

Rev. Beth J. Costlow

10th Sunday after Pentecost/Lectionary 17/Proper 12

John 6:24-35

August 1, 2021

Prepared for: Lutheran Church of Our Saviour, Greenville SC

- Signs of God's presence...
 - At Walmart, I watched a man in a scooter reach for a milk jug, in case he needed help.
 - We passed each other a few times as we shopped.
 - Finally, at the checkout behind him, I asked if he needed help emptying the basket on the front of the scooter.
 - “No,” he said, “but thank you for asking. You’re very kind.”
 - “Just a Christian, trying to love others,” I told him.
 - And there followed a conversation about how he was struggling with his faith, during which he thanked me for showing him that God is real.
- John's Gospel.
 - No parables. Just stories of what Jesus did.
 - By the time the story in today's selection takes place, we've heard:
 - Jesus turning water into wine at the wedding at Cana
 - Jesus recognizing details about the woman at the well's life that only she should have known.
 - Jesus healing the child of a royal official, even without being present with the child
 - Jesus healing an unknown number of people
 - And remember, it wasn't the healing that surprised his followers; it was Jesus' doing it on the Sabbath.
 - And, of course, the feeding of the five thousand.
- It is this crowd—the same ones who have just been fed by a mere five loaves of bread and two fish—that follows Jesus in today's lesson.
 - They've seen signs. They've heard the stories.
 - But they don't actually have much interest in the Lord until they get their own firsthand experience.
 - And then they want something more.

- But not really. They don't ask Jesus for more signs to show who he really is.
 - They might not fully understand what Jesus is doing—or what he's about to do—but they do understand that he's got some power
 - They ask what *they* should do to perform the works of God.
 - What they really want is the power that Jesus has—the power to save themselves.

- Jesus' answer? "The work of God is faith in the One sent by God."
 - No, really. Look at what we know about God...
 - Our ancestors ate manna in the wilderness. Moses made sure they got it.
 - Jesus: You've got it wrong. Moses didn't send that bread. My father sent it.
 - And then, greedy, the crowd—again, remember that these are the same ones who just were fed by Jesus!—want more.

- And then comes the real answer. "I am the bread of life."
 - I am enough.
 - I am all that you need.
 - More, though, Jesus is the promise that faith is God's work.
 - Eternity is God's work.
 - Jesus is enough. Jesus is all that we need.

- I fought with this selection a lot before finally finding the Good News in it.
 - Jesus doesn't always feel like enough.
 - When a nurse takes a toddler away from his mother to sedate him and put him into a big, metal tube for an MRI of his brain, faith might not feel like enough.
 - When a wife sits at her husband's bedside while they face the uncertainty that comes with a cancer diagnosis, faith might not feel like enough.
 - When a relationship becomes toxic and needs to come to an end, but love still exists, faith might not feel like enough.

- Jesus is all we need.
 - That man at Walmart? Even with his doubts mixed in, Jesus is all he needs.
 - That mom handing over her toddler? Jesus is all that she needs.
 - That wife sitting beside her husband? The couple whose relationship is broken?
 - Jesus is all that they need. Jesus is all that you need.