

SERMON: 2018/07/29 (10th Sunday aft. Pentecost, Yr. B - Track 1) - 2 Samuel 11:1-15; Psalm 14; Ephesians 3:14-21 & John 6:1-21

[Key:

8am only

10am only]

Okay, I know that you know [this story] [those Bible-stories] really well: You've probably heard [it] [them] a *thousand* times!

Take, the gospel, for example.

You could rehearse these details in your sleep:

In fact, as I paraphrase it, I want you to fill in the blanks:

Jesus, having just crossed the "Sea of Galilee [pause]" - also called the "Lake of Tiberias," steps onto the shore to find this *huuuge(!)* crowd waiting for Him, and - we learnt last week - He didn't get annoyed with them (for chasing Him), instead He had '*compassion*' on them, and so decided to give them some dinner (because they were hungry and far from their homes).

But how to feed such a large crowd?

Well, a small boy [pause], who likely listened to Jesus' "Sermon on the Mount" - which preceded this episode [Mt. 5ff.] and had happened in the same place - and had heard Him say things like, "Give to everyone who begs from you, and do not refuse..." [v.42], offers his own packed-lunch to be shared around: [Jn. 6:9a].

And the Apostles think this is ridiculous!

Philip says that it would take 'six [pause] month's wages' - that's a lot of money - to 'buy enough [food]' for everyone, [v.8].

But Jesus insisted.

And He took the boy's modest, little lunch (of five [pause] small bread-rolls and a pair of dried fish [v.9]), and He began to break off pieces - a bit like Holy Communion - and hand them out, and the pieces that He broke off kept going and going *and going(!)* until all the people were stuffed [pat belly].

It was a miracle: they filled twelve [pause] whole baskets with what was left over; Jesus had fed everyone from pretty much nothing [v.11b-12a] - just like He had helped God the Father make the whole universe at the beginning of time: [1:3; see also Gen. 1].

And by doing this - feeding that hungry crowd - He demonstrates for us what it means to genuinely care about other people, and that's to be *active* - actively

charitable - in meeting the needs we see around us.

But notice too that, in Mark's version, He fed them in the context of "teaching" 'them many things.' [Mk. 6:34] - about the love of God and how human beings should respond, and seek to live lives of holiness pleasing to Him *because this is the real remedy* that our broken world needs.

Not just *ad hoc* handouts *at our own convenience*, but the Gospel - the *whole* Gospel.

But I want to ask you a question:

why, do you think, that our lectionary - that's the series or "system" of readings that we're following this summer - "swap" in *John's* version of the "Feeding of the 5,000" when we've been following *so faithfully* Mark's account (*for months now*)? What's special - *or different* - about what John remembered of this moment that Mark forgot?

To help you out, I'm going to place the two versions side-by-side on the screen...  
So, what do you notice?

What *one* thing - what easily over-looked "element" - does John add that might be important for us to know?

...

The answer is [verse 15] 'When 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.'

Mark doesn't mention this "nugget" of curious information *but it's important*.

The 'crowd', that is to say, that large "body" of unorganised people who were strangers to one-another, like attendees at a music concert or public lecture, become galvanised, *unified* around the idea of agitating for the replacement of their inherited dynasty - the "Herods" - with Jesus.

The 'crowd', in other words, became a *mob*.

*A dangerous mob.*

But Jesus didn't want to be their *earthly* king; He wasn't interested in *imposing* - with force - His "narrow way" [see: Mt. 7:13-14; Lk. 13:24; Jn 14:6] on others.

And yet that's what *human* kings do: "force."

It is their "M. O.;" their "excellence."

The prophet Samuel warns the Israelites about this.

And today, we see David doing just that - *ordering* his servants to bring Bathsheba to his bedroom for some illicit sex, *ordering* his lieutenant, Joab, to fetch her husband - the soldier - Uriah back from the battlefield, *ordering* him to go home and wash his feet, *ordering* him to back again to interrogate him as to why he

didn't obey his first set of orders and then *ordering* him to return to the fighting; and then, finally, *ordering* Joab to have the poor, jilted man killed.

But this isn't how the LORD operates.

This isn't how a relationship of (genuine) love is - making demands and pushing people around.

*No*, we need to *choose* Jesus [and dependance on Him] for ourselves [ref. to Jos. 24:15].

Every morning if need be.

And with perhaps with prayer.

Let's do that now:

Father God, we give you thanks for the example of that young boy who shared his lunch with strangers because Jesus told him to. Help us, by your Holy Spirit, to be like him, and show God's great compassion to everyone in need. Amen.