



MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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August 5, 2012

Pentecost 10

Sermon Text: [2 Kings 4:42-44](#)

Pastor Randy Ott

First Lesson: [2 Kings 4:42-44](#)

Psalm of the Day: [Psalm 84](#)

Second Lesson: [2 Corinthians 9:8-11](#)

Gospel Lesson: [John 6:1-15](#)

Trust the Power in The Lord's Word

It does what we would not expect

It does these things through us

In Christ Jesus, dear fellow redeemed:

I'm going to talk just for a minute just to the men here. The women will probably get what I'm talking about. Men, you've been fighting this illness, this pain, this sickness for awhile and let's say your wife is sick and tired of listening to you whine about it. After week after week of subtle encouragement, she finally has gotten you to go to the doctor. It's been so long since you've been to the doctor, because you won't go there for anything, that you find out you've got a new doctor. You are sitting in that waiting room forever and ever. You've read every magazine that's there. Finally the door opens and the doctor walks in, and literally, the doctor is 11 years old. What are you going to do? Are you going to sit there and listen to him? Are you going to get up and walk out? Are you going to look around for the hidden cameras assuming you're being pranked or something?

I doubt very seriously you'd put any trust in what that person would say to you, would you? You don't want to be there in the first place. You don't want to be doing it in the first place. You just want to go home and rub some dirt on it and wait for it to feel better, right? So you don't want to be there and then you see someone that you don't think you can put any trust whatsoever into what they say, so you're not going to listen. You're going to get up and go, right? I suppose that's what we do. To stay and listen to him would be just as silly as not listening to and not trusting in the One who said "Let there be light" and there was light.

You and I, we have something better than an 11-year-old doctor. We've got a God who said in his powerful Word, "let there be plant life" and there was. We've got a God who in his Word has acted in love to use that Word to create in us this trust that even though you and I are filthy rotten sinners, our sins have been taken away through the life and death of Christ. There is no denying his Word has power because it made all of us here, who were spiritually dead, it has made us alive through the work of the Spirit. There's power in the Word. So to not trust in that Word, to not trust in the power of that Word would be kind of silly.

You and I have probably got a head knowledge of that, but when we get up into the business of living, when we walk out of theory and into practice, sometimes for you and

me it is hard to trust in the power of the Lord's Word because we have a sinful nature. We don't want to be there. Our sinful nature doesn't want to be there listening to what our God has to say. We can come up with all kinds of excuses and all kinds of reasons not to. So as we think back to those words that I read to you from 2 Kings, we want to learn from that and from our other readings that we heard this morning to trust in the power of the Lord's Word.

The one thing we see this morning in our readings is that it does what we wouldn't expect. Then we are also humbled this morning to see that God has chosen to do those things, those incredibly powerful things, those unexpected things, at times he chooses to do it through us. That's amazing. It's humbling. It's frightening. It's all those things. That's why we need the power of the Lord's Word.

The reading I read to you this morning from 2 Kings 4 comes from the supplemental lesson. It's probably not one you've heard all that often, the feeding of the hundred. The feeding of the five thousand you probably remember, our Gospel. The feeding of the four thousand you might remember. But the feeding of the hundred? It hardly seems worth mentioning when we just read about Jesus feeding five thousand. But it teaches us this lesson about the power of the Word because that's what God's prophet Elisha points to, right? When he is confronted with someone who isn't so sure about what he told him to do, he says "Put your trust in the power that's in the Word of God."

Elisha was Elijah's right-hand man. Elijah was taken into heaven in that whirlwind. Elijah had asked Elisha, "What can I do for you?" Elisha said, "I would like to receive a double portion of your spirit." Elijah said, "If you see me go, that's what the Lord will grant you. If not, then no." Elisha saw him go. He saw the chariots and the horsemen of Israel and all that. You probably remember that story. In the chapters after that, we are kind of in the middle of a bunch of things that God did through Elisha to show that Elisha did receive that inheritance, some of these various miracles that he had performed. Earlier on, right before this, he raised the Shunammite's widow's son back from the dead. God did that through Elisha. Then he was at Gilgal, where I think he still is here. They went out to gather some food. They got some gourds at the school of the prophets. The company of the prophets were there. They went out and gathered some gourds. Someone picked a rotten gourd, a bad gourd, a poisonous gourd. They started eating it and said "There's death in this pot!" Elisha tells them to throw some flour in it and the Lord would heal them. Then they could eat it, and they didn't get sick and they didn't die.

So now we hear of another food miracle that God does through Elisha. The one that has this man from Baal Shalishah, about 13-14 miles to the Northwest of Gilgal, who brought this offering of the first fruits of the crop. It says from the first he brought these 20 loaves of bread and some heads of new grain. Giving an offering of your first fruit was a way that the people would say "We trust Lord that you'll provide the rest of the harvest. We'll give to you the first. This is our way of saying Lord that you are most important in our life, and we trust you to take care of us, not our own efforts." He brought them to Elisha, the man of God, because Elisha was a prophet in the Northern

Kingdom. In the Northern Kingdom, the king didn't want them going to the Lord's temple, so he set up his own golden calf and said "This is the lord your god" at two different places. This guy that brought this offering loved the Lord, the true God, and didn't want to worship him in a way that God had said "don't do" with these graven images. So he took his offering, not to the king's temple, he took it to the man of God himself. He brings it to him, 20 loaves of bread, some new heads of grain, and sets it before him. Elisha says, "Give it to the men to eat," the company of prophets possibly that were still there. He looks at him like he's nuts. "Twenty loaves of bread isn't going to feed these hundred hungry young strapping lads! What are you talking about? You're nuts!" So Elisha tells him, "Give it to the people to eat. For this is what the Lord says: 'They will eat and have some left over.'"

I always wonder if the guy was kind of looking around thinking everyone was laughing at him when he started putting this bread in front of them. Was he self conscious, or did he do it faithfully and boldly? We aren't told that, but you kind of have to wonder. This isn't what you would expect, these 20 loaves of bread to feed a hundred young men. He doesn't think it would work, but he does it. It just says, "Then he set it before them, and they ate and had some left over, according to the word of the Lord." This is not what you would expect. This is a miraculous gift of God to feed these men through the faithfulness of one of his servants.

God does the unexpected in his Word. You and I often see it, and maybe even just smile and say that's neat, but maybe at times we don't even stand in awe of it. During the last couple of months, we've had an awful lot of baptisms here. When you see that little bit of water poured on a child's head three times and hear "I baptize you in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit," it doesn't look like much, does it? But do you just sit there in open-mouthed gaping awe that God works in this way through his Word? That Word attached to the water doesn't just make it wet, it makes it powerful. God's promise attached to it washes away sin, creates faith, and gives eternal life. Do you stand in awe of the power of God as it does things that on our own could never happen?

Like today, we come to his altar. A little piece of bread and a little sip of wine and God tells us through his Word that with that is the body and blood of Christ that was given and poured out for us. We have this intimate connection with our Savior. Not only that, he tells us when we commune in the way he has instructed us to in his Word, we receive the forgiveness of sins, life and salvation. Do you stand in awe of that? Or do you just take it for granted?

Maybe we at times become so accustomed to God's love and grace and forgiveness that we take it for granted. Maybe sometimes we become so accustomed to the power that we have, this head knowledge that it's there in the Word, that we take it for granted. I don't think any of us would deny that our God is all powerful and he can do anything. That's very true. But when it comes to trusting what he says in his Word, sometimes we act as though we don't believe it.

Sometimes when God's powerful Word tells us to do something that is going to make us a little uncomfortable...he calls us to teach and admonish one another, to rebuke one another, to speak the Word of God to one another...sometimes we don't want to do it. Is it that we don't think that Word is going to be powerful? Is it that we don't think the Word can change hearts and lead the straying back to God? Is it that we don't believe that the Word is powerful enough to create faith in the unbeliever's heart? Maybe it's just that we don't want to do something that is going to make us uncomfortable. The power of our own fear at times reigns in the power of God's Word, doesn't it?

If it doesn't benefit us, then we can come up with all kinds of excuses on why we should do it. That's one truth I've seen in congregational life over these 20-some years. When we are involved in one area of congregational life, it's like we get blinders on and don't see the rest of it, and we think that's the only thing that's really important because either we're involved in it and it benefits us or it benefits our children or our grandchildren, and we forget that there's a whole other big ministry there that our congregation is seeking to carry out and we don't do it, either because we don't trust the power of God's Word, or maybe we just don't love other people as much as we love ourselves.

There isn't any one of us here that hasn't failed our God in some way when it comes to trusting in the power of his Word. There isn't any one of us here that has not sinned against our God, because we have loved ourselves more than we have loved other people. There is not one of us here that has not sinned in this way. Our sinful nature might want to immediately say "Yeah, but it's not as bad a sin as this, or not as bad a sin as that." Get over it. Kick your sinful nature to the curb and just say, "Lord have mercy on me, a sinner. I have sinned." Quit ranking sin and confess sin.

When we confess our sins, we find in Christ forgiveness. When we see that the body and the blood was given and poured out for us, we find forgiveness and we find joy. Then we find the desire to be the instrument that is in God's hands so God can accomplish the miracles he wants to. He does it at times through sinners like you and sinners like me.

That feeding of that hundred...did he need that guy to bring that offering? Could God have fed them some other way? Sure, but he used that man's offering. The feeding of the five thousand...could God have caused food to rain down from heaven? Could he have zapped a McDonald's into existence right then and there and fed them all? Sure, he could have done anything he wanted. He's God. Right? But he chose to have Andrew say, "Hey, here's a kid with five barley loaves and two small fish." He chose to use the disciples, probably looking at each other also like Jesus is telling them to do something really strange, but who knows what might happen as they are handing this all out. He chose to work through people so that people would see the power that he has.

He does it yet today. He has chosen to work through us, to be a blessing to the community that we live in now, not just in the past, not just in the future, but now, to speak the message of the Gospel to those that have forgotten about it, to those who

have never heard it, to those who have strayed away from it. He has called us in his Scripture, and you can't deny it unless you are going to deny the authority of God's Word. He's called us to do it.

He has miracles he wants to perform. He wants to bring the straying sheep back, but he needs his voice to be heard. He wants to bring in other sheep who are not of this fold, but he needs his voice to be heard. The ones he has called to speak it would be you and me. When we see the love and the forgiveness that our Savior has given us in Christ, when we see the purpose he has given us in living for him, and when we see the privilege he has given us in being a party to the power of the Word of the Lord by giving it to us to speak, that moves us to want to serve the Lord, not a have to but a want to. I want others to hear his voice. I want others to know what I know and rejoice in what I rejoice in. Yes at times I am afraid. At times I'm scared to do it, but Lord help me. His powerful Word is powerful enough to even move you and me to speak. Plug into that power. Amen.