

When we see our neighbors, all around, shoot \$1000s of fireworks indiscriminately, it's difficult for a modern world to relate to people with so little, in need, in a wilderness, with Jesus.

The miracle feeding today. This is different from the other feedings. This is in Galilee, the people Gentiles. Jesus is repeating what He did with the Jewish people. The feedings demonstrate He is the God of Moses who leads His people out of slavery; who feeds them with miraculous bread in the wilderness.

Notice He responds to despair. Despair is a particularly debilitating sin because it lacks hope. We can all be worn-down, beat-up, spent. Tired of it all. We think our efforts will be futile. What can I do? Like if you can get on the treadmill every day 5 days in a row, run like crazy and still weighed the same. It seems like a waste of time.

Although this is a land of plenty, filled with so much, we are in a wilderness full of dangers and perils. (Whether you think it or not). Consider the value that is placed on human life, how immorality celebrated and accepted, disparaging views of the family, corruption in all forms in all places and the state of the church.

The Lord puts His Word and so many opportunities and people and gifts in our hands. We are sorely tempted to not doing anything because what difference will it make. What good are 7 loaves? The state of the world is overwhelming. We can't end poverty, we can't stop society's ills, we can't end hunger, we can't end war, we can't make people be Christians, we can't stop the various agendas thrown at us. Apathy, what does it matter? What do I matter? And despair, what's the point, it's all so overwhelming. Apathy and despair so easily set in. That I can't make a difference, I am not needed, not too many people care about things, who cares about me, so why should I try or care and what difference does it make.

Stop it. You bear His Name to the world and carry His Word. For what we have are the commands from God to love our neighbor. We're not called upon to end poverty or even change the community. We're called upon to respond in mercy to the needs that are right in front of us. It may even seem little or insignificant. And this we must do even if our efforts seem paltry or futile, or even when we don't feel like helping or want to. We must simply trust in God's word to do it. Even if you don't see results or success in anything you touch, you have His Word.

Jesus says to act in love for others, He says His word will not return void. Wait for Him to show that to be true; just keep plugging along, how many loaves do you have? Seven that's not enough for 4000 people, too bad, give it to as many people as you can and see what happens.

We do the work of the church with the people in front of us as much as we can. Even if things seem impossible or overwhelming, we act in hope. Hope takes

action because it believes that God is good. That He's working everything together for good. He will do what He says. So work hard at your vocations. Speak His Word to others, invite, give, serve, volunteer, act for you are instruments of His love and you scarcely realize all He does through all the little things and seemingly insignificant things you do, how your word and actions impact so many lives.

You bear His Name, His Word you learn and speak and employ with every single person the Lord draws into your life. How much good will it do? Will it all of a sudden return the United States to its constitutional glory? Who knows, but God will bless us. God will multiply and multiply the gifts and the loaves that you bring. That's a real promise. We should act on it according to that promise not giving in to despair or apathy but instead trusting in Him, believing His word will not return void but will do what He says.

The reality is God works through means, flowing in His means of grace from the Divine Service- you are His means out there; and that is an honor and a privilege, a duty, that you should embrace.

Think about this. He doesn't actually need the disciples, He's going to provide; He's going to take care of His people, one way or another, but He wants to do it through His pastors, still now. Our Lord establishes His Church, His pastors to give the gifts of His kingdom here.

So what was going to happen to those 4000 people out in the wilderness, hungry too faint to make it home, if the apostles didn't pull out the seven loaves? Well, nothing. In spite of where they were or how they felt they weren't in danger. Why not? Jesus was with them.

We know where Jesus is, where He is for us, where He promises to speak, where He promises to feed, where He promises to forgive. Here in Word, Sacraments. Everywhere the gospel is purely proclaimed and sacraments rightly administered. You find him where He promises to be.

If you look at the church at any point in time, whether that's 35AD or 1517 or 1908 here or 2024 -it looks terrible. There's no way this is going last. There's not enough money; there's way too many enemies; the world is evil; governments corrupt; the church a mess; the people are not pure enough, a bunch of failures and they don't help or do enough. And yet if you draw back from a divine perspective and you look, the day was never in doubt. Look how the Lord took care of His people. What then of apathy and despair?

These 4000 people in a wilderness, not in danger, Jesus is with them. The Lutheran Church, Christianity, you -are not in danger, the Lord is with you; where He promises to be; it means He will always act upon you in compassion. He will not fail. And there is a bread that can satisfy. So you eat of it, be filled, and not die. You He gathers here, His people, with so much, having nothing of value without Him, never in need in this wilderness, only for Jesus is with you.