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Proper 12B - Ordinary 17B - Pentecost +8
Sunday, July 26, 2009
John 6: 1-21

Enough for Everyone

After this Jesus went to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, also called the Sea of Tiberias. ²A large crowd kept following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing for the sick. ³Jesus went up the mountain and sat down there with his disciples. ⁴Now the Passover, the festival of the Jews, was near. ⁵When he looked up and saw a large crowd coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?" ⁶He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do. ⁷Philip answered him, "Six months' wages would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little." ⁸One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, ⁹"There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many people?" ¹⁰Jesus said, "Make the people sit down." Now there was a great deal of grass in the place; so they sat down, about five thousand in all. ¹¹Then Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated; so also the fish, as much as they wanted. ¹²When they were satisfied, he told his disciples, "Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost." ¹³So they gathered them up, and from the fragments of the five barley loaves, left by those who had eaten, they filled twelve baskets. ¹⁴When the people saw the sign that he had done, they began to say, "This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world."

When Jesus realized that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, he withdrew again to the mountain by himself. ¹⁶When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea, ¹⁷got into a boat, and started across the sea to Capernaum. It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. ¹⁸The sea became rough because a strong wind was blowing. ¹⁹When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and coming near the boat, and they were terrified. ²⁰But he said to them, "It is I; do not be afraid." ²¹Then they wanted to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the land toward which they were going.

Today I thought we might stop for a moment to think about the people we love. Take a minute to think of the most important people in your life. Who do you love? Are you thinking of them?

Raise your hand if you thought of your mom and dad. How about your brothers and sisters? Grandparents? Cousins? Maybe some very special friends?

When I think of the people I love the most - those people I care for most deeply in my heart - those are the people I think of first. We don't usually describe ourselves as "loving" everyone we know - because that's what makes love so special.

But God's love is different. God has enough love for us all.

Think of what that means! As people we can't even hope to *know* everyone - much less love them all in a deep and special way. It's just not possible. But God's love is bigger than anything you can imagine...and it never runs out.

I always think of that when I hear this week's Gospel story. As you might remember from the past few weeks, Jesus has been performing miracles and the crowds of people around him are growing larger and larger. Everyone wants to see him. But today the disciples are getting worried.

A huge crowd of people has gathered and it doesn't appear that there will be enough food for them all. All they have is five loaves of bread and two fish - which doesn't seem like it could possibly feed them all. But Jesus asks that they be fed and much to the disciples' surprise the food not only feeds the entire crowd, but the leftovers turn out to be more food than they had to begin with! It was another miracle.

This story always reminds me that when it comes to God's love there's enough for everyone - even when loving everyone seems like an awfully big job. God loves us all. Don't forget it.

Can we pray?

Dear God,

Though there are many people in the world, we know that your love is big enough for us all. Thank you for watching over us.

Amen

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