

9th Sunday after Pentecost

Matthew 14:13-21

**LSB HYMNS: 648, 699, 684, 743, 642, 924.**

**INTROIT: Psalm 136:1-9.**

**P** Give thanks to the LORD! For He is good.

**C** **For His mercy endures for ever.**

**P** Give thanks to the God of gods!

**C** **For His mercy endures for ever.**

**P** Give thanks to the Lord of lords,

**C** **for His mercy endures for ever;**

**P** to Him who alone does miraculous things,

**C** **for His mercy endures for ever;**

**P** to Him who by understanding made the heavens,

**C** **for His mercy endures for ever;**

**P** to Him who spread out the earth on the waters,

**C** **for His mercy endures for ever;**

**P** to Him who made the great lights,

**C** **for His mercy endures for ever;**

**P** the sun to rule over the day,

**C** **for His mercy endures for ever;**

**All** **the moon and stars to rule over the night, for His mercy endures for ever;**

**COLLECT:** Heavenly Father, though we do not deserve Your goodness, still You provide for all our needs of body and soul. Grant us Your Holy Spirit that we may acknowledge Your gifts, give thanks for all Your benefits, and serve You in willing obedience; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever..... **Amen.**

**Readings**

**Old Testament: Isaiah 55:1-5**

**Epistle: Romans 9:1-13**

**Gospel: Matthew 14:13-21**

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **Amen.**

The text for our sermon for this morning is written in the book of Matthew 14:13-21 which was our gospel reading before

**13** When Jesus heard what had happened, He withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place to be alone. The crowds heard about it and followed Him on foot from the cities. **14** When Jesus came out of the boat, He saw a large crowd. His heart was filled with pity for them and He healed their sick. **15** In the evening His disciples came to Him and said, "This is a deserted place and it is already late. Send the crowds away, that they may go into the villages to buy some food for themselves!"

**16** Jesus answered them, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat!"

**17** They told Him, "We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish."

**18** He said, "Bring them here to Me!"

**19** He ordered the people to sit down on the grass. He took the five loaves and the two fish, looked up to heaven, said a blessing, and broke the loaves. He gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. **20** All of them had enough to eat. They took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. **21** The number of men who had eaten was about five thousand, not counting the women and children.

Lord God, Heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth, Your Word is truth. **Amen.**

Dear friends in Christ,

Peace be with you.

The church fathers who came up with the three year lectionary had a hard task. Even when we stretch the lectionary readings out over three years, there's simply not enough Sundays to get the entire Bible into the lectionary. They had to make the difficult choice of what to include in the lectionary and what to leave out.

That's the reason we skipped over a few paragraphs of Matthew in order to get from last week's Gospel to today's Gospel. Today's Gospel tells of the event that is commonly called "The Feeding of the Five Thousand." The reality of today's Gospel is that Jesus fed 5,000 men plus their families with a couple sardines and five pieces of flatbread. The need for feeding all these people came up because they were stuck out in the middle of nowhere. The verses leading up to today's Gospel give some insight as to why Jesus and His disciples travelled to a deserted area in the first place.

The preceding verses tell us that Jesus and His disciples had just learned about the death of John the Baptist. The first words in today's Gospel are "**When Jesus heard what had happened...**" These words refer to the news that John had died. John and Jesus had a close relationship. Not only were they related, but John was also the forerunner of Jesus. Many of Jesus' disciples were also disciples of John before Jesus called them to follow Him. It is not too hard to imagine that the news about John's death caused quite a bit of grief. So today's Gospel begins with Jesus taking the disciples to a desolate area after they learned that John had died to be alone with their own thoughts and feelings.

But, the people whom Jesus left behind on the shore figured out where Jesus was going and they travelled around the Sea of Galilee by foot. When Jesus arrived at the deserted place, it was no longer deserted. It was full of people. Jesus saw these people and He had compassion on them, **His heart was filled with pity for them and He healed their sick.** This was a special kind of compassion. Jesus was moved down to the very core of His inner being.

He was moved because He remembered how things were supposed to be. As the Son of God, Jesus was there at creation. Everything was made through Him and He saw it all and it was very good. He was also there when Adam and Eve sinned and the world became a sinful place. That's the reason He took on our human flesh in the first place ... to take our place and deal with sin for us. In today's Gospel we see God in human flesh surveying the results of sin and having compassion on the victims of that sin.

I suspect that most Christians in 21st the century would still understand how sickness is the result of sin. Sickness is part of the dying process and death is the result of sin. We in 21st century might live a few years longer because of our medical technology, but we still get sick,- we still have accidents and we still die. We can empathize with the sick people injured people in that deserted place. We understand that sickness is the result of sin, and we understand that the healing touch of Jesus is Jesus having compassion on the victims of sin.

On the other hand, it's more difficult for the 21st century Christian to see hunger as a result of sin. We live in a land where over eating is the problem, not under eating. Between grocery stores, convenience stores, restaurants, and other food sources, most of us have never been desperately hungry. It's a simple thing for us to stop off at a fast food restaurant/petrol station when we're on the road. It's not a big deal. Hunger is not as big an issue today as it was when Jesus fed the 5,000.

Things were not so simple for those 5,000 men who brought their family members to Jesus. Back then there were no fast food restaurants. An oven would be built out of rocks in the front yard and heated by firewood that you had to gather if you wanted hot food. You spent most of your day gathering and preparing food for the next meal. Wealthy people might eat until they were satisfied. The average person was rarely satisfied at the end of a meal.

Now think of the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve were constantly surrounded by food. Out of all the trees in the garden, only one was off limits. Any time they needed to eat, they simply put out a hand and picked something from a nearby tree. It wasn't until Adam and Eve sinned that gathering and preparing food became a struggle. It was after Adam and Eve sinned that God said to Adam: "**Because you have listened to what your wife has said and have eaten from the tree about which I had commanded you, 'You shall**

**not eat from it!’ the ground is cursed because of you. You will eat from it through painful toil all the days of your life. <sup>18</sup> It will cause both thorns and thistles to grow for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. <sup>19</sup> You will eat bread in the sweat of your brow until you return to the ground. For you were taken from it. For you are dust, and you will return to dust.” [Genesis 3:17-19.]**

So we understand that when Jesus heals the sick, He is undoing the curse of sin. We also understand that when Jesus feeds the hungry, that too is undoing the curse of sin.

The disciples witnessed Jesus as He undid the curse of sin by healing the multitudes. Nevertheless, their words and actions indicated that they didn't understand. As the day came to an end, they suggested that Jesus send the people away so they could find food. Jesus said, **“They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat!”** The disciples had seen Jesus perform many miracles. They should have known that He could give them enough food to feed all the people. Instead they said to him, **“We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish.”** Instead of looking to Jesus to give them food to give to the people, they tried to figure out how they could obey Jesus with their own resources. In spite of all that they had seen, they still didn't understand.

[Jesus] said, **“Bring them here to me.”** He took the five loaves and the two fish. **He took the five loaves and the two fish, looked up to heaven, said a blessing, and broke the loaves. He gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. All of them had enough to eat. They took up what was left over of the broken pieces, - twelve baskets full.** In this way, Jesus made it possible for the disciples to follow His instructions. He gave them the food and they were indeed able to give the people something to eat. In fact, they all ate and were satisfied. Today, we still live with the symptoms of our sin. The symptoms may not be exactly the same as those suffered by the thousands who ate from those five loaves and two fish. Nevertheless, we still suffer from sin. Jesus' heartfelt compassion and His words and works in today's Gospel account, teach us that He has the authority and power to deal not just with the symptoms of sin, - but He is able to deal with sin itself. He regularly deals with the sin that attacks us daily.

Jesus' compassion and His words and works also comfort those who share Him with others. Jesus instructs us to give His gifts to the people we meet in the world around us. We have the same response that the disciples had. **“Lord, I only have these few pathetic skills. There's no way that I can do what You say.”** Jesus responds the same way to us that He did to the disciples. He says a blessing and gives **HIS** gifts to us. We can share His gifts with the people around us and have more left over than what we began with! The greatest blessing that Jesus gives to us is the blessing that comes from His cross ... the forgiveness of sins. With that forgiveness, He gets at the root cause of all our problems. With that forgiveness, He saves from the eternal punishment of hell. With that forgiveness, - He gives us life forever with Him.

Just as Jesus fed the 5,000 through His clueless disciples, He still gives His gifts to clueless sinners today so that they may share them with other sinners. At the beginning of the service, We confess our sins before God and each other. Then, even though I am just as much a sinner as any of you, I still forgive your sins with the forgiveness that Jesus Christ has given to me. As I stand here in this pulpit, I am simply one sinner telling other sinners about Christ's salvation. As I consecrate the bread and the wine of the sacrament, I am a sinner who relies on Christ's promise to take up residence in the bread and wine with His body and blood for the forgiveness of your sins. Just as the multiplying of the fish and loaves had nothing to do with the disciples who delivered the meal to the crowds, so also the source of forgiveness, life, and salvation has nothing to do with the pastor. Instead, it all depends on Jesus.

As you find yourself stranded and hungry in the desolation of this sin-filled world, know that Jesus has entered this world with sacred food for you. This food is the Gospel of His suffering, death, and resurrection for you. This Gospel gives you the forgiveness of sins, and with the forgiveness of sins comes life and salvation. Just as He once gave temporal food by the hand of His disciples, He now gives you His sacred food through the mouth and the hand of His servant. Even though His servant is a sinner, His food is still holy ... and His food is for you. Amen

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Amen

**3rd Hymn: 684,**

## Prayer of the Church Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

P Let us pray for the whole Church of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.

*Brief silence*

P Almighty God, heavenly Father, You are gracious beyond measure. In the wilderness, Your Son healed the sick, miraculously fed over 5,000 and satisfied them. We give You thanks for all that You provide to support our bodies and lives. Lead us always to look to You as a loving Father who knows what we need and supplies it. Make us content with what You give, that we may not covet what others have or turn elsewhere for what only comes from Your hand. Lord, in Your mercy,

**C hear our prayer.**

P Gracious Lord, You have made us children of the promise on account of Your Son. Let Your promises continue to go to the ends of the earth. Incline the ears of all to listen, that their souls may live. Make pastors faithful witnesses of the Holy One of Israel, whom You glorified by raising Him from the dead. Lord, in Your mercy,

**C hear our prayer.**

P Lord God, we pray for this land, that we may have devout and faithful rulers, good government, good weather, faithful neighbours and the like. Lord, in Your mercy,

**C hear our prayer.**

P God of comfort, as Your Son healed the sick, so also heal those who are sick in our midst [*especially all who have asked for our prayers:* ]. If it be Your will, restore them to health, or give them strength to accept their affliction, as well as a hope for the day when the corruptible will put on incorruption. Lord, in Your mercy,

**C hear our prayer.**

P Merciful Lord, provide for the hungry and homeless. Those who are in Hospitals and care facilities Protect the staff and volunteers that care for those who have little, that all may come to recognize that every good gift comes from You. Lord, in Your mercy,

**C hear our prayer.**

P Heavenly Father, as Your Son fed the crowd with bread and meat, so also today He feeds us His body and blood. Let us receive these worthily, trusting in Your promise of forgiveness, that we may be strengthened in faith toward You and in love toward others. Lord, in Your mercy,

**C hear our prayer.**

P Into Your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in Your mercy, through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

**4th Hymn: 743**