

Enough Time to Sit

Mark 6:30-44

The Eighth Sunday after Pentecost, July 19, 2015

Immanuel Lutheran Church, Broadlands

God has called you to various duties. Within those duties He has called you to provide for others. Fathers are called to provide for their families. Fathers are called to provide for their wives and their children. With the assistance of their wife they are to clothe, house, and feed the children.

If your parents become elderly and are no longer able to provide for themselves, God calls the children to provide for their parents. You can read more about this in the book of 1 Timothy. God calls the children of parents who cannot provide for themselves to provide for them. Children of such parents are to feed them, clothe them, and house them.

That means that some fathers may find themselves in a situation where they are providing for their own children while at the same time providing for their aging parents, while at the same time providing for their aging in-laws.

Grandparents who are able to provide for themselves may assist parents in providing for their children as accepted by the parents.

Now there are other vocations where God commands us to provide for others. If some of us have employees, God calls us to provide for the employees. God commands you to provide for them what is right. You are to give them a fair salary and fair benefits. In other words God calls you to provide them with adequate food and clothing. God commands you to house them. After all what does a salary do if it does not feed, clothe, and house people?

When it comes to provision of the basics, these are the duties to which God has called you.

If you ever think that you do not have enough money to do these things, it is because you are not trusting in the One who called you to do them. You do not recognize the God in whom you say you believe. You either trust in another god or you believe in yourself.

Jesus called His apostles to feed the five thousand men plus women and children in the wilderness. They complained to Him that they did not have enough money to feed them. They started talking about pricing and markets. They questioned whether even 200 denarii which in today's money is approximately \$16 000 would be enough to feed everyone. You know that you lack faith when you start talking to the Lord about markets and pricing with a view toward explaining to Him how there will not be enough.

But many of us do not do that. Many of us start talking about pricing and the markets when we are not thinking about our Lord at all. If we were thinking about our Lord at all, we would realize how presumptuous it is to talk about how there is not enough in the face of He who made everything.

If you believe the resources will not be there, then you don't believe. Either that or you have worshipped something else that took your money away and now you owe on that thing that you wanted so badly that you cannot now fulfill the duties of your vocations and provide for the people that God has commanded you to provide.

When you come into the sanctuary all of you stand up at the beginning of the Divine Service. I say, "In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." It is a statement indicating the name in which our worship is conducted. All of you say, "Amen," which means that you believe that the

Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit is the proper name in which to worship. By doing so, you have acknowledged your God.

When you stand and confess the Nicene Creed together you say, "I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth." Later on you confess, "And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord." Then later on you confess, "I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life." You confess that this is your God.

You are saying that this Jesus who sent His apostles to feed the five thousand men, plus women and children is your God. If He is your God, how dare you ever doubt His ability to care and provide you with all that you need to fulfill your duties in providing for those people for whom He has called you to provide?

This Jesus is the Jesus who purified the lepers. This Jesus is the Jesus who cast unclean spirits out of people. This Jesus is the Jesus who healed the sick. This Jesus is the Jesus who forgave sins. This Jesus is the Jesus who raised the dead.

When it comes to life and to death Jesus saves. When Jairus' daughter died, Jesus was there to raise her from the dead. When the apostles were in the boat and the storm came up and they thought they were going to die, Jesus got up and commanded the wind and the waves. On that occasion the apostles were intelligent enough to ask, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey Him."

Now these apostles should have been smart enough to know that when Jesus is out in the wilderness with five thousand plus people and it comes time to eat and some of them will drop over unless they get something to eat that He has their best interests in mind and will feed them. But if we are going to piously condemn the apostles on a Sunday morning for their lack of faith, then we will have to condemn ourselves also for our lack of faith. We would rather talk to Jesus how about how impossible it is to do what He has asked us to do and talk about how the markets are against us than to trust that He will provide for everything that we need.

Let me be clear. The Lord is not merely telling His apostles that He will feed them. He is also telling them that they will feed the five thousands. When the problem arises our Lord's first reaction is to tell the apostles, "You, give them something to eat." If the apostles had faith they would have taken the five loaves and the two fish and immediately started handing them out. Instead they did not believe that Jesus would provide and so they did not do what He asked and started talking about money and how they did not have it.

To be sure our Lord could have fed the apostles, but our Lord was not merely commanding that the apostles be fed. He was telling them to feed and provide for others. He was calling them in that moment to provide for the five thousand plus everyone else they brought with them.

And just as the apostles and thus you and me should have known that Jesus is the God who provides, they and we should also know that Jesus provides what we need to fulfill the duties to which He has called us.

Take the apostles as examples. Jesus called them to be apostles. He assigned them certain duties. He told them, "Heal the sick. Cast out demons. Raise the dead. Preach the good news." Now it should be obvious to anyone with an ounce of faith that there is no way for the apostles to perform their duties on their own. When our Lord commands them to heal the sick, He is not giving them a rule to obey out of their own resources. And definitely when our Lord commands them to cast out demons and raise the dead, He is not merely giving His apostles a list of duties to be performed. He is also giving them the authority to do precisely those things which He commanded them to do. So also now with the five thousand He is commanding them to do something that is outside of their ability to perform. But it should have been no matter. After all they had just told Him all of the things that they had done and

taught in His name. They had reported to Him about how even the evil spirits had submitted to them in His name. The apostles had healed the sick in His name. The apostles had preached in His name. The apostles had raised the dead in the name of Jesus. How much more then when He tells you to do something simple like feeding five thousand plus people.

How dense can an apostle be? If Jesus can command the wind and the waves, you don't think that He can do this also?

Now mercifully our Lord has not put you in the wilderness with five thousand hungry people to feed. But He has called you to provide for those people to whom He has called you. Like I said before, He has called you to provide food, clothing, and shelter to your children and to your aging parents if necessary and to your employees what is fair according to their wages. In addition there will be times of extraordinary circumstance where God will ask you to provide for your neighbor in his time of need in one way or another.

Any anxiety that you feel in regard to these vocations is a lack of faith. Any time you tell the Lord there is not enough money and complain about the price of bread is a lack of faith on your part. You do not believe in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, even though you say that you do.

After all, the Lord who fed the five thousand is the Lord who had them sit down on green grass. Did you catch that? When the people sat down by groups by hundreds and fifties, they sat down on the green grass. Why did Mark bother to record that the grass was green? I remember a pastor pointing that out to me and then proceeded to tell me that their next sermon series was going to be about the colors of the Bible. That seems flighty to me, but what about the green grass anyway? The green grass is a reminder to the apostles of who makes the grass green. In the beginning the God whose disciples they are made the grass grow green. He made the earth bring forth vegetation with seed in it according to their kinds. He made the earth bring forth green vegetation and He gave to the humans and the animals the green plants for food. He gave the humans and the animals green plants for food. And if that were not enough there were twelve baskets full of broken pieces left over, one for each apostle to remind them of the God with whom they were dealing and in as gentle a way as possible rebuke them for their lack of faith.

The God whom you confess as your own is the one who makes the corn grow. He is the one who makes the beans bloom. He is the one who makes your gardens flourish. He is the one who provides you with your livelihood. He is the One who makes the economy run. You may not think it runs well, but without Him it would not run at all. He is the One who provides the paycheck and the extras when He feels like blessing you.

He provides you not only with enough to feed you, but also with enough to feed those whom He has called you to feed. He fed the apostles and He told them, "You, give them something to eat." It was the command of the One who created the green things for food. When He commands you to give to the ones in your charge something to eat that means that He is using His word of command to create the things that you will give to them to eat. There will be plenty. There will be enough to spare.

The Lord may not give you enough to make ends meet because He may not think that the ends you are trying to make meet are sufficiently oriented to His glory. The Lord will give you sufficient amounts to fulfill your vocations, to your children, your spouse, your grandchildren, your parents, and to your neighbors in their time of need.

He will give you enough that you may rest.

The other sign of faithlessness in regards to our Lord's provision besides anxiety is overworking. If you have no time to rest, you are overworked. If you do not take a Sabbath at all, you are overworked. If you are overworked, you either worship your job as your God which is a whole other problem that I will deal with some other time or you doubt the power of God to provide for you and you think that you have to work hard to produce it. Like the apostles you have calculated how much it takes to feed the ones committed to your charge. You know how much work it will take to get that done and you are bound and determined to do it yourself. You either believe that God will not provide it or you believe that God is a commanding God who demands that you do it yourself and therefore you misunderstand Jesus when He tells you, "You, give them something to eat."

Now listen to me. Your Lord gave you His own life. He gave you His own life to give you eternal life. He is going to raise you from the dead and you are going to live forever. That means that everything is going to be ok regardless of how things turn out in this life. He is going to feed you and those charged to you regardless of how things turn out in this life. But even still your Lord promises to provide for you in this life also. This life also is not some barren wasteland that Jesus does not care about until you get to eternal life. Where Jesus is present any barren wasteland is filled with food!

If He gave you His life, how will He not also along with His life graciously give you all things. And when He promises to give you all things, He means all things. He does not merely forgive you of your sins. He also feeds you, clothes you, shelters you, and gives you the means for feeding, clothing, and sheltering those whom He has called you to feed, clothe, and shelter on His behalf.

When the Lord does that He will do it with some left over. There were twelve basketsful left over for the apostles. There will be leftovers for you. With the Lord Jesus caring for you, there will be leftovers sufficient for you to enjoy some time of rest on the green grass.

In the Name of Jesus. Amen.