

August 6, 2017
Proper 13A Christ
Church, Mexia

Jesus had received the news of the brutal murder of John the Baptist. He knew that he needed to step away to grieve and gather his wits. It was not to be. Desperate people knew where he was going. Perhaps their desperation was magnified because they too had heard of John's death. So, when Jesus' boat came to shore, they were already there, crowding in with their dear ones who were ill. We've all been there, or if you haven't, chances are you will be someday. One that we love more than our own life is terribly injured, gravely ill, dying. Where else can they go but to Jesus? Moved by compassion for them, he spends the time he had set aside for solitude, healing them.

And then it is evening, and there is nowhere nearby to get a meal. The disciples urge him to send them away before it is too late for them to get home, or at least to find food and shelter. But Jesus says, 'No. You feed them.' The Son of God did not want his people to go hungry; people who had so recently been desperate for healing; perhaps many who had been near death. He did not want them to walk away with empty bellies, even though their desperation had been healed and calmed. Even though he had to be about to go to his knees with fatigue and grief for John, he could not want to abandon them.

Many preachers preach this sermon focusing on the miracle of the feeding of the multitude with 5 little barley loaves and two small fish. This morning I'd like to look in a different direction. Think about what it took to say to Jesus, "Here's what we have, and it's not enough." In John's account of this event, he tells of a small boy who brought his lunch to Andrew to share. Then Andrew brought it to Jesus. No matter who it was, it was a brave thing to do. No matter who it was, it required a deep trust in Jesus, to risk it.

We are all enormously gifted people. There is not a person in this room who is not richly blessed. I know I am, but so many times when the opportunity has come to use my gifts and blessings for someone that God has clearly sent across my path, I have been afraid and felt that I was not up to doing what was needed. Have you ever felt that way? Of course, in spite of my talents, I may well not be up to doing what is needed, and whether I am or not is hardly the point. One of my gifts, I suppose, is that I am a pretty smart person. You know, I can't really tell that having above average intelligence has made much of a difference in my life or in the lives of those I try to serve. But courage has. The courage to say, "Here's what I have, and it's not enough." Do you know the story of Edward Teller? Edward Teller was a Hungarian- American theoretical physicist who was in charge of a group at Los Alamos during the Manhattan Project. By all accounts he was prickly and at times fairly paranoid, no doubt scarred by life as a child in post WW1 Hungary. He was certainly obsessed with nuclear weapons and their potential uses. Curiously, the following quote is also attributed to him, "When you come to the end of all the light you know, and it's time to step into the darkness of the unknown, faith is knowing that one of two things shall happen: Either you will be given something solid to

stand on or you will be taught to fly."

No matter our strengths, the time comes when we can't see the next step. We don't know how to fly. Perhaps the miracle of the feeding of the 5000 and all our stories is this: when we are brave enough to come to Christ saying, "Here is what I have, and it is not enough," we can and do have the faith to know that he will accept what we bring and make it enough.