

Matthew 14:13-21
“In Christ Alone, We are Satisfied”
Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

August 2, 2020
First Lutheran Church, Glencoe, Minn.
Pastor Peter Adelsen

Grace, mercy and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! Amen!

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

[Intro]

How are you being fed? The common proverb “*You are what you eat*” is very true.

We are constantly eating. We eat to satisfy our stomach. We also eat to satisfy our mind. How are you being fed?

One week is 168 hours. On average, we should be getting about eight hours of sleep each night, which is 56 hours per week. On average, we work 30-40 hours per week. On average, we watch 35 hours of television per week¹. On average, we spend about three hours per day on social media, which is about 21 hours per week². But, how much time are you studying God’s Word in Scripture and hymnody?

A typical Sunday Divine Service is between 45 minutes to an hour and 15 minutes. A typical Sunday Bible class is an hour.

According to a study, fewer than 20 percent of churchgoers open their Bible daily³.

And, sadly, according to a Barna survey, one-in-three practicing Christians has stopped attending or stopped watching services online during the COVID-19 Pandemic.⁴ Again, *one-in-three* practicing Christians have just vanished, since the pandemic.

¹ <https://www.nydailynews.com/life-style/average-american-watches-5-hours-tv-day-article-1.1711954>

² <https://techjury.net/blog/time-spent-on-social-media/#gref>

³ <https://www.christianitytoday.com/edstetzer/2012/september/new-research-less-than-20-of-churchgoers-read-bible-daily.html>

⁴ https://www.barna.com/research/new-sunday-morning-part-2/?utm_campaign=OS-Rep-200722-Back-To-Church&utm_content=Matthew%20Sisson&utm_source=OS-MATTHEWS&utm_medium=email

Today, more people are taught about Jesus from television and movies than from God's Word. And, more often than not, what television and movies teach about Jesus is just pure wrong.

So, what are you eating to satisfy your body and soul? Remember, "*You are what you eat.*" So, how are you fed? How are you nourished?

[The Feeding of the 5,000]

Today on this Ninth Sunday after Pentecost, we hear how Jesus withdraws from the public eye to a remote place. Or rather, He attempts to do so. The crowds who followed Him as He spoke parables are searching for Him as they desire to be fed by His Words. When they find out where Jesus is – *on the northern corner of the Sea of Galilee*, they follow Him on foot.

Today's Gospel lesson is all about God's compassion and how He provides for us!

We begin today's reading with Jesus responding to the news of John the Baptist's execution. Upon hearing the news, He withdrew to a desolate place by boat as He prayed. In time, the crowds that heard His parables found Him upon a boat in the Sea of Galilee.

"When [Jesus] went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them and healed their sick" (Matthew 14:14).

Although, John the Baptist had died, the mission would continue. God's compassion and providing would not cease.

Jesus sees a people that are in desperate need for someone to guide and nurture them. They are sick and hungry. They have spiritual needs and physical needs. They are starving for only the nourishment that He alone can deliver.

"Now when it was evening, the disciples came to [Jesus] and said, 'This is a desolate place, and the day is now over; send the crowds away to go into the villages and buy food for themselves' But Jesus said, 'They need not go away; you give them something to eat'" (Matthew 14:15-16).

Now, let's look at this from the point of view of the disciples: Whoa! Where did this come from? This is Jesus challenging the disciples to provide food for the crowd. Here, Jesus is testing them. Now, did the disciples pass the test?

The disciples respond to Jesus saying, ***“We have only five loaves here and two fish”*** (Matthew 14:17).

Instead of looking at the situation with a glass half full, the disciples are seeing this situation as a glass half empty. They see this situation as hopeless. They have little faith in seeing a resolution. All Jesus is looking for is for them to put their faith and trust in Him, their Master, who is God in the flesh, to provide.

You see, Jesus refuses to dismiss the crowds, because there is no need to do so. The disciples are seeing this situation from a human point of view by asking “Why not dismiss the crowds and let them provide for themselves?” But Jesus is seeing this situation from God’s point of view.

This Jesus is the same God who delivered quail to the Israelites. This Jesus is the same God who gave the Israelites bread from heaven in abundance. This Jesus is the same God who opened the rock and out sprung water. (Introit – Psalm 105:40-41)

This Jesus is the same God who ***“makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust”*** (Matthew 5:45).

As the disciples fade from view, they return after Jesus acts. With the command ***“bring them here to me”*** (Matthew 14:18), the Lord provides.

Just as He has done before, Jesus prepares nourishment for the crowds. He takes the five loaves of bread and two fish, pronounces a blessing, and gives the food to the disciples. Then, Jesus fulfills His word that the disciples thought they could never do as He said to them: ***“You give them something to eat”*** (Matthew 14:16).

Through Jesus, the disciples were able to provide food to the crowds. They thought they couldn’t, but now they are! You see, Jesus wasn’t about to leave the crowds to fend for themselves. Jesus provides.

And Jesus didn’t just provide the crowds with enough food. He provided the crowd with an abundance of food! Everyone ate and no one was left hungry for more. Everyone was completely satisfied.

As everyone was satisfied, there was an abundance of food left over, enough for twelve full baskets! That is a lot of leftovers for people who have eaten their fill.

Now, how many were satisfied? Was it just a few? No, it was a crowd of 5,000 men, not including the women and children! So, this *Feeding of the 5,000* could be actually more like the Feeding of the 10,000 or 20,000! God is constantly providing and He always gives in abundance!

[The Message of the Miracle]

Now, what was the result of the Feeding of the 5,000?

It may seem odd that Matthew offers no account of a response or faith from the disciples or from the crowds. There is no mention of astonishment or faith or praise. Instead, the crowd and the disciples are left to marvel on their own at the Christ, who acts the way God acts and miraculously feeds the people.

You see, the primary message of this miracle is about the compassionate power of Jesus!

This miracle tells us about who Jesus is and about how much God cares about the needs of His people – in this age and in the age to come!

As the Israelites wandered in the wilderness, they needed God's provision, and He graciously provided even when they didn't think that He would or could. Here, Jesus reaches out to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. He heals their sicknesses, and He offers them truth, and He feeds them by multiplying five loaves of bread and two fish into a feast!

Jesus not only provides for our needs of body – our daily bread – He also provides for our spiritual needs as He is also the Bread of eternal life! Jesus is always providing for you and me!

[We are Only Satisfied through Jesus]

Oftentimes, we may be like the disciples and see the situation in our life as hopeless. You may be in severe financial debt. You may not have enough money to put food on your table. You may be suffering the loss of a loved one who guided you, and now You are lost without them. You may think you have sinned so badly that you believe that even God would not forgive you. You may be worried about COVID-19, cancer, or other diseases. You see, on our own, we are limited. On our own, we are never satisfied. On our own, we may see only hopelessness.

But faith trusts in Jesus even when the situation is hopeless from a human perspective. So, put your sins, worries and griefs upon Jesus! He alone gives us the confidence to get through the roadblocks of our life. As the world arounds us changes, God's love for you never changes – *for He is the same yesterday, today, and forever!* (Hebrews 13:8)

If you are in debt or you would like to learn how to manage your money better, a great resource is Financial Peace University, which First Lutheran will host again this fall.

If you have sinned – *and we all have* – we have Jesus, who has died for that sin, so that by repentance and faith in Him, that sin is forgiven through His atoning death and bodily resurrection! And, know this, for everyone who dies in Christ will receive the crown of everlasting life!

You see, Jesus continuously shows His compassion upon us, His sheep! He did not leave us to suffer and die in our sin. Instead, Christ came to us with divine compassion as He saved us from sin and death as He feeds us with Himself through His Word and Sacrament! He rescues us and feeds us through His Means of Grace! In hearing His Word taught and rightly proclaimed, we are fed! In receiving His true body and true blood in the Sacrament, we are fed! Our brokenness is restored to health as Christ alone strengthens and preserves us in body and soul to everlasting life!

Just as Jesus once took bread, *“said a blessing,”* broke the loaves *“and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds”* (Matthew 14:18-19), He also now takes bread, blesses it by His Word to be His very body, and freely gives it to His Church by the hand of His called and ordained servants. And, just as *“they took up twelve baskets of the broken pieces”* (Matthew 14:20), there is more than enough for His whole Church to eat and to be satisfied!

So, every person who hears His Word, receives His Sacrament, and by faith believes His promise is completely satisfied for by grace through faith in Christ alone, we are *“the children of the promise [and] are counted as offspring”* (Romans 9:8) in His kingdom, as we are satisfied in this life and in the life to come!

In Christ alone, we are satisfied! Amen!

The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, our Lord. Amen.

✠ SOLI DEO GLORIA ✠