

Sermon July 25th, 2021

Jesus Nourishes Us

In our gospel this morning, we hear two stories. First, Jesus sees a large crowd coming. A crowd of people who are tired. A crowd of people who are hungry. A crowd of people who are in need of healing. A crowd of people who long to be nourished so they can keep on living even as they face hardship. So, they can keep on following Jesus.

After the disciples survey the crowd to see what food they have, they come back to Jesus with five barley loaves and two fish (**Image**). Food that a young boy donated for the cause.

At this point the disciples are anxious. Worried that they don't have enough to meet the needs of the crowd.

In response to their anxiety, Jesus takes from the little they have, and gives everyone the food, the nourishment they need for the journey ahead. In fact, Jesus has leftovers, just in case others also need nourishment along the way.

This is the first story we hear this morning. A story that gives us hope that there will be enough to keep us nourished when we trust in Jesus. That Jesus will meet our needs. So, we can be Jesus' hands and feet in the world. "Don't worry if you only have five barley loaves and two fish. I can do great things with these things." Jesus says to us.

In the second story we hear, the disciples are caught up in a storm (**Image**). The waves are getting heavy. The disciples don't know if they have what it takes to get through this storm. To arrive at their destination.

Suddenly, Jesus appears to them on the Lake. At first, the disciple's anxiety revs up. They have trouble making out Jesus. When Jesus finally convinces the disciples that it is he. The disciples invite Jesus aboard, and he calmly brings them to their destination.

Again, the disciples need something to help them continue along the journey. The disciples need something to help them continue to follow Jesus. Again, Jesus meets their needs. Jesus gives them peace that helps them believe that even when the waves get rough Jesus will be there to calmly guide them to their destination.

This past year in a half we have found ourselves wandering, looking for Jesus to feed us after a long journey. We have longed to be nourished so we can continue to be Jesus' hands and feet in the world. So, we can continue on the journey despite the hardships we have faced during this pandemic.

This past year in a half we have found ourselves out on the water in our different boats (Image), as the wind pushes the waves against our boats. Threatening to flip our boats right over. Leaving us to drown.

As we have dealt with these crashing waves, we have longed to see Jesus' presence on the lake. We have longed for Jesus to come on board, and calmly guide us to our destination. Relieving us of our fears and anxiety.

On all the exhausting journeys we walk. In all the storms we face. We long for Jesus to meet our needs. Through prayer. Through scripture. Through word and sacrament. Through one another.

For example, when we grieve, we depend on meals from friends and family when we are too weak to cook (**Image**). We depend on their support to help us put one foot in front of the other, as we try to pick up the pieces of our broken lives. We lean on the comforting words of a scripture passage like Psalm 23 that gives us hope that God is with us even in the darkest valleys we face. We lean on prayer to help us make sense of our grief. To help us see God's presence. We lean on the sacrament to help us feel God's presence (**Image**). We lean on the Word to give us hope in God's promise of healing and redemption.

In our grief, we need God to nourish us to keep us going. To keep us following Jesus.

Similarly, when we are dealing with a physical illness, or a mental illness, or a relationship breakdown, or a job loss, or any other suffering we have experienced. We need God to nourish us to keep us going. To keep us following Jesus. We need God to nourish us through prayer. Through Scripture (**Image**). Through word and sacrament. Through one another.

In our gospel, we bear witness to two places where Jesus nourishes the people who follow him. In our lives, we can bear witness to many places where Jesus has nourished us. Keeping us going. Keeping us following Jesus.

Including all the little things Jesus did for us during this past year and half to get us to this day.

As I stand out here hearing the birds, the bugs, the squirrels, the neighbors dog. I feel reassured that like these animals and insects, who are nourished by God. God is nourishing us too, and will guide us to our new destination. The kingdom of God. A place where we experience God's healing and redemption for our lives and for our world.

Let us pray, loving God, please nourish us when we feel exhausted, hungry, and anxious from this long and sometimes painful journey. Feed us and calmly guide us to our destination in the midst of this storm. **Amen.**

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