



Sermon: June 27, 2021

Scripture Reading: John 6: 1-14

The Message:
“If It Were Up To Kids...”

[Video Version](#)



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5 loaves and 2 fish. We all know the story. One of Jesus' greatest miracles, and the only miracle that makes it into all four gospels, other than Jesus' resurrection itself. Matthew, Mark, and Luke also give their recollection of how things went down that day. But there is one difference in John's retelling of the story. The festival of Passover was near, and Jesus was gathered with thousands of his friends. The good word of Jesus' miracles was spreading, and people wanted to be in the presence of Christ. But even Christ needs to take a break sometimes. So Jesus went off with his disciples, and in his compassion, made arrangements to feed the hungry crowd. And here, in a moment, we see the one detail in John's retelling, that is omitted from the other Gospels. Andrew tells Jesus, "Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish." And just like that, the moment is gone. The miracle of the loaves and fishes, arguably one of Jesus' greatest miracles short of returning from the grave! Would never have been if it weren't for this young boy! A detail so small that Matthew, Mark, and Luke felt no need to record it. John goes on to detail that the bread was made of barley, another element that is unique to John's story. During Jesus' time, barley was cheaper than wheat. So the poorer citizens would generally eat loaves made of barley. Our bread and fish came that day not only from a child, but from a poor child. Jesus' miracle would not have been, if not for this young boy. Yet how often are children looked over? Regarded to be of lesser importance than adults. They don't vote, they don't pay taxes, they don't spend their money on the economy. Why should they be treated with the same regard as adults? But what John's gospel is telling me is that, no matter how small, every child is a part of God's big picture, and everything about them is important.

This past school year, I have been lucky enough to revisit grade 1, as Evelyn and I navigate the difficulties of virtual school. And one unit that "we've" were learning about was community. Specifically, places where the kids feel that they belong. When asked to identify significant places in her community where she had a connection to, Evelyn immediately shared with her class that she has a church community that she belongs to! Of course, she also listed grandma's house as one of her favourite places, but, of course, it's grandma's house! But how proud was I that she listed our church as a significant place in her life. She feels comfortable, and welcome, and supported, and loved here!

You may not believe it, but I suffer from incredible stage fright! I joke that the vibrato that can be heard when I play the trumpet is not a musical choice but my nerves coming through. I, like Evelyn, was lucky to grow up in a church that was supportive. For those who don't know, I was baptized within the walls of our Clarkson campus, by Reverend Bob Johnstone. Just as my kids feel at home here, I have always been connected to a church family. Some of the leaders that guided me as a child, I now consider to be my friends. And that is what we as a church must do for the next generation. Provide them

with a safe space where they can be nervous, but where they can be themselves, where they can shine and succeed. We need to guide them down the path that Jesus walked, the path of compassion and kindness. For the more little people that we can help grow into big people who live like Jesus, the better off the world is going to be. That little boy with two fish and a few loaves of bread; he certainly didn't owe that crowd anything. His family was not well off, and perhaps they really needed that food. Or, maybe they had planned to sell it to the crowd as a source of income! But that little boy knew that God was calling him for more. Little did he know that he was already chosen to be a part of history. That his good deed would be a part of one of most amazing stories of all time! We can never know which little humans God will choose to be a part of the historic moments. But even in the non-historic moments, we all still have something to offer. And as we gather virtually this week, I am so grateful to all of my young friends who have offered what they have to enhance our worship. What an honour that all of these kids, teens, and young adults have shared their gifts with us, through readings and music. I can only hope that our church home can continue to support and encourage them as they grow and find their own path in God's world. Each time we observe the beautiful moment of baptism, we, as a collective congregation, vow to commit ourselves to support and nurture that child. The gift of protecting and guiding all of the children that we've seen today, is all of ours

One of my favourite anecdotes was told to me by Reverend Jim Cairney. He told me, one day a toddler walked up to his brand new baby brother who was laying in his crib. And the toddler asked, "can you tell me about God? I'm starting to forget" And that short story has stuck with me. Society has been getting it all wrong! These kids aren't just little beings who can easily be looked over. They are closer to God than you or I. They were existing with the creator right up until they came to be on this earth. If anyone knows God, it's kids. Kids are inherently compassionate, honest, curious beings, who quite frankly could teach us adults a thing or two from time to time. Kids naturally want to be helpful and caring, because they aren't jaded yet by the sadness in the world. On the Indonesian island of Bali, an infant's feet do not touch the ground for 105 days after they are born. This practice comes from the belief that newborn babies are still close to the sacred realm from which they came, and therefore deserve to be treated with the same adoration. What a beautiful idea.

God sends little souls to this earth in all sorts of body types, with all sorts of abilities, or disabilities, and with all sorts of identities. For reasons that I can't begin to understand, some children are born into a life of privilege. And I don't just mean wealth. Simply being born as cisgender, which is when your gender identity matches your physical sex, life is automatically just easier. Or by just being Caucasian, gives some children a privilege that they will never fully understand. And yet some children are born into a life of struggle. Struggle because they live in a world where racism has been embedded through our laws and regulations. Struggle because the world is not accessible for someone with a physical or mental disability. Struggle because their insides don't match what they see in the mirror or struggle because they are judged for "loving differently." But each one of those souls was in the realm with the creator just before coming to this earth. God made each of them, exactly how they were supposed to be. And kids don't see these differences. Kids don't care about skin colour or orientation. These are privileges that were constructed by adults. If it were up to kids, there would be no racism, no gender inequality. And my prayer for the next generation is that they don't lose that as they grow older. They keep that goodness that is inside of them, given to them by God as they were created, and set us adults on a new path.

We have just made it through an incredibly difficult year. Our kids have been told to stay away from their friends. Don't play, don't hang out, don't socialize. I don't care how well adjusted your family is, no teenager wants to be with their parents 24/7. We have teens missing their proms, young adults missing their convocations. We have young children learning by looking at a screen all day. Our teachers have been making the most of it, but our kids are missing out on some of the lessons that teachers can't teach through a tablet. Our postlude at the end of the service today will be showing off our kids and youth who are celebrating educational milestones this year. And to the graduating class of 2021, I have so much faith. I believe that you see where the world has gone wrong. We can not change our history, but we can determine our future. I believe that you have a fire inside of you to change what needs to be changed so that our future is bright, for everyone, equally. Our society has moved so far away from Jesus, that day on the hill, trying to feed a crowd of thousands of people with only 5 loaves of bread and 2 fish. So let's not "get back to normal." Our pre-covid world was filled with chaos and injustice. Let's make something better. Let's make something that Jesus would be proud of. Let's follow Jesus that day, welcoming in those who are often overlooked. And let's follow the example of that little boy in the crowd and give everything we have to God and to those around us. We need to get back to basics. We need to get back to that child-like mentality of just helping others for no reason other than it's the right thing to do. Love your neighbour, no matter what. Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. That's all there is.