

“How the Lord Feeds You” (St. Matthew 14:13-21)

For Your Life in Christ the Week of the Seventh Sunday after
Pentecost, July 31st, 2011
Saint Paul’s Lutheran Church of Irvine, CA (LC-MS)
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Introduction: Jesus our Savior had and has compassion!

- A. The word in the original language is *splagchnizomai*. It means that “his gut moved” or his inward parts poured forth. His heart goes out to you in a deep, personal, and true way. He really, really cares and it always leads to His acting, doing something about it!
- B. Notice how St. Matthew tracks His observations, compassion, and action:

Matthew 4:23: *“And he went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction among the people.”*

Matthew 9:36: *“When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.”*

Matthew 14:14: *“When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them and healed their sick.”*

- C. These Scriptures describe more than just sympathy (sameness of feeling) or empathy (the ability to share in another’s emotions, thoughts, or feelings). Christ is so deeply moved when He sees His people in real need that He is so internally moved, it causes Him to act and help driven by deep love.
- D. How does He act; what does He do?
 - 1. He preaches the good news.
 - 2. He heals disease and sickness (remember the eschaton).
 - 3. He intervenes for and helps the harassed and helpless.

Part I: Where Does This Ministry Take Place?

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- A. Matthew 14:13 = “[Jesus] withdrew from there in a boat to a desolate place...”; Matthew 14:15 = the disciples say, “This is a desolate place...”.
- B. We too are in a desolate place in the sense that we live in a place impacted by the desolation of sin, the world, and the evil one:
 - 1. This August 2nd: The U.S. Treasury says, “The fact remains the U.S. will exhaust borrowing authority on August 2nd and after that date there is no way to guarantee we will be able to meet all of the nation’s obligations.”
 - 2. Last July 22nd: The terrible massacre in Oslo, Norway by the sociopath who killed eight people in a bomb attack & then shot 68 at an island summer camp filled with youth.
 - 3. Constant: Our own battles against our sinful nature, our guilt, our shame, and our fear.
 - 4. 1st Peter 2:11 calls us “sojourners and exiles”!
 - 5. The hymn “I’m But a Stranger Here” stanza one: *“I’m but a stranger here, Heav’n is my home; Earth is a desert drear, Heav’n is my home. Danger and sorrow stand Round me on ev’ry hand; Heav’n is my fatherland, Heav’n is my home.”*
 - 6. These are indications of desolation. *Jesus does not avoid the desolate places, but enters into them. He comes to us.*

Part II: Jesus Does Not Send Away, But Serves Us NOW!

- A. The human reaction to the desolation is to feel overwhelmed!
- B. The disciples take in the situation with the great crowd, their recommendation to Jesus is clear: *“This is a desolate place...send the crowds away...(vs 15)”*.
- C. Jesus doesn’t go along with the human perspective. But says: **Matthew 14:16:** *“But Jesus said, ‘They need not go away; you give them something to eat.’”*
- D. He sets up the disciples for a critical lesson:
 - 1. They are flabbergasted. Matthew 14:17: They only see their limitation: only five loaves and two fish.

2. We are like the disciples: our circumstances and limitations seem to justify our pessimism.
3. There is only one answer: Jesus takes over:

Matthew 14:18: “And he said, ‘Bring them here to me.’”

E. Jesus serves you now through HIS ministry and there are three major contours of ministry. In these, Christ brings you close to Himself and serves you NOW (take note of your role for others):

1. There is “general ministry” which entails all kinds of *service*. Here whatever is done in faith in Christian vocation as father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister, citizen, worker, etc., God works through you to help other people. Praise God for holy vocation and general ministry that we all conduct! God serves others through you! For example:

Romans 12:10-13: “Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. ¹¹Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. ¹²Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. ¹³Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.”

2. There is “congregational ministry” which entails the royal priesthood (all Christians in the body of Christ) sharing the good news, not only as support for the office of the ministry, but actually taking part in sharing the Gospel:

1st Peter 2:9: “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.”

3. There is “the office of the ministry” referring to the office of Christ given to the church in and through which pastors serve:

1st Corinthians 4:1 (St. Paul referring to the apostolic ministry which is continued in the pastoral ministry):

“This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.”

Part III: Christ’s Provision and Service to You Has No Limit!

- A. Just as the Lord took five loaves and two fish and fed 5000+, His ministry resources for you today are intended to continue! Through all of these, His compassion for you is evident!
- B. His ministry to you will never run out!
- C. Especially when it comes to what is most important:
 1. He gives you the forgiveness of all your sins. He wants you to have a clean conscience on account of His blood!
 2. He gives you eternal life. Don’t take this gift for granted. Think about it: your death has been destroyed through His powerful and glorious resurrection!
 3. He gives you the Holy Spirit. He equips you to live as a Christian.
 4. He incorporates you into the body of Christ and all of the ministries are given to you: to receive from them and to contribute to them.

Conclusion: Christ’s Compassion Leads to Lavish Provision!

- A. You are given “wine and milk” without cost (Isaiah 55):

Isaiah 55:1: “Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.”

- B. “Wine and milk” = lavish provision. These are symbols for the most important provisions that God gives you by grace.
- C. These cost you nothing! Christ already paid for it!
- D. The Lord does this for you out of compassion!
- E. In response, we spend less time feeling sorry for ourselves and more time basking in His compassion and of course, sharing His compassion for others. Salvation leads to service. This is the life of Christ! Let us live it as once again He feeds us this day! This is how Christ feeds you!