around Jesus, here is how the Gospel writer Matthew describes the action:



Jesus asked his disciples to bring the food to him, and he told the crowd to sit down on the grass. Jesus took the five loaves and the two fish. He looked up toward heaven and blessed the food. Then he broke the bread and handed it to his disciples, and they gave it to the people. After everyone had eaten all they wanted, Jesus' disciples picked up twelve large baskets of leftovers.

— Matthew 14:18–20 CEV

From scarcity to abundance in the hands of Jesus: it's a miracle our Lord continues in unexpected ways even today.

- **Jesus *takes* what we give to him.** For the disciples gathered around Jesus on the hillside that day, it was the five loaves and the two fish they had. For us as disciples gathering around Jesus today, it is our financial gifts that we bring.
- **Jesus *blesses* what we give.** With eyes toward heaven, our Lord both offers thanks for our gifts and consecrates our gifts as holy offerings. They now become sacred means through which God's work may be done on earth.
- **Jesus *breaks* what we give.** The gifts we've shared may be divided into pieces. Yet, in the miracle-working of Jesus, division actually equals multiplication.
- **Jesus *gives* back to us to give to others.** For the disciples, it was enough fish and bread to feed everyone and still have leftovers. For us, we also use the shared, blessed, and multiplied resources to satisfy the needs of others as well as ourselves.

In the face of the great need around them — thousands of hungry people — Jesus' disciples worried about what they lacked. Jesus focused on what they possessed. In bringing Jesus their own bread and fish, the disciples risked going hungry themselves. But the power of the miracle only happens through the disciples. Where his disciples see only impossibilities, Jesus sees opportunities, for God can multiply even the smallest gifts if they are made available to him.

Today, Jesus isn't asking us to give what we *don't* have. He's simply asking us to look and see what we do have and then bring it to him. He'll take it from there.

As we focus on stewarding the financial resources God has entrusted to us, let's hear the Lord invite us to join in the miracle. As he said to the first disciples, so Jesus says to us: "What do you have? Bring it to me."

- **Bring to the Lord your *tithes.*** In general, God does not call upon us to give a fixed amount. Instead, God instructs us to give proportionally. Throughout history, tithing meant giving one tenth (10%) of your income back to God. In your household, tithing might mean a different percentage as you respond obediently to what the Lord asks you to bring for the work of God's kingdom. Intentionally seek in prayer what percentage of your resources you should share; then make a plan and commitment to do just that.

- **Bring to the Lord your *offerings.*** In gratitude, God's people have always brought special gifts to the Lord. While faithfulness leads us to give back a portion of what God has given to us, thankfulness can impel us to give even more. Consider ways the Lord has generously provided for you and guided you, blessed you, and loved you. In response, how might you use your accumulated assets and respond in kind with your own generous gifts that bless and love others?

The distinction between tithes and offerings is not absolute, but the principles can be helpful. As you plan your financial giving, you might consider *tithing* to the Calvin Church General Fund. We also invite you to make additional one-time or ongoing *offerings* to our Deacons Fund or mission partners. Going beyond this, consider making a legacy gift through your estate planning. More information about these options can found under the "GIVE" menu on our website at www.calvinpc.org.

Like the first disciples of Jesus, we may not think we have much to give, but in the hands of our Lord the miracle of multiplication continues. However, this process only begins when we respond to Jesus' invitation to give. It's not a magic formula, but there is a repeated pattern to our Lord's work. He takes what we bring to him. He blesses and breaks it. He gives it back transformed for us to use for another's good.

Included with this letter is a commitment form for **God Multiplies: Stewardship 2027.** Please use the form to indicate your financial stewardship commitment for Calvin Church's General Fund in 2027, and note any additional offerings you already plan to make. While we would appreciate receiving your response by **Monday, November 30,** you may mail it or return it to the church office at any time.

Thank you for your partnership in the life and ministries of Calvin Church! May we each respond faithfully to our Lord's call to bring our gifts and then see how God multiplies them.

Serving Christ with you,

Dr. Neil Trainer
Pastor