

Eucharistic Living

John 6:1-15

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We live in difficult times, perhaps even dark times. What do we do? How do we meet overwhelming need when our own meager resources are way too little? How do we prepare our children? How do we equip and train our children and grandchildren to live in a world of climate change, desperate hunger and poverty, refugees, and war? Do we give them firearm training? Do we teach them how to build a bunker? Do we teach them to be suspicious of others, especially if they're not perceived to be like us?

John shows us today in this story of the feeding of the 5000 a different answer to raising our children. In the face of overwhelming need and our inability to fix it, steps forward this child with nothing more than two fish and five barley loaves.

Jesus has the crowd sit down or a more accurate translation: He had them recline. In other words, to recline means they were all going to have a meal. Not just grab a bite to eat and not just to eat something alone. To recline in that time and place, meant to sit down together and share a meal – except there is nothing to share... Yet.

Jesus takes the bread, give thanks (eucharist), and shares. He does the same with the fish. And John says, "Everyone had as much as they wanted."

This story is much beloved and well known in the 2000-year history of Christianity. It is one of the rare miracles that is in all four of the Gospels and it is one of those stories that the church has held up to reflect our own meals, and especially our sacred meal sometimes called the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion, or the Eucharist. Eucharist, the oldest term used for the meal, is a Greek word meaning giving thanks or thanksgiving. It is the word used in verse 11, where it says that Jesus received the bread, gave thanks, and then shared it. Just like what we're doing this morning.

Instead of eating food to fill the appetite, each person eating in isolation from each other, Jesus transforms this into a meal where food is shared together and eaten together with Jesus and with each other.

All because a boy came forward with his meager brown paper sack dinner of crackers and sardines, barley loaves and fish. Notice this:

(1) This boy trusted Jesus.

There are plenty of reasons to not trust anyone these days. And our kids pick up on it quickly. Trust has to do with making a kind of commitment and with all of the hypocrisy around today, especially religious hypocrisy, we do not want to trust.

But this boy trusted Jesus. He decided that this Jesus fellow was worth giving his own sustenance to, was worth giving his commitment.

(2) The boy shared what he had.

The boy didn't have much but he shared what he had. We say to ourselves that we don't have much and therefore, we had better hang onto what little we

have. We rationalize that if we had much we'd share. But this boy shares what he had even when it was all he had.

(3) He believed that little things can make a big difference.

Facing overwhelming needs, we are tempted to give up and withdraw. We can't do this anymore. There is just too much to do: climate change, gun violence, nut cases in higher office, so much anger and hatred and bigotry, and our local schools need help, our local hospital needs help, our local city needs help, our neighbors need help, our family members need help.

But this boy trusted that his little lunch could make a big difference if he shared it with Jesus. You hear this from me constantly: I believe that our small efforts, our modest offerings of our lives, our little actions make a difference. Some of it is that many small actions add up. Some might have been that when the boy shared his sack lunch, everyone else did the same. Maybe. But most of it is that when we offer our little efforts to God, God does something with them beyond our understanding. Our job is to simply trust God, share what we have, and have the stubborn faith that knows this is the way God works – using the little, the small, the humble, the inadequate, the foolish and transforming them into something that changes the world.

Our challenge is raise our children to live such a way. That's called eucharistic living. Living a life of thanksgiving and sharing and trusting God. God in turn changes a crowd of strangers to big gathering of neighbors sharing together. May it be so with us.

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. One True God, Mother of us all. Amen.