

John 6:1-21

July 25, 2021

Grace and peace be with you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

So, it happened to me again this past week. Someone shook their head and said about Peace in Christ, “But we’re so small.” But, we are so small.

I read a book called *God, Improv, and the Art of Living* by MaryAnn McKibben. Great book! I highly recommend it. In her discussion of Improv, MaryAnn says that instead of saying “but,” you have to say “and” to comments made by other people.

Peace in Christ is small and... not “but,” but “and.”

Peace in Christ is small and we have faithful members. Peace in Christ is small and we reach out to the world through the ELCA, the Episcopal Church, and FaceBook Live. Peace in Christ is small and I know everyone in the congregation. Peace in Christ is small and... your turn.

Great! Yes – “and!” “And” puts such a more positive spin on things, doesn’t it? Don’t you already feel better? No more buts, only ands.

Because Jesus and I have a message for everyone who thinks being too small is ever an issue for God. We are not too small! We can never be too small, because God is so great!

Alright? So, I never ever want to hear you say, “but we’re so small.” That phrase is to be removed from our phraseology. The next time you say “we’re so small” I expect to hear an “and.” Ok?

Because we’re not too small. We are always just the right size for God to work miracles. We just need to be open to all of the possibilities. We need to be “and” people. No buts!

Just take a look at the Gospel reading for today. There is a small group of disciples - only 12 of them. They weren’t too small.

There is only one small boy with food. He wasn't too small. He only had 5 little rolls of bread and two sardine sized fish. That wasn't too small.

There was only Andrew's small idea. It wasn't too small.

When Jesus gets involved, nothing is too small. Jesus will take whatever we can give and he will perform miracles with it. Jesus is the "and."

There was a small group of disciples and there was a small boy and he had a small meal and Jesus took what was available and fed 5000 people.

With God, nothing is ever too small. Anything we are willing to give, God is willing use it to make a difference in the world. Nothing is ever too small for God.

A small group of people. A small boy. A small idea. A small amount of food. A small church. Jesus uses small things to perform great miracles, because it's not about us. It's about God, and God is the great one. So, with God, whatever we have and whoever we are is enough. Nothing is too small!

We have enough. We are enough. That's the good news for us and the world! With God, there is always enough!

Actually, there is more than enough. As we see here, after Jesus feeds the 5000 there are 12 baskets full left overs. 12 baskets!

And I want you to notice something about those leftovers. Jesus tells the disciples to go and gather up all of the fragments of bread, because he doesn't want anything to be lost.

Gather up all of the broken pieces so that nothing is lost.

Gather up those who are not whole so that they will be gathered into a community.

Our call as followers of Christ is to go and gather the broken so that they can be made whole by God.

We are called to seek out the broken and gather them in to God's loving embrace. God doesn't want any broken person to be lost. God cares about the least, last, lost, and lonely. God cares about the smallest of the small.

And so, we give what we have to Jesus and he takes that little bit and he uses it to feed the hungry – not just the literal hungry, but those who are emotionally and spiritually hungry as well. Just the willingness to give makes a huge difference in a broken person's life. It means that they matter, and they do. They matter a lot to God.

It doesn't take a lot from us. It only takes what we have to offer. A small gift in God's hands makes a real difference. What we give to Jesus causes miracles to happen.

Giving is where it's at. Give to Jesus, because if we try to take Jesus to do our will, our will will be thwarted. Jesus is all about God's will, not human will.

The people who were stuffed with bread tried to take Jesus to be their king. The terrified disciples tried to take Jesus into their boat. And, neither attempt was successful.

Jesus withdrew from those who wanted to take him to be king. He left them. And, when the disciples tried to take him into the boat, they arrived on dry land.

We can't take Jesus and force him to do our will. Jesus only concern is doing God's will. And so, Jesus will not become king through the people forcing it upon him. Jesus becomes king through his death and resurrection, because he is not an Earthly king. He is the heir to God's throne, which he is given by his own dying.

And when we are terrified, Jesus will take us where we need to be – on to solid ground. He won't be taken into our terror. Instead he takes us from our terror into his eternal peace.

And so, we give to Jesus all that we can and we let Jesus take us where we need to be.

We cannot take from Jesus and we can never make Jesus go where we want him to go. Instead, God gives us everything and then sends us out to continue Jesus' ministry in the world, for the sake of the world – to take the peace of Christ, which is given to us, into all of the broken places in the world.

We are being sent to collect all that is broken in our world and give it to God for healing. Jesus wants all of the broken pieces – all of them. Nothing is to be lost, not even the littlest crumb, because everything is to be made whole through Jesus' life, death, and resurrection.

Death and resurrection. Broken and whole.

And so, when Jesus sees a need, he will ask us what we have to offer to bring satisfaction to a situation, and then he will take it and multiply our offering until it far out reaches the need set before us.

Jesus is God's creating force and he can take the small offering of a little boy at the suggestion of a single disciple and feed an enormous crowd so much that there are baskets left over.

Jesus takes the smallest of things given to him, even small ole Peace in Christ and what we have to offer, and he performs miracles with them. He feeds the hungry and he makes people whole through us.

So, never be discouraged. With God there is no such things as too small, because our God is so great! There is no way we can ever limit what God can do.

And so, let us pray – Please Lord, let us be a part of the miracles you have in store for the world and help us not to be afraid. May your will be done through us. We are small and we are willing.

Thanks be to God! Amen.