

The Rev. Michael C. Fedewa
July 26, 2009
Proper 12 B
The Eighth Sunday after Pentecost
2 Samuel 11:1-15
Ephesians 3:14-21
John 6:1-21

Years ago, when we were using the a different cycle of readings, the reading from the Hebrew scripture each week was chosen to match a theme that was found in the Gospel. This reflected the belief that the Hebrew scripture reached their fullness in the life of Jesus, and the Gospel. The new reading cycle, the Revised Common Lectionary that we have used for the past few years, the reading from the Hebrew Scripture is no longer chosen to reflect a theme of the Gospel. On most Sundays now, the readings from Hebrew Scripture and New Testament are completely independent of each other. More often than not, there is no connection between the readings.

In this weeks' readings, not only is there no connection between the readings from 2nd Samuel and John, but in fact, the readings are almost opposite. The theme in Samuel and the theme of John go in completely different directions.

2nd Samuel recounts the descent of King David into the abyss of evil. David had it all. He was the chosen one of God. By God's grace David defeated Goliath, driven out the Philistines, united the 12 tribes of Israel, and built the city of Jerusalem. David was loved by God, and loved by the people of Israel. David had wealth, power, and prestige; all that he could possibly want and he still wants more. All that he has was not enough. So, in his desire for more, David begins his descent into sin. David's descent into sin reaches its evil low when he plots to have Uriah, his faithful general killed. David's plot succeeds. Uriah dies in battles. David is a murderer. Betrayal, adultery and murder—all because with all that David had, he was never satisfied. With all he had, he wanted more.

John's Gospel recounts a wondrous miracle. Jesus sees the crowd and knows that they will need to be fed. Phillip anxiously declares that there is not enough money to feed the crowd. It is then that the miracle begins to unfold. An unnamed boy is brought to Jesus with simple gifts of bread and fish. The boy who does not even possess a name, offers what he has, and the miracle occurs. The boy offers what he has, and thousands are satisfied.

The evil of David ends with murder. It begins with his desire for Bathsheba. His gazing upon her, his inquiring, his sending for her all precede his fall into murder and betrayal.

The miracle of multiplication of the loaves ends with a crowd of over 5000 fed and enough food left over to fill 12 baskets. 12 baskets full---enough to satisfy each of the twelve tribes of Israel. It begins with the unnamed child offering what he has to Jesus. It ends with enough food for all.

The stories of scripture reveal a truth: the choice for evil often begins with the desire for more. Sin begins when those who have more than enough, still crave more. Sin begins when those who have more than enough, think that the world is theirs for the taking. We could make the case that all of sin is rooted in a desire for more. More power, more pleasure, more things, more money, more toys, more more more. Even when we have enough, we want more.

Grace begins, goodness begins, miracles begin to occur when those who have enough offer what they have to God. When the child offered the little he had, a miracle occurred. When we offer what we have, miracles can still occur.

Where do we find ourselves in the stories? We who live among the most indulged people on earth. Even in financially difficult times, we have more than enough, more than most in the world would ever imagine having,

and yet we crave more. Of course we do not go as far as David, we do not give in to murder. Yet, our indulgent life style, our desire for more does put the poor of the world at risk. The global climate change spawned by our high standard of living causes suffering pain and death for those who are poor. Sadly, truthfully, I am more like David than I would like to admit.

Or, perhaps we can find ourselves in the place of the young boy. Can we take what have and bring it to Jesus?

Perhaps we find ourselves in the place of Phillip, the practical one. Phillip knows that cost of food. He sees how many mouths there are to feed. Even 6 months wages cannot begin to feed the crowd. When we look at the needs of the world, might we be more like Phillip than we might like to admit. Surely we do not have enough wages to care for the needy in the world. We cannot possibly feed all the hungry, we cannot possibly give clean water to those who thirst. We cannot possibly give everyone adequate health care. The Phillip in us looks at our resources and the needs of the world and we simply give up. We cannot possibly provide the God given rights of food, water and health care. Sadly, truthfully, I am more like Phillip than I would like to admit.

Each week at the Offertory we bring our gifts to the altar. Each Sunday we step into the sandals of the young boy and offer our loaves and fishes to Jesus. After we bring these gifts, thanks is offered and miracles occur. Our gifts of bread and wine become the body and blood of Jesus. Our gifts of food and are multiplied and the hungry are fed. Our financial offerings spread the Good News of God's love.

Most likely, we find within ourselves traces of David, Phillip, and the unnamed child.

We confess that we are too much like David and though we have more than enough, we still want more. Lord have Mercy.

We confess that we are too much like Phillip, we see the poor and try to avoid our responsibility to care for them. Christ have Mercy.

We pray that we may become more like the unnamed child. May we offer our gifts to Jesus, trusting that our gifts in his hands will bring miraculous results. May our gifts in his hands be enough to satisfy those who hunger. May our gifts in his hands be more than enough to heal the world.
