

Sermon- Thanksgiving Eve- November 21st 2018

Text- Matthew 14:13-21

A Little Kid Gets It

Grace and Peace to you and from our Lord Jesus Christ. Happy Thanksgiving to you in advance of the big day tomorrow. The day means different things to many of us. For some, it is a day to pig out on football. The NFL has three games scheduled. You can watch from morning to night. For others, it is a travel day. Today and tomorrow is one of the busiest travel days of the year. Traveling to see relatives and friends. For others, it will be a planning day - specifically for Black Friday.

I remember that I went to Black Friday once in my life. My quest was in response to Auntie Joyce, (an elderly aunt of Cathy) who wanted a cheap vacuum cleaner. Arrived at Walmart with hoards of people lined up. A whistle blew and I was shoved into the store. In one section there was a huge display of TVs and a woman was having trouble getting one off the top. I volunteered to assist and as I did so a bunch of these TVs fell on my head. Dazed, I left looking for the vacuum cleaners only to find out they were all gone. Last Black Friday I went to.

I am reminded of a guy named Thorstein Veblen, a 1st generation Norwegian, Born in Wisconsin who coined the phrase "conspicuous consumption." Food for thought. For many, Thanksgiving will be the start of a four day weekend. Time to rest and take a retreat from the noise. And boy, has there been noise in the last few weeks. Probably good to rest.

So let's get to the Gospel. Jesus is looking for a rest. He has, in recent days, debated the Pharisees, healed a slew of people, taught many parables, and just heard that his cousin, John the Baptist, has been beheaded by Herod. He is emotionally and physically spent so he does what any good Wisconsin person would do, he goes to the lake.

But Jesus fails at resting much like I have failed at retirement. Crowds followed him. They had needs. There were sick folks, and blind and lame that came for healing. So Jesus scraps his plans for a rest and teaches, listens, heals and loves for another long day.

Now, it is the end of the day, and the issue of dinner presents itself. How to feed all these people. Pretty impossible task. Philip says it would take even more than 200 silver coins to feed all these people. It would even exceed the limit on his American Express Card. Another disciple comes forward with a rather bizarre solution to the dilemma. He says he found a kid who has some sardines and buns who is willing to share it all. But that is so little for so many. But Jesus says to the people to sit down, and the meal begins. The disciples start handing out the food and there are left overs. The miracle of the feeding of the 5,000 or more.

Kind of funny when we examine the text in detail and perhaps try to figure out what was going on. Here we had all these people that had packed backpacks and coolers for this day trip. Maybe sandwiches and brats. But none had offered to share, only the little kid. He gave all he had, didn't hold back. Jesus probably smiled and said, someone finally gets it. There are two miracle stories in this text. The first being that Jesus can multiply our gifts. The second miracle has to do with the rest of the crowd. When Jesus brings forth the kid as an example of sharing, the crowd was moved to do likewise. They began sharing. One man had two loaves of bread and gave one to his neighbor. A mom had sandwiches for her children and she cut them in half and fed another family. You get the idea. Wow. What a lesson for us.

A story from a famous writer, Loren Eiseley. Eiseley had rented a home on a Pacific beach and writes about an observance one day.

** I was sitting on the deck overlooking the ocean, and down the shoreline, I spotted a figure that seems to be dancing, joyfully dancing at the water's edge. I walked down to the sand and toward the dancer, and the closer I got, the more I noticed that the beach was littered with starfish, lying on the sand. And then I realized that the man wasn't dancing at all; he was picking up starfish and throwing them into the surf. I asked him what he was doing and he said that he was saving starfish. I remember saying that there had to be thousands of starfish here, you can't possibly make a difference. Just then, the dancer bent down, picked up a starfish and hurled it into the ocean and then turned to me and said, "Made a difference for that one".

What does the Gospel teach us? Every time we share our resources to help a starving child, we make a difference for that one. When we place school supplies

in a box for a child who can't buy her own, we made a difference for that one. Every time we decide that we have MORE than enough, and we share that someone might have JUST enough, we made a difference for that one.

And the kid says, "I have some fish and rolls. It isn't much but I'll share." And Jesus tells all of us, Sit Down. Watch what your sharing will do!
Amen. Let it go so.