

Sermon John 6:1-11

May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in your sight O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.

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“After these things Jesus went over the sea of Galilee, which is the sea of Tiberias. And a great multitude followed Him, because they saw His miracles which He did on them that were diseased. And Jesus went up into a mountain, and there He sat with His disciples. And the passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh.”

Jesus had taken His disciples to a remote shore of the Sea of Galilee. But the crowds, eager to see the miracles of Jesus, followed Him, - thousands of people. Then, Jesus asks the impossible of Philip. "Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?". Philip realizes how impossible this is. They didn't have any way to feed these people, They did not have much money, and even if they had such funds where would they buy food in such a remote place? But, Jesus doesn't give him a solution at that time. Remember that John mentioned that Jesus asked this when he first saw the crowd. In the

Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke describing the details of this miracle, it is made clear that after seeing the crowd Jesus went on teaching them and healing the sick for the rest of the day. Can you picture Philip and the other disciples discussing this among themselves throughout the day? "How are we going to feed these people? That's impossible!" Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, answers, " There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many" After all, Jesus, can't you see, it is just impossible. But, Jesus told the disciples to have the crowd sit down. ... around five thousand. Then Jesus took the five loaves of bread and after giving thanks He distributed the food, as much as they wanted.

Now, today's Gospel reading ends here. However, the details of this miracle continue through Vs. 12 and 13.

"When they were filled, He said unto His disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost. Therefore they gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten."

Indeed, if Jesus could feed the 5000, if He can heal the ill, give sight to the blind, give hearing to the deaf, even bring the dead to life, what is there that He cannot do. What problems do you have that you have not entrusted to Jesus?

If He can feed five thousand, He can help you. Sometimes, things seem so impossible, for so much of our energy is wrapped up in earthly things, just like those disciples worrying about earthly food.

But there's more to the impossible. When faced with temptation, no matter how powerful, deceptive or seductive, Jesus asks you to refuse it without regretting what you think you're missing out on. When faced with pain, illness, or disease, he asks you to bear it patiently. When faced with the loss of a dear friend or loved one, he asks you to persevere. When insulted or mistreated, he asks you to return kindness. When wronged, he asks you to forgive. Yes, in all those things that lead us to cry out, "Why me?! It's too much! I can't put up with it! You have to take it away," we sound like the disciples: "Send the people away, for we can't feed them."

It's impossible for me to patiently endure. I just can't do it.

But those are the words Jesus wants to hear from you: "I can't do it." We live in a can-do culture that's infected even many churches. Jesus confronts us with the impossible to bring us to our knees, so that we cry out, "I can't! Even using everything I have, I can not do it." He brought that home to the disciples. Even after gathering all the resources they could, they only had five loaves and two fish. But what did the disciples do with what they had? They brought it to Jesus.

That, is what must follow our cry, "I can't." So then, take it to Jesus. When the world faces the impossible, some people might give up in despair: "I can't do it, so it's all hopeless." But you, when faced with the impossible, can bring it to Jesus. That's why He places the impossible in front of us. So that we bring it to Him. We can pray, "I can't, dear Jesus, but if it is Thy will, and for the good of my soul, you can."

As Jesus works His will in you and leads you on His way, it may not be easy. It may not necessarily feel good to you. It may put you into awkward situations or even into apparent danger. Sometimes, His answer will be "No", because what you ask for is not good for your soul. As time passes, you will recognize his love even if His answer was "No".

I wonder what I would have been thinking if I were one of the disciples at the point where Jesus tells them to have the people sit down and distribute the food. Would I have thought that, " If we have these people sit down, they'll expect something to eat. What are they going to do to us. when we have no food?

Whatever the disciples thought, they listened to Jesus. They followed His will. They trusted Him. They left it in His hands. Our prayers should not stop with, "Jesus, I can't." But, instead, we should pray, "I can't, Jesus. But I trust you to work Thy way in me. I will listen and follow. Thy way, not my way,

dear Lord. Thy will be done" And He may well lead us through paths that seem impossible for us. And even as we follow, they may not be easy paths. It is the narrow way. You may struggle.. But follow on ... follow on, no matter how dark or difficult. For from the impossible, Jesus works blessings beyond what we can anticipate. Do you think the disciples imagined they'd have enough food. "Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little!" Well, each one did not have only a bite. but as much as they wanted. They were all full, and twelve baskets full were left over. The more impossible the situation, the greater the blessing Jesus works. So leave it to Jesus to do it His way, not your way. Often with earthly things, Jesus teaches us to be content, but not by giving us more, which would be our way. Rather He teaches us that no matter how little we have (even if it's just five loaves and two fish), we have all we need if we have Him. He is our comfort. In Him we have true happiness and contentment, no matter what our earthly lot. And what great blessings He has worked for us by traveling the most impossible path of all! He takes wretched sinners like you and me and prepares us for the presence of the holy God, ... the brightness of our heavenly home, ... the glory before the throne of the Almighty.

Yes, the Lamb was slain and with His blood He purchased us for God. He made us to serve our God and to reign with Him. What blessings He has worked out for us by suffering that impossible path to the cross, weighed down by the sins of the world, ... that impossible path by which our God became one of us and died for us, ... that impossible path by which He conquered death and rose again in victory to give that same victory to all those who believe in Him.

So when faced with the impossible, entrust it to Jesus. Again, remember: when you are faced with the impossible, entrust it to Jesus. Follow Him on the impossible paths of life, listening to His voice as it calls to you from the Scriptures and the Sacraments. For He feeds you not only for a day. He feeds you for all eternity with His heavenly manna. And, we should forever thank Him for His love which passes all our understanding.

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Remember the words of our Lord who said, "It is better to give than to receive".