

Pastor Colleen's Sermon of November 15, 2009

Grace, Peace and Mercy be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen

In the lesson for today from the book of Hebrews the author writes, *"let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another,"*

This quote from the book of Hebrews reminded me of a great children's story called Stone Soup. And I would like to share the story with all of you this morning.

READ THE CHILDREN'S BOOK STONE SOUP.... (Stone Soup by J. Muth)

The monks in the story wanted to see what made people happy...
And it turns out happiness was as simple as making stone soup.

They had nothing but 3 stones and a small pot....
But they had faith that they had so much more...
And one by one the villagers in the story wanted to be a part of this process of making soup
One by one the villagers unlocked their doors,
Brought what little they had
And in the end it turned into a delicious pot of soup.

3 stones, a small pot and faith....
Sometimes that is all that is necessary to create a delicious meal.

Or sometimes it is as simple as a Sonshiner's potluck...
At a Sonshiner's potluck it usually goes something like...
one person brings in a casserole,
Someone else some baked beans,
Another person a creamy asparagus dish
Another a pot of stew
Another a pumpkin pie
Another a tray of little sandwiches....
And the list goes on...
One by one folks bring in their dishes to share
and all the dishes become a delicious and filling lunch for 20.

OR...

The youth gather to cook meals for aid for friends.
They start with 5 chickens that folks have cooked and dropped off
They peel a 10lb bag of potatoes that one of them has brought and make mashed potatoes
They open some cans of green beans
They cut a tray of brownies that someone else has made
And one by one they put together meals and at the end of the day there are 200 complete meals packed up and ready to deliver...

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OR...

A woman drops off a box of fabric scraps
Two women take the fabric and wash it
Some more women cut the fabric into squares
Several women gather together and piece the squares into a quilt
These women sew the pieces together
A few other women tie knots in the fabric
One more woman sews the back on to the fabric

From one box of fabric scraps comes several quilts that are shipped to people that have no other way to stay warm.

Or...

My daughter's middle school decides to bring in their loose change and throw it into a container at lunch.
Every day for a month the kids drop their pennies and nickels into the container
At the end of the month \$500 has been collected to give to their gym teacher, a recent breast cancer survivor, so she can pass the money along to support breast cancer research.

Are you getting the picture...
3 stones, one pot and a whole lot of faith...

We get so overwhelmed by what we don't have
We forget that what we do have is enough
We forget that if we share what we have with one another we can create the most delicious and amazing meals
When we give what we have we can share it with each other and we can have more than enough.

Jesus was always showing this.
The two fish and five loaves were enough to feed thousands...
Jesus told the disciples not to put their light under a bushel but instead let the candle shine to light the house.
Jesus healed the lame and the blind one by one... yet his gifts of healing brought people to him by the hundreds and thousands...
He shared one gift of healing and it was multiplied into hundreds of followers.
And then there was the ultimate sharing...

Jesus gave up his life for us.
And even though he was executed and buried for the sins of the entire world,
Jesus' talents were not overcome by the grave.

For even today, more than two thousand years later,
the death and resurrection of Jesus yields abundant fruit as person after person after person is buried and raised with Christ in Holy Baptism.
And his death yields abundant fruit as he empowers us to overcome our fears
Come out of our locked homes

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And bring what we have...
One gift at a time to share and
to be a blessing to others.

You see ultimately, God is a giver.
God gave us life itself.
And God's ultimate gift was that of his son.
It is a gift we didn't earn,
Can't pay for,
And don't deserve.
Yet it was given freely... out of love.

God does not ask us to renounce our possessions.
God does not ask us to give up necessities,
but God does ask us to share out of our abundance.
The deepest joy in life is not by taking all that we can get, but by sharing all that we have got.

God says... I've got these three stones and a pot and I can help you make the most delicious
soup you've ever tasted.
I just need some spices, some carrots, some onions.... Whatever you have to share...
No matter how small and inconsequential you think it may be...
Bring it...
And I will multiply it into a feast.

Bring what you have to God...
Even if you think that your couple of potatoes will not make any difference.
Give them to God and watch as God combines all of our gifts to create a banquet where no one
goes hungry,
There are plenty of leftovers,
And every one's offering can be multiplied and shared with the world.
All because God is the giver,
All because we have plenty to share
And all because being happy is all about making stone soup.
Amen

**May the peace of God which passes all human understanding, keep your hearts and your
minds in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen**