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**“The Miracle of Sharing”**

**By**

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You can perform miracles. Yes you can. You may ask “But how? I have no powers...”

Listen to this miracle story. After months of hard work and years of saving, the day came for a couple (Reb and Jacky) to open their own restaurant. All that was needed was the final health inspection and the issuing of their business permit which was scheduled for first thing that morning, then "Our Place" as they called their restaurant would be in business.

But that morning the winds and rains of Hurricane Hugo hit, unexpectedly making its way 200 miles inland to their North Carolina town. Trees were uprooted, power lines were down, homes and stores were destroyed. Reb and Jacky hurried to their restaurant. Everything was intact.

A deputy sheriff pulled up and told them that their restaurant, the fire station next door and a service station down the road were the only locations that had electricity. The couple called the health inspector and asked him to come immediately so they could open, but because of the power outage, he couldn't get into his office to issue the permit. No permit, no business opening.

With a refrigerator stocked with 300 pounds of bacon and beef and bushels of tomatoes, lettuce and bread, there was only one thing to do ...give the food away.

They told the deputy, "Tell your coworkers and other emergency people you see that we'll have free BLT's and coffee for anybody who wants to drop by." Soon firemen, policemen, linemen and other workers were filing into the restaurant. When the couple heard that another restaurant was scalping people by charging ten dollars for two eggs, toast and bacon, they placed a sign in their window: FREE BLT'S--FREE COFFEE. Families, travelers and street people were

welcomed. Then something began to happen. People started to clean counters and sweep floors. Volunteers took over the dish washing from Jacky and helped Reb at the grill. Hearing about what was going on at Our Place from the local radio station, people from a neighboring town that had not been hit too badly by the storm brought food from their freezers. Stores and dairies sent over chicken, milk and foodstuffs of all kinds.

And so the long day went. Those first cups of coffee and BLT's somehow stretched to 16,000 meals. The restaurant's small stock increased by 500 loaves of bread, cases of mayonnaise, 350 pots of coffee and bushels of produce. And yes, that community witnessed a miracle, the miracle of sharing.

When I read today's Gospel story I genuinely believe that the actual miracle happened in the hearts and minds of the people in the crowd. Notice that we don't read that suddenly a gigantic mountain of bread and fish appeared between Jesus and the crowd! What we read is that Jesus asked his disciples to share what they have and then the people were fed. I believe that when the people saw the apostles starting to pass out the meager five loaves and fishes, they brought out their lunches and shared with one another. A powerful miracle of sharing!

On a UMC web page Rev. Dr. Derek Weber shared; *The motivation for this miracle is compassion. God can take a little and make a huge difference in the lives of those around us...let's celebrate the abundance of God's grace. How has a little word, a small gesture, a seemingly insignificant moment made a great impact on us? What testimony can we give about the abundance of God's grace in our own lives or in the lives of those about whom we care?*

You see? Today's Bible reading reminds us that Jesus invites people to collaborate in the manifestation of God's kingdom. You are able to perform miracles! We just need to listen to Jesus and act in love and solidarity with others. Amen!