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St. Paul's Lutheran Church  
2100 16<sup>th</sup> Street SW  
Austin, MN 55912-1749  
Pastor Ted Barthels  
Sermon preached on  
August 20, 2017  
11<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

Scripture Lessons: Isaiah 55:1-5; Romans 8:35-39

Hymns: 537; 36; 531; 309

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Sermon Text: Matthew 14:13-21

When Jesus heard *it*, He departed from there by boat to a deserted place by Himself. But when the multitudes heard it, they followed Him on foot from the cities. <sup>14</sup> And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick. <sup>15</sup> When it was evening, His disciples came to Him, saying, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is already late. Send the multitudes away, that they may go into the villages and buy themselves food."

<sup>16</sup> But Jesus said to them, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat."

<sup>17</sup> And they said to Him, "We have here only five loaves and two fish."

<sup>18</sup> He said, "Bring them here to Me." <sup>19</sup> Then He commanded the multitudes to sit down on the grass. And He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke and gave the loaves to the disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitudes. <sup>20</sup> So they all ate and were filled, and they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments that remained. <sup>21</sup> Now those who had eaten were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

(NKJV)

This is the Word of God.

Sanctify us, oh Lord, through Your truth. Your Word is truth.  
Amen.

In Christ Jesus, God our Savior, dear fellow Redeemed:

INTRO: “Boy, was I ever lucky that things turned out so well!”  
We have all heard similar sentiments expressed by someone at some time or another in our lives. In fact I’m pretty sure we’ve all heard it any number of times. Maybe we have even said it ourselves. Lucky? I think not. Our lives don’t operate on luck like a frivolous game of chance we play for fun. We all know that the better word to describe the life of the child of God is “blessed.” We are so richly blessed, and Lord’s blessings so fill our lives that we sometimes fail to recognize the small or not so small miracles of God that come up in our lives. If we but take a careful look at the events of our lives, at the overall nature of the circumstances of our lives we see evidence of something truly amazing. And that is what the Spirit would teach us in our text this morning. --

**THEME: The Feeding of the 5000 Reveals  
the Lord’s Continual Care.**

The first lesson that really must make an impact upon our hearts and lives is --

**I. The Depth of Jesus’ Compassion.**

Jesus had made His way accompanied only by His disciples to the east side of the Sea of Galilee, a sparsely populated area. It had been a very eventful time for all of them. Jesus had sent the disciples out on a missionary journey among their countrymen, and they had much to relate to Jesus of the events they had experienced. At that time they received news of the execution of John the Baptist by King Herod. Upon hearing this news Jesus desired some time alone with His disciples, a time to reflect, to learn from recent events, and also to rest.

However, it was coming near to the time of the feast of the Passover and many people were on the move, making their way to Jerusalem for the Passover. Some had seen the heading of Jesus’ boat, and they led the way for a great crowd of people to trek

around the north end of the Sea of Galilee to find Jesus and His disciples.

So what was Jesus' reaction to seeing this vast crowd making its way toward Him? Was He disappointed? Was He perhaps even disgruntled? He wanted, more than that, He needed this time alone with His disciples for prayer, meditation, contemplation, and it wasn't to be!

Our text reports, "*He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick.*" (v.14) His heart went out to them. He cared about them. He put the needs of this mass of people ahead of His own needs. Even though He was tired, and had enough to do teaching His disciples, He saw these people as sheep without a shepherd, and He taught them. He saw how they came to Him for help and deliverance from sickness, and He cared for them, and healed their sick.

This is the heart of our Savior. Jesus is just as the Lord is described in a psalm of David:

**Psalm 103:13-14** "As a father pities *his* children, *So* the Lord pities those who fear Him. <sup>14</sup>For He knows our frame; He remembers that we *are* dust."

He knows that we are weak and vulnerable. He understands the struggles that we have in life. He is sympathetic. David's words are not only to be applied to God the Father, but all the more to our Savior Jesus Christ. The Lord wants us to know that He sympathizes with us in our struggles. He was tempted like we are, yet without sin. (Hebrews 4:15) One of the aspects of looking to God for help is the mistaken notion that God can't really relate to us in our struggles of life. Jesus walked this earth with us. Jesus endured temptation, and trials and tribulations, and the death of loved ones. He struggled with life's problems. Jesus looked upon the crowd that day, and His heart went out to them. Today Jesus looks upon His children and His heart goes out to us. He still knows our frame. He remembers that we are dust, and He is moved with compassion.

His compassion doesn't stop with feeling for us in our trials, He is moved with compassion. Compassion leads to help, and when Jesus helps we see –

## II. The Almighty Power of the Son of God.

As the day wore on the disciples began to become concerned for all these people. There were thousands of them, and this was not a place for crowds of people. They suggested that Jesus send the people away so that they could find someplace to buy food. Jesus response to their suggestion was a bit of a shocker. “*Jesus said to them, ‘They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat.’*” (v.16) How were they supposed to do that? They maybe had enough provisions for themselves for that night and perhaps the next morning, five loaves of bread and two fish. That would hardly be enough for Jesus and the disciples! For the crowd that was gathered before them, it wouldn't even begin to meet their needs.

Jesus doesn't ask His disciples, then or now, to do things that cannot be done, or things for which He will not provide. Jesus blessed the bread and the fish and broke it and gave it to the disciples to distribute to the people who had been seated on the ground in groups of fifty and one hundred. It was all organized and everyone was fed. Everyone was fed not just a bite or a morsel. Everyone in the entire crowd had enough that they ate their fill. Our text implies that they were hungry. Indeed it had been a long day. They had walked a long way. They had been receiving Jesus' ministrations in teaching and healing for hours. They needed food. **Jesus knew their need and supplied according to their need, and more!**

This was a wondrous miracle. Jesus, the true Son of God, used His divine power to multiply the broken fragments of bread and fish so that the entire crowd of 5000 men, plus many women and children, received the food they needed. The lessons here are many. First and foremost let us know and believe that Jesus is the Son of God! That is the primary lesson in all of Jesus' miracles and why they are called signs by John in his gospel. We see the evidence of Jesus' almighty power clearly presented that we might know and believe that Jesus is the Christ who alone can bring us salvation. He is the Promised One. He is powerful to save!

Secondly, as we look to Jesus for help we call upon His name for the forgiveness of sins. We are assured that as the Son of God He has delivered us from all sin, from death, and from the power of the devil. This is an amazing truth confirmed for us by Jesus' signs and wonders. As great as this blessing is, the Lord's compassion doesn't stop with taking our sins away. Even as the Lord sees our struggles and our heartaches, as the Almighty He is also able to bring us appropriate deliverance from our temporal and material trials. He invites us to call upon Him in every trouble knowing that we will not be disappointed for He will deliver us.

Again, we are assured that Jesus does not fail us. In His Sermon on the Mount Jesus said, "*Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.*" (Matthew 6:33). Our natural man is quite quick to reply, "Yeah sure, I wonder how that will work out? I need to eat, you know." And so it happens that many Christians neglect things spiritual because they need to work to supply their daily needs. Jesus shows us that we need to turn that around and trust Him to keep His Word. We need to put spiritual things first, and give Jesus the time to minister to our greatest needs, and give time for our own prayers and devotion. Jesus will provide all these things that we need. After all it is the Lord who "*richly and daily provides clothing and shoes, food and drink, house and home, spouse and children, ... and all I need to support this body and life.*" (Luther's Small Catechism, Explanation to 1<sup>st</sup> Article of the Apostle's Creed.) He is the one who provides even when we earn a living with our jobs. He is the one who has so richly blessed us in this favored land that we have so much more than the bare necessities of life.

Yes, this miracle emphasizes for us --

### **III. The Abundance of His Providential Grace.**

The Lord is not stingy in His providential care. "*The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.*" (Psalm 33:5) Jesus provides richly for all men. "*He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.*" (Matthew 5:45) While the Lord can and has caused famine to befall nations as a judgment, typically it is the geopolitical machinations of man that cause some people to go hungry while others are awash in surplus. It comes

down to the false stewardship of some, and their greed, or their animosity toward others that is in evidence in this world. The Lord – the Lord is gracious and provides daily bread to all even to all the wicked.

In our text the almighty power of Jesus provided in abundance for every need in that crowd. He fed them the bread of life with the wisdom that leads to salvation. He healed their sick delivering them from the curse of sin. He fed their bodies and not only did all 5000 plus eat well, the disciples gathered twelve baskets of leftovers; more food remained than that with which they began. They gathered those leftovers; they weren't left strewn across the field. They gathered those leftovers so that the providence of God might not be wasted.

Again that is an important lesson for us in showing appreciation to the Lord for the abundance with which He has blessed us. It is not simply following the old adage, "Waste not, want not." It is a matter of showing appreciation and respect to the Lord for the blessings which He has poured out abundantly upon us that we strive not to waste that which the Lord has given us. We acknowledge His providential care, and "receive our daily bread with thanksgiving" (Martin Luther, Small Catechism, 4<sup>th</sup> petition,) by making the best use, and careful use of the blessings which the Lord has entrusted us. I say the Lord has entrusted us with material goods as food and clothing and house and all the other things that make up our lives, because ultimately they remain the Lord's and we are stewards, caretakers of His earth and all that it contains. In this stewardship we honor the Lord with our wealth not only by giving back a portion to the Lord, but also by acknowledging the Lord as the source of our blessings, being responsible in using them, and using what we can to show Jesus' love to our neighbor in acts of kindness.

So much of what the Spirit has taught us again today can be summed up in words we commonly use to acknowledge the Lord and to receive our daily bread with thanksgiving. Those familiar words of our introit this morning say so much: "*Oh, give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good and His mercy, (or steadfast love) endures forever.*" (Psalm 136:1)

**AMEN.**

“Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” Amen. (Romans15:13)