

GRACE CHURCH
PENTECOST 8 - Proper 12-B (RCL)

Honesdale, PA
28-29 July 2018

2 Samuel 11: 1-15
Psalm 14
Ephesians 3: 14-21
John 6: 1-14

*BUT SIR !?!
+ + +*

It's always the seemingly insignificant person in life's story
who might give us the most upon which to wonder,
reflect, and find meaning in and through.

Here's the miracle of Jesus feeding the 5,000 -
a story told in all four Gospels, which is a miracle in its own right,
while Matthew and Mark give the story twice,
once with the 5,000, and another instance with 4,000.

So important is this miracle, that it appears six times in the Gospels!
John uses it in his theology bent as a precursor to the coming Passover. .
We know Jesus does miracles -
the disciples are just learning that.

Here are thousands who are fed both by the teaching of Jesus,
and for their immediate need of physical sustenance.
Imagine feeding all of Honesdale with 5 bagels and 2 sardines!
There's Philip and Andrew (*Gee, where did Sue get those names for our boys!*)
and the other ten disciples recognizing what Jesus can and will do.
So it's no real surprise to them, just another chapter in His story.

But what about this poor kid heading home from market
with his family's supper?
5 small loaves, picture in your mind a typical pita, and just two fish.
"But, sir. Please, sir.
It's all I have for my mother and grandfather, my sisters and me."
Andrew pushes a frightened kid to the front line,
to give up his family's meagre meal.
What trouble he will be in when he gets home!!
Jack and his beanstock legumes had nothing to compare for punishment.
You did *what* with our supper?!?
You gave it to some itinerant whacko preacher?!
But look at what happens.

After everyone has been fed,
the disciples, like good bus-boys, collect the left-overs.
Now, don't think these are crumbs and fish heads and skeletons.
That's just not Jesus' way.
Would he take away and leave the boy and his family to starve?
No.

The boy went home
with his gift multiplied hundred-fold -
not just a few loaves restored, but baskets-full.
Now, I could go into stewardship and demonstrate that Jesus,
does not waste food, like most of us who throw away
what percentage - I forget - each week?
If we would only feed a hundred, let alone a thousand or more, each year!
That's not really the message for today, but you can take it with you.

In the alternative Old Testament and Psalm readings for today,
and if I had prepared this before I gave Taber the hymn-list,
I would have changed the bulletin Friday afternoon.
But I didn't want to waste the stack of bulletins we had already printed!
Waste not want not!

Let's be good stewards.

Today's message is truly a reminder
that God will always provide a miracle.
The other Old Testament reading has the prophet Elisha
likewise feeding a hundred of his students
with similar limited resources of loaves and fishes.
The Old Testament's corresponding Psalm celebrates
that God provides for the needs of every living creature -
remember the birds of the air and the flowers of the field?
"How much more does God love you?" Jesus asks.
Earlier in the OT we have Elisha's own mentor, the great prophet Elijah,
making the portion of meal and oil of a poor widow and her child
last for many days until rain came upon the land.
Plus we cannot forget Moses and the people in the wilderness -
complaining about God in their
then finding water from a rock, sweet honey cakes and quail.
Later Isaiah will prophesy to the beleaguered people,
"Right here God will provide a banquet,
and every fear and anxiety will be wiped away."
So many stories of how God provides.
But we too soon forget, or explain away.
- Well, that was thousands of years ago.
- That's just an allegory.
- Those stories are just to teach me how I should act.
No, those are stories to remind us to offer what we have,
be it a handful of grain and a cruse of oil,
or 5 pita and 2 fish,
or the barrenness of 40 years being lost in life,
and to accept what Jesus breaks open, offers to God in thanks,
and then hands to our satisfaction.

Back to our young lad.
Can you just picture him skipping down the hill-side on his way home?
Does he drag all those left-over, fresh portions, to his family,
to his neighbors, and to those he encounters on the way.
“Here, please take some of this for your family,”
he says to the stranger he passes on the way.
Of course the stranger tests the staleness of the bread and sniffs at the fish.
and we pray, gives thanks to the boy, and to God.
Skipping, laughing, food to fill his belly for days.
There’s an hymn I can hear wafting on the air
as our lad whistles,
“On our way rejoicing, gladly let us sing!”
And those 5,000?
You betcha!
“On our way rejoicing!”

CHILDREN’S SERMON

Kit-Kat candy bars - “Give me a piece of that Kit-Kat bar.”

What happens when you break your Kit-Kat in two,
and give it to a friend?

What happens when you break it and give it to a new kid in your school?

So I want you each to take one of these Kit-Kats,
go find someone you’ve never met -
there’s a bunch of people here that I bet you don’t know yet -
and break open the bar and give them one half,
tell them your name and ask what their’s is.