

Year B, July 29, 2018
Pentecost 10 (Proper 12)
Christ Church, Mexia

“(Sherlock) Holmes and his loyal side-kick, Dr. Watson, had gone on a camping trip. After a good meal and a bottle of wine they lay down for the night and went to sleep. Some hours later, Sherlock awoke and nudged his faithful friend. ‘Watson,’ he said, ‘look up at the sky and tell me what you see.’

Watson replied, ‘I see millions and millions of stars.’ ‘And what does that tell you?’ asked Holmes.

Watson pondered for a while, knowing how detailed and precise his detective friend could be, and wanting to impress him, he said, ‘Astronomically, it tells me that there are millions of galaxies and potentially billions of planets. Astrologically, I observe that Saturn is in Leo. Horologically, I deduce that the time is approximately a quarter past three. Theologically, I can see that God is all powerful and that we are small and insignificant. Meteorologically, I suspect that today will be a beautiful day. ... What does it tell you?’

‘Watson, you dolt! Some scoundrel has stolen our tent.’ Sometimes we can overlook the obvious or focus on the wrong thing.

Today’s gospel account of the feeding of the 5,000 and Jesus walking on water may be two of the best-known stories of the New Testament, if not the Bible. And they are two of the most difficult to explain in today’s world where science makes us skeptical. They don’t seem possible, do they? And I could go into all sorts of explanations, like the disciples were most likely rowing near the shore on their journey because of the winds and Jesus could have been walking along the shore, or in shallow water rather than on it. And we could consider that the feeding of the 5,000 may have been a eucharistic-type meal. The bread and wine you receive here at the rail doesn’t fill you up physically, but you may leave “satisfied.” But to do all these things would seem to miss the real point of the stories, somewhat like Watson missing the fact that the tent was gone.

So, what do this scripture tell us? One thing is described by the Rev. Jason Cox regarding the feeding of the 5,000, “(it) is a parable about what we are called to do and who we are called to be. If we are going to follow Jesus, at some point, he is going to turn to us and say: You

give them something to eat.” Or maybe something else. In other words, we all have a purpose; God has or will call each one of us to ministry of some sort – to do something for the Kingdom of Heaven – probably more than to donate our bread and fish or money or attend church regularly. And most likely we have, or will, feel inadequate at that moment. “I couldn’t possibly.... I don’t have the time, I don’t have the talent, ...whatever you feel you lack. Or you may think, how could **I** possibly make a difference in this complex and expansive situation?” Sound familiar to anyone? It does to me. We need to trade our perception of inadequacy for confidence. And maybe accepting Theodore Roosevelt’s words can help: “Do what you can, with what you have, where you are.” We can do that, can’t we?

And when we’re called, we’ll most likely have to give up something – change in some way – in order to do God’s bidding. Reallocate our time and priorities, use our money differently or change our perspective or way of thinking or change our personality, giving up control, for example... Most likely there will be a price associated with it, but not necessarily a large one. Not like the disciples’ thoughts about the financial cost for feeding so many people. Thus, we’ll need faith that it will be OK to accept the call and make that change.

And be assured that God will never ask us to do anything alone – God is always with us. Also, realize that we don’t have the power usually to do what needs to be done; God will supply the power to make things happen. We need to do what we can, but more importantly to be God’s presence, the channel through which God will accomplish the work. Remember this isn’t the only time God reportedly fed many out of a little. Recall the story from 2 Kings about Elisha that we heard this morning. God did the same through Elisha that he did through Jesus. And recall how God fed the Hebrews in the wilderness.

Anyway, I guarantee you – I guarantee it. If you accept God’s call, you will find an abundance to your life that you have never known. Before I accepted the call to ordained ministry, I worked in several pastoral care ministries, e.g., Stephen Ministry or Community of Hope, and many other ministries for the church. And I always got more than I gave – much more.

Let me close with the words of our Presiding Bishop in his revival homily on Saturday night of General Convention: “My brothers and sisters, my siblings, we have work to do. To stand for Christianity, a way of being Christian that looks like Jesus of Nazareth. A way of being Christian that is grounded and based on love. A way of being

Christian that is not ashamed to be called people of love. So go from this place and be people of the way. Go from this place as people of Jesus. Go from this place as people of love! Go from this place and heal our lands! Go from this place and heal our world! Go from this place until justice rolls down! Go from this place until the nightmare is over! Go from this place until God's dream is realized!"

Go and follow God's call for your life. Go, with "yes" on your lips and "I can" in your hearts!

In the name of the one God, the Creator, the Word and the Spirit.

Amen.