

Grace Lutheran Community, 6 August 2023:

Tenth Sunday After Pentecost

The sermon text for today is based on

Matthew 14:13-21

Are you hungry? Did you miss breakfast because you are too busy or maybe were running late?

Do you long to be fed, filled with the best most nourishing food that you have ever had?

Well you have come to the right place for today you are already being fed and you will be nourished to continue to do the work that God has sent you to do in the name of Jesus. That same Jesus who feeds you daily by His word.

Today's text follows on from the death of John the Baptist.

When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns.

Jesus has headed for a time of perhaps prayer and rest after the news of the death of John the Baptist. But the crowds were hungry for more. They had heard Jesus and some may have joined hearing about what Jesus had been doing, the miracles, the teaching, the caring and love. The setting free and the encouraging. They wanted more.

How often do we forget what Jesus has already done for us? In your own life do you hunger for more of Jesus in your life? Do you desire to

live Jesus in your everyday place? Do you know how much He provides for you in His word? That word that does what it says – I forgive you all your sins, I love you, I am with you always, I am sending you in my name.

You did not choose me, I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit.

The crows were hungry for Jesus and, ‘When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed those who were ill.

This Jesus is our Jesus. He had compassion on the crowds. On each person present and Jesus continues to have compassion of us. When we sin, when we are lost, when we are stubborn not forgiving each other, when are choosing to be well fed by worldly desires or when we push others down, yes Jesus has compassion on us. He looks at your heart and sees just how lost one can be when they are not fed by the bread of Life Jesus. He had compassion on us all dying on the cross for our sin and continues to have compassion on us, suffering with us in our selfishness often refusing to live as forgiven people of God because we would rather serve our own desires. Put me first is what we often desire and do. We forget to have compassion on those around us sharing Jesus love with them and the hope that comes from His words of eternal life.

Yet Jesus has compassion on us, wanting to sit us down on the grass and feed us with His Holy word. That word that feeds and strengthens and nourishes us each day until the Lord calls us home to be with Him forever.

Jesus feeds us and sends us with satisfied souls and bodies into the world to serve others, sharing Jesus love by His word living in us and springing from our hearts to speak words of love and peace and to drive our actions of good deeds so others will see and glorify the Lord. But how often when we have an opportunity to show compassion and love to our neighbour – remembering a neighbour is anyone who is in need – we turn them away or we seek to send them off to feed themselves. Have a listen to this, how the disciples are keen to hurry them away rather than to ask Jesus to help them help others.

As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, ‘This is a remote place, and it’s already getting late. Send the crowds away, so that they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food.’

How often do we miss what is going on, the big picture in mission, God’s mission to the world through Jesus now working in and through us.

Jesus replied, ‘They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat.’

Jesus encourages the disciples to minister to the crowd but they only see a small amount of food, obviously not enough to feed the multitudes. ‘We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish,’ they answered.

Again when we are called by Jesus to follow Him and to feed the hungry both physically and spiritually do we only see the smallness in what we have and not the grace, love, power and abundance of Jesus.

‘Bring them here to me,’ he said. And he told the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to

heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children.

The Lord feeds the people, it is from a loving God that He pours out blessing to all.

Even though the disciples couldn't feed the people with what they had, Jesus still asks them to participate in His good work. In His abundant gift but more importantly to serve the people with the gift Jesus provided. It is the same with us. Let us not be overwhelmed by the lack of resources to feed the souls of the hungry rather let us rejoice for Jesus invites us to participate in His work in the world, to feed the hungry with the food He provides especially His word.

Go out in peace today and know that when you are weary and hungry Jesus says come to me and rest, learn from me and you will find rest for your soul. Know that Jesus sustains you and heals you and recreates you as forgiven children of God to go and do the work you are sent to do. Know that you don't have to provide the food for Jesus has in His word and continues to in all our physical needs and in our abundance let us serve others so they may come to know the bread of life and feed on Jesus word and be satisfied today, tomorrow and eternally.

Amen