

Pastor Daniel Waldschmidt – St. John’s Lutheran – 10th Sunday after Pentecost – John 6:1-5

“We’ll see what the Lord has in mind.” That’s a phrase I learned from my dad. “We’ll see what the Lord has in mind.” Whenever someone has a problem they can’t solve or whenever anyone is uncertain about the future, he always says, “We’ll see what the Lord has in mind.” It’s a comforting saying because it reminds us that the Lord has the future under his control. I thought of that saying when I read our Gospel for today: **“When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, ‘Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?’ He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do.”** Today we are going to see that whenever we face a problem in our lives we can trust Jesus, because **he already has in mind what he is going to do** to solve that problem.

One interesting thing about this passage is that before doing the miracle Jesus gets his disciples involved. He asks Philip, **“Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?” (John 6:5)** Philip answered him, **“It would take more than half a year’s wages to buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!” (John 6:7)** Basically Philip responds by saying “This problem is way too big!” When we see a need, do we ever respond like Philip? Do we ever say, “That problem is way too big for me to solve on my own!” But just because the problem is way too big for us to solve on our own, doesn’t mean we shouldn’t do anything about it all.

Andrew also responds to Jesus’ question. **“Another of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, spoke up, ‘Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?’” (John 6:8-9)** Philip had responded by saying the problem is way too big. Now Andrew responds by saying “Our resources are way too small”: **“Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?”** Do we ever respond like Andrew? Do we ever see someone else’s need and say, “Well, I would help, but I have problems of my own. I have my own bills to pay. My resources are way too small.”

The problem with both Philip response (The problem is way too big) and Andrew’s responses (Our resources are way too small) is that neither of their responses included Jesus. Neither Philip nor Andrew mention Jesus. Philip should have said, “Yes, the problem is big, but Jesus you’re the Son of God. No problem is too big for you.” And Andrew should have said, “Yes, our resources are small. But Jesus you have almighty power. You can take our small resources and do anything you want with them.”

Look what Jesus does with the big problem and the small resources. **“Jesus said, ‘Have the people sit down.’ There was plenty of grass in that place, and they sat down (about five thousand men were there). Jesus then took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed to those who were seated as much as they wanted. He did the same with the fish.” (John 6:10-11)** With his almighty power Jesus took the five loaves and two fish and multiplied them into enough food so that every person there ate until they were full.

Jesus is the one who solves the problem. Jesus did get his disciples involved. He asked them to think through the problem. And Jesus did use the contribution from the young boy: the five

loaves of bread and two fish. But in the end Jesus was the one who did the miracle. Jesus was the one who solved the problem.

When we face problems in our own lives. Jesus certainly wants us to think through the problem, just like he got his disciples involved and asked them to think through the problem, **“Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?” (John 6:5)** Jesus wants us to think through the problems we face. Jesus also wants us to contribute whatever resources we have towards solving the problem. He used the donation from the young boy. He wants us to do all of that. But in the end, he’s always the one who solves the problem.

So when we face a problem, we go to the Lord in prayer and say, “Lord, I’m going to think through this problem and contribute whatever resources I can to solving this problem, but in the end I trust you. You’re the Son of God. No problem is too big for you. And you already have in mind what you are going to do.” Our passage says, **“He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do.” (John 6:6)**

When we are struggling with a problem it’s very comforting to know that Jesus already has in mind what he is going to do to solve it. The next time you are struggling with a problem, think to yourself, “The Lord already has in mind what he is going to do to solve this problem.”

And when you trust in Jesus that he is always going to take care of you, then that frees you to start using your resources not just to help yourself but to help others as well. In the Gospel for today *Jesus* did the miracle but he also got ordinary people involved in his plan to help others. He got the disciples involved. The disciples were the ones who distributed the food to the people. Jesus made use of the contribution from the young boy. Jesus used the five loaves of bread and two fish that the young boy gave. In the same way Jesus also wants to get us involved and contribute to meeting the needs of others.

This world has a lot of big problems. There is a lot of poverty in this world. There are places in the world where “each one getting only a bite” (6:7) is not too far from the reality. And because I’ve seen what Jesus can do with small resources I’m not going to say, “That problem is too big.” Or “My resources are too small.” I’m going to say, “How can I help?” I’m going to give my five loaves of bread and two fish to help those in need. Because I know that Jesus will always take care of me, it frees me to start using my resources to help others.

And not only does Jesus take care of your physical needs. He also takes care of your biggest problem, the problem of your sin. Notice what Jesus does at the end of our Gospel for today, **“Jesus, knowing that they intended to come and make him king by force, withdrew again to a mountain by himself.” (6:15)** Why didn’t he want to be their physical king? Because Jesus knew that they needed more than just a king for this world. They needed a Savior from sin. Jesus had his eyes on a bigger problem, the problem of sin. And he already had in mind what he was going to do. He was going to die on the cross to take away your sins and mine. Ultimately what the Lord has in mind for you is heaven. So we can trust him to take care of all our other needs as well. And when we trust him to take care of our needs then we are free to contribute to meeting the needs of others. Amen.