

July 28, 2024 – Tenth Sunday after Pentecost

“What Jesus Has in Mind” by Pastor Julio Romero

Gospel: John 6:1-21

The Feeding of the Five Thousand is a well-known story that presents a big challenge for all preachers. The first thing I thought when I saw the Gospel for this Sunday was, what am I going to say that you have not heard so far about this story?

I guess that is the reason we have two stories in one Gospel lesson, the “Feeding of the Five Thousand” and the story of the Lord walking on water. This way, it gives us the choice to preach about either one, or to combine the two. But let’s not forget that the Good News of our Lord is found in every word and sentence of His Gospel.

One line that woke up my senses and my spirit as I read these two stories is the sentence that comes after the Lord Jesus asked the disciple Phillip, “Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?” Then the writer of the Gospel makes the comment that Jesus said this to test Phillip, for Jesus himself knew what He was going to do.

Phillip’s answer was a realistic one, he said “Six months’ wages would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little.”

Phillip, just by looking at the size of the crowd, knew that it was impossible to find enough bread right away to feed all those people.

All he could do was to come up with a figure of six months wages to give to each of those people just a little bit of bread, not a full meal. Phillip didn’t add the logistic cost involved in delivering the bread and the time to prepare it. It would have been a majestic task for sure.

Overall, it was an impossible task according to Phillip and to anyone else, but little did he know what the Lord Jesus had in mind, what the Lord Jesus was about to do.

We know the miracle, with two fish and five loaves of bread he fed the crowd, the Lord Jesus did something humanly impossible, but that is exactly what he had in mind.

There is no doubt that Phillip and the rest of the disciples as well as each person in the crowd were astonished at Jesus’ miracle.

Of course, there was no way Phillip or anyone else in the crowd could see it coming. Nobody expected such a miracle, but if we put ourselves in Phillip's shoes, which is what we Christians do when it comes to understand or relate the Holy Scriptures to our personal lives, we tend to see ourselves in those stories.

I wonder what Jesus had in mind for you when you were facing almost impossible situations, times when you didn't see a way out, or a solution to your problems, times when it seemed impossible to have a favorable result and all you could do was pray and trust that God would do something about it. And He did!

That was perhaps the idea that came to Andrew when he said to Jesus, "There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish."

Even though Andrew acknowledged that five loaves of bread and two fish wouldn't be enough to feed the entire crowd, he knew whom he was talking to.

Andrew and Phillip didn't have the ability, the gift, to read Jesus' mind, to predict what He was about to do, but they had seen the power of God at work in Jesus and it turned out that five loaves of bread and two fish was all that Jesus needed to feed five thousand people.

We carry five loaves of bread and two fish with us: our faith. It is through faith that we make petitions for our needs, it is in faith that we trust that God can do what we cannot. We may think that our personal faith is small and insignificant for the challenges of life, but this Gospel lesson teaches us that God can use it to do incredible things.

We don't have the ability to predict what God will do or what He has in mind but one thing we know is that God knows what is in our heart and in our mind.

The Guardian, a British daily newspaper, reported on February 9, 2007, that a team of scientists has determined that reading brain waves can reveal a person's intentions. Literally, if this report is true, science has determined a way to read the mind and determine what you intend to do or want to do before you even do it.

Of course, we knew this could be done. Jesus did it long ago, for the Bible states that he read the intentions of people, or he knew what they were thinking. You can read Luke 5:22; Luke 6:8; John 2:25; John 21:17. Read also Psalm 44:21 to verify it. The Lord knows what we are thinking each moment of each day. And He further knows that what we think about is what we will become. Our thoughts are the seeds of our actions.

If God read our minds today, would He find thoughts that are pure, or thoughts induced by the world? It is said that if we open our mind to the wrong things, we will become what we allow inside. It doesn't take a mind reader to figure that out! Let's try our best to clean up our thoughts and ask the Lord to renew a right spirit within us, as Psalm 51 says.

After feeding five thousand people the Lord withdrew to the mountain to pray and the disciples got on a boat to go across the lake, to go back home to Capernaum. It was while they were sailing that a strong wind started to rock the boat and they were worried that the wind could make the boat sink to the bottom of the lake. It was then when they saw Jesus walking on water toward them. Jesus' presence brought them safely to the other side.

We can say that these are two independent stories, the feeding of the five thousand and Jesus' walking on water, but I think they are intertwined stories. In both, Jesus is doing what no human being can do. In both stories Jesus is doing what none of His disciples could predict what He was about to do.

Both stories show that Jesus is the Lord of all and whose mind none of us can read or predict. It seems that it was important for Jesus that the disciples knew Him as the Lord and ruler of all and witnessed His divine power, so that they could believe in Him and trust Him.

Let's believe in Him and see Him for who He is, the Lord of all who can do what we cannot, and who might surprise us with what He has in mind for us. *Amen.*