

Sermon- Our Saviors Lutheran Church- 2/3/2019

Souper Bowl of Caring Text- Matthew 25:31-46

Penalty Flags or Touchdown

Grace and Peace to you and from our Lord Jesus Christ. Today we focus on the National effort called the 'Souper Bowl of Caring'. I will get to that in a moment.

Unless, you have been on a different planet or have no interest in football, this is Super Bowl Sunday. Some of us may tune out because our beloved Green and Gold are not playing. Or, perhaps we will not watch because we are tired of seeing the New England Patriots in the Super Bowl. Reminds me of growing up when I didn't watch the World Series because the Yankees always won. Except of course in 1955, when the Brooklyn Dodgers and Jackie Robinson finally beat the Bronx Bombers.

The Super Bowl today pits the Rams against the Patriots. Glitz vs Legacy. Young coach Sean McVay vs mister personality Bill Belichick. Jared Goff and Todd Gurley vs Tom Brady and Edelman and Gronkowski. My prediction is that Ndamukong Suh will have a huge game and Brady will see a portion of the game on his keister. Rams by nine.

But what is interesting about the Super Bowl is how insane the costs are. Tickets range from about \$3,500 to \$475,000 for a Suite. And the ads, oh the ads. A 30 second ad will cost about the same as last year. Five million bucks. No, you didn't hear me incorrectly. Five million for a 30 second ad. Anheuser-Busch has bought five minutes of advertising air time. That's \$50 million. Quite ridiculous. Spoiler alert - the Clydesdale horses are back. We will see commercials from Pepsi, Burger King, Doritos and even Olay skincare - finally figured out that women watch sports as well.

But here, we are involved in the other concept, the 'Souper Bowl of Caring'. It is an effort to use the Super Bowl to mobilize youth in a national effort to care for people in their local communities who are hungry and those in need. Its birth occurred in 1990 in South Carolina. 22 churches participated and they raised \$5,700. Last year, thousands of churches participated and they raised \$2.7

million. Pretty impressive but remember, that's only half of a 30 second commercial later tonight.

Which leads me to the Gospel for today. We actually used this text back at the end of November on Christ the King Sunday. On that day we focused on sheep and goats. I suggested that sheep tend to follow the voice of the shepherd. They trust that the shepherd will lead them to food, water and safety. And even if the sheep wander, which they often do, the shepherd will go out and rescue them and bring them back to the safety of the flock. Goats, on the other hand, are basically headstrong. They don't follow anyone. I suggested back then this analogy: If we are allowing ourselves to be led, being sensitive to the pull of God's spirit, and following the path of the Good Shepherd, we are sheep. If we are headstrong, going our own way, and pulling back against God's spirit, we are goats. You might remember that I suggested we are neither but perhaps shoats.

But today let's focus not on sheep and goats, but rather on seeing and doing. Listen again to the words. "Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink?" Then the words – "when you DID it for the least of these my brothers and sisters, you did it for me." You see, for you and me there is this business about seeing and doing.

We do see, every single day. We see the homeless, we see the food pantries we see the need. We see the need when we volunteer at the warming shelter, we see the need when we pass the bags in the grocery store that we can purchase for the hungry and needy. We see the need when we watch the TV screen and see people like ourselves, part of the 800,000 federal workers, who were not paid and needed to go to the food pantries. Make no mistake, we see the need. It is in front of us on a daily basis.

Again, the key phrase in the Gospel is "when you DID it to the least of these my brothers and sisters, you did it for me". If we follow Jesus, if we believe that he gives us new life, if we believe that Jesus gives us a Program for living, then the expectation is that we will DO IT. We will feed the lambs. We will feed the sheep. Remember when Jesus asked Peter, "do you love me?" Peter says of course I love you Lord. Then Jesus says, "feed my lambs, feed my sheep."

And my prayer is that we not only do it for this one day. That we will develop a lifestyle of doing it for the least of these my brothers and sisters. Each week, each month, each year. Part of our living.

When you watch the Clydesdale horses tonight, enjoy the moment. I love watching them especially about wind energy. Oops - another spoiler alert. But I will also remember that ad cost plus \$5 million. Wow. Can you imagine what 6,000 ELCA churches could do if we take this Gospel seriously? Seeing and Doing. Can you see the need? Then Jesus is saying 'Do something about it.'
Amen. Let it be so!