

“Jesus’ Secret Recipe”

Have you ever felt like you just absolutely could not do something? Or maybe a problem in your life came up out of nowhere and you had no solution for it? That basically, you were asked to do the impossible? Well, I’ll tell you, you’re not alone, in any of those three questions.

We’re not alone because in this morning’s gospel lesson, that is exactly what is happening to the disciples. If you remember, last Sunday we heard from the book of Mark and Mark’s account of the large crowds flocking to Jesus for healing. We saw how Jesus and his disciples needed a break from their work, but couldn’t seem to get a chance at that R & R. Immediately after coming ashore they are approached by the huge crowd wanting Jesus to perform miracles of healing on the sick. And Jesus being a loving and caring shepherd tends to the shepherdless flock. We learned from Jesus in Mark’s account that being a shepherd to the people is more important to him than his rest. We learned that his R & R is not mandatory but optional, which means Jesus never seems to be worried or put off by our interruptions, by our constant need of his compassion and grace. In other words, we learned of his extraordinary openness and availability to us. We can go to him with any of our needs and know our needs will be met, always.

Now, in today’s lesson, the lectionary turns to John’s gospel and John’s account of Jesus and the disciples coming ashore to the great multitude. Where last week the lectionary reading omits Mark’s eyewitness account of the feeding of the 5,000 now we are given John’s story of the feeding. The reason the lectionary last week omits Mark’s story of the feeding is because today we are learning something completely different from John and what he wants us to hear from his account of the feeding. At the beginning of John’s story what seems critical is not Jesus’ compassion for the shepherdless crowd (as seen in Mark and the other gospels: Matthew &

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Luke), but that there is a lesson to be taught to his disciples about not underestimating his power. In Jesus’ lesson to his disciples we see his Secret Recipe for feeding 5,000 unfold.

First, Jesus puts the question to Philip of how the crowds are to be fed, in order “to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do” (6:6). Thinking logically, as anyone would, Philip says to Jesus, “Six months’ wages won’t pay for the food needed to feed these people.” Then Andrew chimes in and reports the presence of one boy’s lunch: five barley loaves and two fish, but adds, “What is that among so many people?”

Interestingly enough, Jesus does not rebuke Philip or Andrew in their “what is logical, Mr. Spock” moment, but takes charge of the situation, gives instructions to his disciples, distributes the loaves and fish himself, and then has the disciples gather the remains.

You see, Jesus here used the crowd to his advantage as a teaching moment. Jesus used the crowd’s extraordinary number of 5,000 and his disciples unbelief of feeding them with just 5 loaves of bread and 2 fish as scratch batter to mix up and create a miracle moment and teach his disciples of his power. The answer to their closed minded disbelief of how to feed the large crowd is demonstrated by Jesus’ divine power of serving everyone not just five loaves of bread and 2 fish, but also a main dish of “I told you so.”

Jesus does not deal in cautious calculations of what is possible. Jesus ignores all of it and says to it, “I am” “It is I” “the one who comes from above, the one who redefines what is possible.” Therefore:

JESUS CONTINUES TO MAKE THE IMPOSSIBLE POSSIBLE. AND CONTINUES TO MAKE OUR UNBELIEF AND UNCERTAINTY INTO BELIEF AND CERTAINTY IN HIS POWER, RULE AND AUTHORITY.

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So my challenge for you this week is, if you feel like you can't do something, that something is so overwhelmingly impossible. Go to Jesus, Go to God, he can make it possible. He has the Secret Recipe to make it happen. To make all unbelief or doubt in what is possible, possible. AND KNOW THAT YOU WILL BE MADE FULL AND TRUST THAT THERE WILL BE LEFTOVERS.

In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.