

Bring, Trust, Watch and Wait!

King of Glory Lutheran Church
Year B: Pentecost 10: John 6:1-21
Pastor Ruth Ann Loughry
July 27-28, 2024

After this Jesus went to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, also called the Sea of Tiberias. ²A large crowd kept following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing for the sick. ³Jesus went up the mountain and sat down there with his disciples. ⁴Now the Passover, the festival of the Jews, was near. ⁵When he looked up and saw a large crowd coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?" ⁶He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do. ⁷Philip answered him, "Six months' wages would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little." ⁸One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, ⁹"There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many people?" ¹⁰Jesus said, "Make the people sit down." Now there was a great deal of grass in the place; so they sat down, about five thousand in all. ¹¹Then Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated; so also the fish, as much as they wanted. ¹²When they were satisfied, he told his disciples, "Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost." ¹³So they gathered them up, and from the fragments of the five barley loaves, left by those who had eaten, they filled twelve baskets. ¹⁴When the people saw the sign that he had done, they began to say, "This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world." ¹⁵When Jesus realized that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, he withdrew again to the mountain by himself.

¹⁶When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea, ¹⁷got into a boat, and started across the sea to Capernaum. It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. ¹⁸The sea became rough because a strong wind was blowing. ¹⁹When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and coming near the boat, and they were terrified. ²⁰But he said to them, "It is I; do not be afraid." ²¹Then they wanted to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the land toward which they were going.

"So often we ourselves have no idea what to do, but the starting point is always to bring what is there to the attention of Jesus...part of Christian faith is the expectation Jesus will do something we hadn't thought of, something new and creative."ⁱ Bring it to Jesus, Trust God will act, Watch and wait.

God, Holy Spirit, Jesus our Savior, this morning help us to bring all of who we are into your presence. Amen.

'The Hornsby Bend area is approximately seven miles from downtown Austin on FM 973, about nine miles from the nearest major retail grocery store.' It doesn't sound like very far, if you have a car, bus or bike. But for the families of Hornsby Bend, it is what is called a 'food desert.' There are two family-owned markets,

one bakery-deli, two convenience stores, two gas stations. Since most families only have one car and the 55 mph highway that runs through town is too dangerous for children to cross, the kids often opt for sugary drinks and snacks at the Dollar Store. The small family-owned markets don't have much buying power, so fresh produce is very limited and will go bad only a few days after purchase. This is a food desert.ⁱⁱ

The disciples, Jesus and the 5000 found themselves in a food desert. Obviously not the way I just described one, but in the sense, that up on a mountain, there was no place to run and buy food. Jesus, voices the question to Philip. "Where are we going to buy bread?" Of course, Jesus knew the answer. But Philip didn't know.

Philip does what you and I might do. He does the mental calculations...he thinks logically. He knows there isn't enough money. There is simply not enough.

So many families that you and I rub elbows within this community have the same challenge. At the end of the month, we know they face hard choices. "Do we pay for the medicine or buy groceries? Do we keep the electricity on or pay the water bill?"

Philip didn't know what to do. Our families don't know what to do. Sometimes we in churches don't know what to do. We all get overwhelmed when there doesn't seem to be the resources we need. Many a Church council has been known to say, "How much money is that going to take to repair?" "If we only had such and such, or could hire so and so, we'd make it."

How quickly we can slip into ways of thinking that are framed in scarcity. Not enough time. Not enough resources. Not enough, not enough, not enough.

Simon Peter's brother, Andrew, comes along with an idea. "There's a young boy here with five loaves." Yet, he quickly turns his own idea into rejection and scarcity. "But what will that do amongst so many?"

I'm not being at all critical of food deserts, hungry families, or Philip or Andrew, or ourselves! What I am saying is this. When Jesus asked the question, "Where are we going to get enough food?" Jesus was thinking from a God-perspective. Philip and Andrew answered from the human perspective.

From this text, there are four words for us to remember today. Bring. Trust. Watch and wait.

Bring: When we don't know what to do, when we get overwhelmed, when there don't seem to be any viable options, 'bring what is there, to Jesus' attention.' Bring what is there to the attention of Jesus.'ⁱⁱⁱ

Andrew brought what was there to Jesus' attention. He pulled forward the boy and the five loaves. God can use anything! God can use anything and everything to display God's power and presence to us. We think with our own human limitations. That's to be expected. And...we can train ourselves to learn to think with God's unlimited powers!

A member of a previous congregation I served, travelled to India. Many married men were quite promiscuous and became HIV positive. The church member was heartbroken over women who had been infected with the disease through their husbands, and were now left deserted by the very same men. These women had no income and no way of providing for themselves. She came home to Colorado and cried and prayed.

Yet, these Indian women had incredibly, beautiful sari. All sorts of material full of rich colors and patterns. As the sari become worn or faded they got tossed aside. My member taught them how to match colors, fabrics and stitches to make lovely scarves, quilts, and placemats. She brought them to the U.S. for sale. From the first pieces it grew into a little cottage industry which brought their communities money for food and shelter. We bring what there is to Jesus attention. God can use anything.

Bring. Then trust. The disciples had no idea what Jesus was going to do. Had no idea from those five loaves, Jesus could feed 5000 people. Talk about multiplication! But the life of Christian faith is to live in bold expectation that God will be at work, God is at work on our behalf. (repeat) It's where the rubber of life meets the road of faith. God will be and is at work on our behalf.

The text says, Jesus knew what He was going to do! What if...what if...God already knows what God is going to do with whatever we bring? What if, God already has plans to renew? To recreate? To restore? To rebuild? To tear down and start over? To forgive? To walk alongside? To comfort? To teach?

Our task in our faith lives is to live as if. As if...God's got this! God has a plan! God is acting behind the scenes. As if God is ready and waiting and has an enormous stockpile of exactly what you or I am seeking. God will 'do something we hadn't thought of, something new and creative.'^{iv}

There is a verse in Ephesians which we could have read as our second lesson today. It says this, “Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine.” Let’s put that one on our hard drives. Repeat after me. ‘accomplish abundantly far more’ ‘than all we can’ ‘ask or imagine.’ This verse moves us from not enough to more than enough!

Have you ever had a friend or loved one say this? “It was the best thing that could have ever happened to me.” They might be talking about their divorce. Or a really long illness. Or the Friday night the boss came in and handed them a pink slip.

We bring whatever we are and whatever we have – though it might seem so little or so empty and barren – and we walk in bold trust God will take it and transform it into far more than we could ever ask or imagine.

Bring! Trust! Watch and wait.

Now does every situation in our lives change into something better overnight? Does God always turn loaves into a buffet line right before our eyes? Does God always, every single time turn the water into wine? No. Of course not. But to expect that God would is thinking only with human expectations. Remember – we can train ourselves to think with God possibilities not human impossibilities. We walk in bold trust – that’s our life of faith.

Watch and wait. A faithful husband went every day for seven years to visit his beloved in the locked memory unit. Every day. She was dying by inches since her heart was strong. He prayed each night, wondering why God wouldn’t just take her home. That day finally came and he felt a new lease on his own life knowing also she was free from her earthly body. Over time, he realized that in those seven years, God was teaching him, growing him into a deeper soul. He’d become more patient. More tender. More loving. More aware of other’s needs. She might have been dying by inches, but God was growing him by inches.

Where in your life right now, are you thinking there is just not enough. It’s a place you keep getting stuck in, or struggling with, or cannot see any progress. Let’s have a brief moment of quiet. I invite you to bring that situation before God...bring to God whatever you are thinking or feeling about it. Set it before Jesus.

More than we can ever ask or imagine. God is always at work using anything and everything around us to grow us into the souls we might become. Only five loaves? Perfect! Bring it! Amen!

ⁱ N.T.Wright. John Part 1; for Everyone. Part 1 Chapters 1-10. Westminster John Knox Press. Louisville, KY. Pg 73. 2002.

ⁱⁱ <https://www.yourethecure.org/jettie-s-story-my-life-in-a-food-desert>

ⁱⁱⁱ N.T.Wright. Ibid.

^{iv} Ibid. Pg 73.