

The Ninth Sunday After Pentecost  
Proper 12  
Year B  
July 26, 2015

First Reading: 2 Kings 4:42-44

Psalm 145:10-19

Second Reading: Ephesians 3:14-21

Gospel: John 6:1-21

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In the Name of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.  
Amen.

One of the first responsibilities I had when I began my position as the Assistant Rector in Gainesville, FL was accompanying our high school youth on their annual Summer Mission Trip. We were headed to Montana for a week to serve on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation where we would have the opportunity to engage with the local community, repair houses and provide games and activities for the children on the reservation. I was excited about this trip as it would give me an opportunity to meet

and spend time with the youth of the Church as ministering to them was one of my primary focuses at Holy Trinity. We left very early in the morning as we had a 6AM flight. Everything was going smoothly that was until we reached the Orlando airport.

When we reached the airport and found the United Airlines check-in we were greeted by a line of people the length of which I have never seen before nor seen again since then. Although we thought we had arrived with enough time this turned out not to be the case and we ended up missing our first flight.

When we finally reached the counter and told the woman who greeted us our predicament, she at first said, “no problem, I’ll get you on the next flight. She then asked; “how many of you are there?” “Eight”, I replied. With that her expression changed to a look of

extreme pessimism and said that she didn't think we would all be able to get to Montana until tomorrow.

After which much bartering ensued and finally we were all put on two different flights out of Orlando and two different flights out of Denver (which was our lay over destination) with the explanation that it was just impossible to reseat eight people on the same plane.

Unfortunately, several of us would be forced to endure a ten-hour lay over in Denver. She then said "going stand-by in Denver for the earlier flight was an option, but we should by no means get our hopes up."

I was thinking to myself, this week, that the expression on this woman's face when I told her there was eight of us was probably quite reminiscent to the look on the St. Philip's face when Jesus turned to him in our Gospel reading from today and asked, "Where

are we to buy bread for these people to eat?" People who we are told in total, numbered five thousand.

Today's Gospel reading is the miraculous feeding of the five thousand. One of the many miracles Jesus performed during His ministry and it is the only miracle account that appears in all four Gospels. The crowd of people who have been following Jesus and hearing Him preach and teach, who have heard about the miraculous acts He has been performing throughout the countryside are now to be part of one of Jesus' miracles. Jesus takes the food, five loaves of bread and two fish and not only feeds this tremendous crowd with as much as they want but once all have eaten their fill, the disciples gather up what remains which amounts to twelve baskets full. And once Jesus performs this incredible miracle St.

John immediately follows it with another incredible miracle, the miracle of how Jesus walked on water. And after hearing these miracles and pondering the effect they must have had on the people—Jesus performing more signs that show Him to be the Son of God, the long awaited Messiah –we should ponder what they mean to us living today. An amazing grace these miracles present us with is the grace of transformation. And it is through transformation that these miracles can truly speak to us and find a place and a meaning in our lives today.

There is a popular saying that nothing is impossible. This is sometimes said jokingly and it is sometimes said as encouragement. When I teach youth Confirmation classes I always teach a class entitled The Bible and Jesus Christ. The focus of the

class is to discover what the youth know about the Bible and the life and ministry of Jesus. The class is very interactive and always proves to be a lot of fun. However, no matter what, the class always hits a snag when we start talking about Jesus' miracles. Some would say that Jesus feeding five thousand people with five loaves of bread and two fish or that He could walk on water is just too difficult to believe. When I asked them why they have difficulty believing in Jesus' miracles, the most common answer is usually, because they're simply impossible. And to the classes' surprise I respond with, you are correct, they are impossible, and it is that impossibility that make them so remarkable, so transformative.

If we heard today that someone walked on water or performed another miracle as Jesus did we would

probably not believe it. And so it is sometimes with Jesus Himself. We hear about the miracles He performed and we find them to be wonderful awe-inspiring events but we sometimes question if they really happened because they seem so impossible. And in the final analysis they are impossible, no one can feed five thousand people with just five loaves of bread and two fish, no one can walk on water. The question is not, are they impossible, the question is, will we believe in the impossible? And if we take the chance and answer yes, then we will see how these miracles have the power, have the ability, have the grace to transform our lives.

We all can come up against situations in life that are difficult—where we are faced with a situation and it seems that there is no way out, that the only way

out, is hoping for the impossible. What the miracles impart to us is that through Christ, even the impossible is achievable. And what this can do is transform our lives into always believing that through Christ, by turning to Christ we can get through the most difficult of situations. By believing that through Christ, with Christ anything is possible we will find hope. Hope in any situation because through Christ there is always a way.

Once we arrived in Denver, we were all able to get on the same flight to Montana except for one of us. We were told the plane was fully booked, except for seven free seats. So one of us agreed to stay behind and endure the ten hour lay-over. And I know this person prayed to God, pleaded with God to please get him on this flight. It's a small plane, it's



fully booked but God, You can do anything! And sure enough, one seat opened up and we all arrived in Montana together. It can be as simple as hoping and praying for one more seat to open up and this holds true in more desperate circumstances as well.

One of the activities we participated in during the Mission Trip to Montana was hearing different presentations on how Christ has made an impact or changed or effected our lives. One of the presentations we heard was from a leader of another youth group. She told us how a few years ago her father died. She said he was the single most important person in her life. From there she began to fall apart. When she realized she could not deal with the loss, she turned to drugs and alcohol for relief and became totally addicted. From there she watched as

she began to lose everything and her life and began to spiral out of control and yet she still could not kick her addiction. And then one day, she told us how she turned to Christ. In her broken, hurting, addicted state, without any money and in tears she said to Him "I cannot see any way out of this, please, please help me. And here she was almost two years later, sober, healing from the grief of losing her father and leading a group of teenagers, trying to make a difference in the world. No matter how small or how big, how easy or how difficult a situation may be, turning to Christ is always, always an option, through which we will find hope knowing that no matter how bleak, how hopeless a situation may be, Christ is always there for us and can always help us because nothing, nothing is beyond His power and His love.

Believing in the impossible is difficult. We may find ourselves at times hearing accounts from the Bible, like the miracle accounts and wondering if they really happened. Did Christ feed five thousand people with only five loaves of bread and two fish, did He walk on water. It is okay to wonder to question, because sometimes it is through wondering, through questioning that we will come to a deeper faith. My friends may we never fear to question, to wonder and may we never fear to believe in the impossible.

To God be Glory, Majesty, Honor and Praise  
forever and forever. Amen