

Pentecost 10B Lectionary 17 07/28/2024

Our culture teaches us to always want to know and have more. I believe that sometimes that this is important. In our political world today, it is important to discover the truth to the best of our ability. Media slants information as well as candidates. Thus, before we comment or share things on Facebook, it is good to check it out, because if we don't someone else will.

There are other times in conversation that sometimes wondering if we really need to know what is being shared. Most of us know the letters TMI, too much information. As human beings we can only handle so much at one time.

The same with food. Our bodies can only accommodate a certain amount of food. For our own health, we often need to tell ourselves that we don't need any more and be satisfied.

In our Gospel lesson we hear that when the crowd was satisfied, Jesus told his disciples to gather up the fragments of the five barely loaves and two fish. They filled five baskets. But was it only their physical hunger that was satisfied? The crowd had kept following Jesus as there was something about him that the crowd was drawn to. It just happened that it was meal time and Jesus thought the crowd would be also physically hungry.

Jesus had been healing people which were signs of God's presence. When Jesus and his disciples had gone up to the mountain, probably to get away from the crowd, they followed them. John has Jesus testing Philip and asks him "Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat? In other gospels the disciples suggested to Jesus that he send the crowds away so they could eat themselves.

Philip's response was that it would take more than six months wages to feed everyone who was gathered. Andrew said that there was a boy who had five barely loaves and two fish, but what could that do with all of these people. John tells us that there were 5,000 in all and Jesus just said have the people sit down. They were in a spot where there was a great deal of grass which made it the best possible place outdoors.

In John, Jesus actually distributed the food, where in the other gospels, the disciples distributed it. There seemed to be enough for all and when Jesus thought they were satisfied is when he told the disciples to collect what was left over. It was an abundant meal with more than enough for all.

The people were overwhelmed by this sign and jumped to the conclusion that Jesus was the prophet they were looking for. They wanted to make him their king. Their definition of king was not who Jesus was. The people were looking for

someone who would rule with might and power to conquer more lands and accumulate wealth. Thus, Jesus escaped by himself to the mountain.

So, what was Jesus trying to show them? Jesus was demonstrating and giving them a sign that he was God made flesh and that he had everything that they needed. He hosted this meal. He was the bread of life and was passing out the bread of life. It was about more than just physical food. It was about experiencing the abundant life in Jesus, experiencing Jesus, God in the flesh.

When we are always wanting more, are we able to see the abundance that we have? Even though Faith is greatly blessed, it does not mean that we can meet everyone's needs. So, when we worked on the question, "Who are we?" part of it was looking at all the gifts that God has given to Faith. This is what God expects us to share with our neighbors.

It is important to look at what we don't have, but our thankfulness of course comes when we are able to see and experience the abundance that we have here. There is sometimes a fine line about being satisfied and wanting more. If we only focus on what we wish we had our ability to thank God decreases. This can cause blindness in seeing where we can share the abundance that we have.

The kingdom of God provides for people's needs. We are only one part of this kingdom with certain gifts that God invites us to share with our neighbors. Part of experiencing God's abundance for us, is realizing what we have been given.

As people of God, we don't have a great history in remaining thankful. When Moses and the Israelites were out in the wilderness, they complained that they did not have food. God provided day by day, manna which could sustain them from day to day. The people still complained. The manna could be characterized as the bread of life as it provided what they needed. God was showing up.

We want more people in church, more young families, more kids for VBS and Sunday School. Of course, none of that is bad, but I'm wondering if we can turn that around and say thank you God for what and who we do have. It is the old saying, are we looking at a cup half empty or half full.

When we can look at everything as a gift from God, I believe we live our lives differently. It creates a different kind of energy. One that is bright and uplifting. When people walk into a new place and experience this kind of energy and outlook, it is what can draw them back again and again.

It is a choice that we make. There is nothing wrong with desiring things, but can we first be thankful for what God has already given us. When we focus on what we don't have, it becomes more about me and not we, meaning God and our neighbor. When we focus on the abundance that we have as a community of faith

and individually we are able to see more and more where God, Jesus the bread of life is at work. It will allow us to better see and hear those places where we can share the bread of life that we have received.

Culture teaches us to want more instead of being able to see the gifts that God has given us as individuals and as a community of faith. There are things that it is important to know more about. When it comes to our soul and our heart, there is nothing other than the bread of life that can satisfy us.

There is something about sharing and being thankful for our blessings that allows us to feel satisfied. There is a world that continues to wait to hear about and receive the bread of life through you and me. We gather every week to experience and receive the bread of life, Jesus through Word and Sacrament.

It is when we let go of all those things that are running through our heads, doubt and fear, always wanting more and give them to Jesus that we can become ready to hear and experience Jesus the bread of life. Jesus stands ready to feed us here today. May we receive it with open hands, hearts and minds and then be ready to share Jesus, the bread of life with our neighbor. This is when we will be satisfied.

Let us pray, Gracious God, you are always standing ready to feed us the bread of life, Jesus. Often our hearts and minds become clouded with doubt and fear. Today at this time we give our doubts and fears over to you that we may be fed with Jesus the bread of life. Help us to see the abundance in your bread of life that we may freely share it with others and be satisfied. In Jesus' name, Amen