The pattern of Jesus taking the gifts, blessing them, breaking them and distributing them is a major theme throughout the Gospels. In the feeding of the 5,000, for example, Jesus took five loaves and two fish given by a little boy, looked to heaven and gave thanks, broke them and gave them to the disciples who distributed them to all the people. From that one boy’s lunch, the crowd ate enough and 12 baskets of food were left over.

We see the same pattern on the night before he died, when Jesus was at supper with his disciples. The bread and wine had been set up for the meal by his disciples or others who may have helped them. Jesus takes the gifts of bread and wine, blesses them, breaks the bread, and distributes it.

In our reading today, Jesus is invited to take a meal with his followers. They don’t realize that it is Jesus they are asking – they simply ask this man they’ve met along the road to join them – a typical hospitality gesture of the day. In fact, at the time these followers actually encounter Jesus on the road, they are fleeing Jerusalem out of fear because of Jesus’s crucifixion. They’re not, as we would say it, in a good place spiritually. Yet, even so, at the meal, Jesus, the guest becomes the host. He takes the bread they have given, blesses it, breaks it, and distributes it. Because this pattern of taking the gifts offered, blessing them, breaking them and distributing them is so typical of Jesus’s ministry, the followers recognize him in it.[[1]](#endnote-1)

When we look through this pattern, we realize that it exists because God is God and not because we’ve necessarily done anything extraordinary. In fact, it is a pattern in which God takes a very ordinary gift, and, in some cases, what may even seem an inadequate gift, and through his hands makes it enough. That little boy who offered up his lunch had no idea it would be enough to feed 5,000 people. Those who donated that bread and wine for the Passover meal for Jesus and his disciples had no idea that bread and wine would become the means by which we remember Jesus’s death and resurrection for us. Those folks who offered to an unknown traveler the ordinary gift of bread and wine in table fellowship had no idea that, in Jesus’s hands, it would become the means by which they finally understood the mystery of the cross and resurrection and recommitted themselves to following Jesus.

Not only did these ordinary gifts perhaps seem inadequate, the people offering them lacked perfection, too. The disciples who received that great gift at the Passover denied or betrayed Jesus or hid in fear of being associated with him. Those who offered the bread at Emmaus were also running away in fear and lacking theological understanding of what they’d seen.

Right now, we’re all homebound. We’re not doing the ministries in the world that we typically do – at least not in the way we typically do them. We aren’t standing in front of our classes and teaching. We aren’t visiting our older relatives or older members of the congregation. We aren’t helping people in person. We’re not setting up the altar or flowers or doing routine maintenance at the church. We’re not bringing things or making coffee for coffee hour. We’re not singing in the choir.

Yet we still have gifts that we can bring to Jesus – some still active, but others more contemplative gifts. We can make masks, or teach from home, or help others set up Zoom or Skype or Facetime so that they can have virtual visits. We can use this time to offer up prayers for each other and for the world. We can offer our time for Scripture study, seeking to learn more about our vocation as baptized people. We can shop for those who are at high risk and leave the items on their doorstep. We can dress up like dinosaurs or other creatures and bring cheer to members. We can phone those in our communities to bring them cheer. The possibilities of using our gifts in creative and small ways are endless. Even if we feel that our offerings are inadequate, Jesus will take them, bless them, break them and distribute them in the world so that these gifts are enough.

For some of us, this time at home may be revitalizing our faith and bringing us closer to God. For others of us, this time at home may bring spiritual struggles. We may feel we’re off our game a little bit because we can’t worship inside the church or with each other physically. But, even if we’re not 100 percent faithful and hopeful, we still have gifts we can bring. Jesus takes what we bring, no matter the size and no matter our ability to offer it, and bless it, break it and distribute it. We don’t have to be perfect for our gifts to matter in the world because Jesus makes them holy for us. We just need to be willing to offer up what we have.

Give what you can. Jesus makes it enough.

1. Culpepper, R. A. (1994–2004). [The Gospel of Luke](https://ref.ly/logosres/nibab?ref=Bible.Lk24.30-32&off=655&ctx=earlier+meal+scenes.~+The+guest+becomes+t). In L. E. Keck (Ed.), *New Interpreter’s Bible* (Vol. 9, p. 480). Nashville: Abingdon Press. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)