

John 6:5-11

5 When 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?" 6 He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do. 7 Philip answered him, "Six months' wages would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little." 8 One 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?" 10 Jesus 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. 11 Then 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 (NRSV).

We come together on Sunday mornings for some very specific things; fellowship, study the word, prayer, and communion. We love to come together in the Lord's name. When we are together we have love and care for one another, and we can feel the Holy Spirit dwelling with us and it makes us feel good. However, the challenge for us in daily living is to carry that loving spirit and the sense of togetherness throughout the week because every day presents us with challenges, setbacks, and rude people.

Last week the Gospel of John introduced Jesus to the people with an approach that is much different from the other Gospels. John's approach is theological and it is designed to show the divine nature of Jesus as the Son of God. It is the divine Savior that came into the world. He is the word. He was there in the very beginning of creation. He is God and he came to us in human form.

As the gospel progresses Jesus encounters trouble with the religious leaders. The Gospel of John tells us that they were seeking all the more to kill him. There are two reasons for this. One is breaking the Sabbath. This shows that they held their regulations as a higher value than the value of humanity. The other reason is calling God his own Father. This is a claim to divine status. An equal response to a threat is a counter threat. However, Jesus is a person of peace, so he does not threaten them. What Jesus does is he rebukes the religious leaders. He attempts to educate them by teaching two aspects of theology. One aspect is if you do not honor the Son, you do not honor the Father who sent him. The other aspect is whoever hears and believes the Son has eternal life. Jesus continues to refer to himself as the Son of God. He does not deny who he is for self preservation. Jesus then escapes from the attempts to persecute him by going to the other side of the Sea of Galilee. Here Jesus has a crowd problem. A very large crowd kept following after him because of all of the healings and miracles. So Jesus goes up the mountain but the crowd continues to follow him. This brings us to today's Scripture.

You know the story. It is the only miracle story found in all 4 of the gospels. There is a large crowd of 5,000 people and a boy has five loaves and two fish. Jesus takes the loaves and the fish and gives thanks. Everyone eats until they are full and there are twelve baskets of leftovers. The Gospel of John tells us that they want to force Jesus to be their king. The people recognized Jesus as the promised prophet. But what they expected was for God to send them a prophet that is a warrior king. They wanted war not peace. They wanted Jesus to lead the charge to expel the Romans. They wanted to force Jesus to be their king but that is not what Jesus is all about.

It is easy for the details of the dialogue to get overlooked. The dialogue reveals a contrast between a conventional worldview and the divine abilities of the Son of God. Jesus knows what he is going to do; he asks the question in order to get them to think. This will help them to understand who he is and it will help them to remember how who he is connects with the experience. They cannot answer the question. Conventional wisdom is the crowd is too large, there is not enough food, and not enough money. The disciples know who Jesus is but their thinking is restricted to conventional limitations. The question sets up the learning experience in order to help them understand that the unlimited abilities of Jesus are due to his divine nature. Conventional expectations offer no solution. There lies lesson for us. It is God and Jesus that meets our needs. When we rely on our own strengths and wisdom, we are restricted by conventional limitations.

The Gospel of John starts by explaining the divine nature of Jesus. Jesus is active in creation. The gift of food comes from him. All of the wonderful resources that sustain life come from the creator. The air, water, food, clothing, and shelter; all of the abundant resources, more than we can possibly count, all come to us from the creator. We spend our lives with conventional limitations, full of worries and dissatisfactions; we get upset when something doesn't go our way. But when we focus on God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit, we end up satisfied and thankful as we move beyond conventional limitations. Jesus fed the multitude because the people came together in his name. The audience wanted to get to see and hear Jesus. They wanted to be close to Jesus. After he fed them, all were satisfied with plenty of leftovers.

We live in a world that full of problems with people not getting along, being rude, disrespectful, and angry. If we all come together in the name of Jesus and treat the other person as if that person is Jesus then the world would have much fewer problems. Jesus said "when you do it to the least of these you do it to me" If we all come together in the name of Jesus and treat the other people as if you are Jesus the world would have much fewer problems. Reality is you are to model your life after him, when we call ourselves Christians we carry title of Christ and are to live by the golden rule. We come together in the name of Jesus every Sunday morning. The world would be a much better place if we all come together in the name of Jesus. The Christian world view is we are all together as on in the united body of Christ.