

A sermon preached at St. George's Anglican Church Calgary, by the Rev. Clara King, August 6, 2017.

Proper 18 - Year A

Genesis 18:1-15

Matthew 14:13-21

May the words of my mouth and the meditations of all our hearts, be always acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, our Strength and our Redeemer. Amen.

Imagine the scene presented in our Gospel reading today: imagine 5,000 hungry people getting restless. Imagine the rising anxiety of the disciples, as they try to figure things out. They look around for a solution, but they can't see anything that's going to help – I mean, there's these 5 loaves and 2 fish, but they don't really see that it's going to get them very far with 5,000 hungry people.

So they scuttle over to have a quiet word with Jesus about the problem. But Jesus looks at the same situation and sees a world of possibility: wow, 5 whole loaves and 2 whole fish! No problem! From the 5 loaves and 2 fish they can grow a banquet rich enough for everyone to share.

Imagine if we could look around at our lives, and see what Jesus can see; the 5 loaves and 2 fish we have to offer, Jesus can see as feast enough to feed the world.

For instance, let me tell you what's been happening recently:

- I visited some people's homes
- Some of us have been shopping at Superstore and Walmart
- We read the transit map and went on the C-train
- I wrote a letter
- and a bunch of people made sandwiches
- and a bunch of other people drove their cars

Entirely ordinary actions; entirely ordinary events, entirely ordinary – like 5 loaves and 2 fish. Except for what Jesus is doing with it all – because Jesus is taking these small actions and turning them into miracles: We as the body (the hands and feet) of Christ have taken Thomas shopping for winter clothes to keep him safe through the dangerously cold winter we had this past year. We've helped get him to his appointments and his eye surgeries and a bunch of people in our

parish have provided meals for Thomas, every week for the past 6 months: bags of food each Sunday to last him the week ahead, because he wasn't getting enough food during the day. We as the body of Christ provided the proof that Hayatt, Shahnaz and Moniba needed to prove that they were Christians, and had fled Pakistan for fear of violent persecution based on their Christian faith, and as a result, they have been granted refugee status in Canada, and will soon be granted Canadian citizenship. And we as the body of Christ have welcomed Martha and her family to Canada, when they have come across the world with barely the clothes on their backs to an entirely foreign culture where they are strangers to almost every single living being.

Christ did all of this through us, through our ordinary actions. Visiting, driving, sandwich making, shopping, letter writing and map reading. So ordinary, like 5 ordinary loaves and 2 ordinary fish. Transformed, by the incredible power of Christ into something extraordinary. We are changing people's lives, and it is humbling and awe-inspiring to be in the midst of it and watch it happening.

Perhaps we all live fairly ordinary lives. Perhaps we do more or less the same thing every week, and perhaps we find our lives boring and not all that important. It can be so easy to look and see a world full of problems needing gigantic solutions, and feel too small and too unimportant and too powerless in the face of all that challenge.

Just like the disciples did, that day on the hill.

Even though they had followed Jesus through all his adventures, and seen all his miracles to date, they still were having difficulty seeing beyond the ordinary. Here they are in our Gospel story today, thinking they have nothing to contribute; but Jesus sees that they had everything that is necessary – and more! Twelve baskets more than necessary! The Disciples thought that what they had to offer was nothing special; Jesus took what they did have, and through their gifts, transformed people's lives.

All through the Gospel stories, time and time again, Jesus takes what is ordinary and shows that it is extraordinary. He takes ordinary people- fishermen, labourers, house wives - and helps them find their gifts, their strength. He visits ordinary places, stays in ordinary villages and travels ordinary roads - and that's where the miracles happen. He uses ordinary images of ordinary peasant life to describe the kingdom of God: God is like a shepherd with his sheep, God is like a father with a wayward son, God is like a woman baking bread - images of ordinary life. And Jesus takes ordinary things - bread and wine - and transforms

the most ordinary things in the world into the most powerful and abiding symbols of God's loving presence in our lives.

So what, we live ordinary lives! It is *in the very midst* of the ordinary that Christ comes to meet us, and through us to transform the world.

What each of us can do is far from ordinary. 5 whole loaves, and 2 whole fish is all it took. All we need is *to offer* our 5 loaves and 2 fish – resources and skills we already have, and by Christ's incredible power working through us, we can change peoples lives. We already are, and we're just starting. Imagine what Christ might do next.

Let's imagine, and friends let's be ready: so that when the next opportunity comes, we've got our 5 loaves and 2 fish handy, and ready to offer. And by the power of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, we will see things happen here, way more than we could ask for or imagine.

So here's to the ordinary, folks: may Christ consecrate everything that we have to offer, and give us the opportunity to see his power moving in our midst: the light shining in the darkness, so bright that no darkness could ever overcome it.

May it be.

Amen.