

Feeding the Crowds

July 21, 2024

Our Savior's Way Lutheran Church

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We are going to continue our sermon series, *Journey with Jesus*, talking about what Jesus is doing as we go through the Gospel of Mark. As we talk about a story that might be familiar to many of us, *the Feeding of the Five Thousand*, I would love for you to open up to Mark chapter 6. It is Mark 6:30-38.

There are all kinds of amazing things that Jesus is doing in Mark 6 as we are walking along with Him. We see what He has been doing. So, what has He been doing? Well, we see that He has healed a man with a demon. He went and healed a woman who grabbed the corner of His robe. He went and healed a little girl and raised her from the dead with His word. He sent His disciples out two by two to go into the countryside to teach everyone that the kingdom of God is at hand because in His own hometown when He went there, they did not believe that He was who He said He was. In all of this, in everything that He is doing, every single episode points to Jesus as being the Messiah, as being the one that God had promised to send from the very beginning, from the very time that Adam and Eve made that first mistake and separated themselves and all of us from God. God promised that He would send His promised one, His chosen one, His Messiah, to bring His people back to Himself. And Jesus keeps helping us see that He is the one. So today when we talk about *the Feeding of the Five Thousand*, guess what He will be trying to do. Jesus is very consistent, very consistent. His message is, "The kingdom of God is at hand, and it is right where I am. So, see the kingdom in me."

Let's see how this works out in chapter 6, verse 30. "The apostles returned to Jesus and told Him all that they had done and taught." Do you remember what happened? They went out and what were they doing? They were

healing people in the name of Jesus. They were casting out demons in the name of Jesus. Can you imagine going out and doing that? That is pretty amazing. That is an incredible thing. So, they came back and told Him that all these things had happened just like He said they would. What an incredible adventure. What an incredible experience.

Can you imagine coming back and hearing all those stories? In just a couple of months, we are going to have the opportunity to welcome back the Frahers. A year ago, we stood right here and prayed over them and sent them off to Kenya to start a brand new mission where they are providing a home and a place and great love for people who are coming to receive care at Tenwek Hospital. They are going to be back here in the States and visit with us. And we are going to hear their stories of how so many people's lives have changed because of your generosity, because of their time, because they are bringing the kingdom of God in Jesus' name to people who need it. I cannot wait to hear those stories. I hope you cannot either.

This is what they were doing, telling those stories of God's goodness for people. So, in verse 31, they were tired. They needed to rest. So, they went out on the boat where nobody else could get to them on the lake. Now, people saw them going and recognized them. They ran there on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. This lake is not that big. They were not going out too far from shore. If the people could not see the boat, they knew what the next port was. They knew what the next town was that they were going to stop in. And so, people saw them leave, and they said, "Well, they are going this direction. So, we are just going to follow along and find the next place where they go." And as they went, more and more people gathered, and they kept coming. They wanted to see this Jesus who could speak and stop the wind and the waves, who could speak and raise the dead to new life. They wanted to see Him.

Verse 34, “When He went ashore, He saw a great crowd, and Jesus had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd, and He began to teach them many things.” They were still tired, the disciples and Jesus. But He saw them. He saw that they had come to Him to experience the kingdom of God, and He loved them right where they were. Now, you all have come here today for many different reasons, with many different things in your hearts and on your minds. But Jesus comes to you in the midst of that, no matter where you are, and He loves you. And He wants to show you this great love and teach you His ways, and to show you that the kingdom of God is real, and it is right here, and it is for you.

So, after He teaches them, what does He say here? He says in verse 35, “His disciples came to Jesus and said, ‘This is a remote place, and the hour is late, so send everyone away to go into the surrounding countryside and villages to buy themselves something to eat.’” That makes sense, right? You know, a couple of weeks ago we talked about sandwiches during the sermon, and I was getting really hungry by the end of the 11 o’clock service. It is time to eat. It is time to go. It is time to spend some time with just your family to get out of the crowds. But Jesus says this in verse 37, He answers them, “You give them something to eat.” And these disciples who had just healed people in Jesus’ name, who had cast demons out, look incredulous at one another and say, “How are we going to buy 200 denarii worth of bread? We do not have a year’s worth of our wages to go buy everybody bread with. How is this going to work?” And Jesus says to them, “How many loaves do you have? Go and see.” And when they had found out, they came back and reported, “Five loaves and two fish.”

All right, let’s pause here. These disciples had just done these incredible things, and yet Jesus tells them, “Feed everyone.” Do you think that is out of the realm of possibility? Do you think they could not have done this? Why do they not believe still? Why do they not just go ahead? All right, we did these amazing things. Why can’t we do this too in Jesus’ name? It

is because every step of the way, the disciples do not have the perspective that we do right now, because we know what already happened to Jesus. We know we live on this side of Easter, that Jesus has been raised from the dead, that He did die and give up Himself for the whole world. And when He was raised from the dead, He made everything new. God's kingdom is being made new right here, right now. And we will continue to be made new all the way through the end of time. And when Jesus returns, everything will be made new. Everything that is sad will become untrue. There will be no more suffering, no more discord, no more brokenness. This is what Jesus came to do. This is what Easter means. We see that. So, we have this in; the disciples have not seen it yet. Remember, as we walk along, they have not seen the fullness of who Jesus is. And so, every step of the way, they are like, "Well, maybe. Maybe this could work. Let's see. Let's find out."

He says, "You give them something to eat." But Jesus is not just challenging His disciples to believe in Him. What He is also doing is showing everybody who He is. Remember His point in all of these things is to point people to Him so that they would see He is the promised one, and this whole story about Jesus feeding all these people points directly to a promise that they were given.

You see this happened before in 2 Kings 4. Elisha, one of the prophets of God, did this exact thing. There was a famine in the land, and one day a man brought 20 loaves of bread made from his hand. first fruits, the first grain of his harvest. And 20 loaves to all the people who are around us so they can all eat. And the servant exclaims, "Wait, there is a hundred people here. How am I going to feed a hundred people with 20 loaves of bread?" So He repeated, "Give these to the people so that they might eat for thus says the Lord"—This is what prophets always say. They speak for the Lord. The Lord says they will eat, and they will even have some left. So, in trust and faith, they set the food, the 20 loaves before the hundred men, and they all ate, and there was some left. There was some left.

This was all according to the word of God, in accordance with what God had promised, that He would feed them in a miraculous way. This is why when people wonder who Jesus is, as we are going through this, they asked, “Could he be Elijah? Could he be a prophet of old?” They know these stories. They know what happened. And Jesus is saying, “I am not just a prophet. I am so much more than that. I will not just feed a hundred people with 20 loaves of bread. Give me two loaves and five fish, and I am going to feed 5,000. Even more than you could ever anticipate. What I am doing is more than you have ever hoped for. Keep looking to me.” This is what Jesus keeps going.

So let's dive back in here. Verse 39. “Then He commanded them all to sit down in groups in the green grass.” Green grass is an interesting thing because it says this probably happened in Spring if it is green grass, which means it might be close to the time of Passover, which is the time when they brought the sacrificial lamb to take on the sins of all the people. Interesting connections here. So, He sat all down in groups by hundreds and fifties and taking the five loaves and the two fish, Jesus looked up into heaven, said a blessing, and broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples to set them before the people. And He divided the two fish among them all. They all ate, and they were satisfied. They took up twelve baskets. Twelve. we know twelves, right? Twelve baskets full of broken pieces of bread and fish. And those who ate the loaves were five thousand men. Jesus takes what little food there is, He lifts it up to the heavens, and He blesses it.

Now, this is an interesting detail. Do we know what Jesus says here? What is the blessing that He gives? Mark does not say. But we know with pretty good certainty what this blessing was because this was a common blessing that all people would have said before they had their meal. There were different blessings for different types of food. But this is bread specifically, and so the blessing that He would have said is this: “Blessed are you, the Lord our God, King of the universe, who brings forth bread from the earth.”

Can you imagine Jesus saying that in front of everyone and knowing what we know today that He is the one that God sent to the earth to be the one who satisfies, to be the bread of life? In John, Jesus says that. *I am the Bread of Life*. Jesus is the one who is this bread.

He takes this, He blesses the bread, and He gives it to the people. And they must be wondering once they eat because they have all been talking. They know that nobody has food, and yet these baskets of food keep getting passed along, and they eat, and they eat, and they are satisfied. And they must wonder at Him when they look at Him and see twelve baskets full. They wonder, “Who is this Jesus? If He is the one that can feed me, I will follow.”

How many of you have ever gone somewhere because there was free food? I have been. I have been from 18 to 24 years old. I have been everywhere. When I was in college, the church that sponsored our Lutheran group there, they would feed us on Wednesday nights and on Sunday nights. And I would be there all the time, not just for the food, but for the great people that I eventually get to learned. If Jesus is giving food out, we are there. Is He giving us more than that too? You see, that is the thing. This is the mystery. You are going to see over the next few weeks that people keep following Jesus because they know He can feed them, but He is trying to get them to see it is not just about your hunger and your stomach that He wants to satisfy. It is that hunger in your soul. It is that connection with God that you feel so disconnected with. He is going to be the one who satisfies that too.

And I do not know what’s happening with you today. I do not know what you have come here with. As I have had conversations with people this week, there are people in our family here at Our Savior’s Way who are going through so many things, things that are really difficult and things that are really exciting. In all of this, what Jesus says to us is, “The kingdom of God is right here in me; look to me to be satisfied. Look to me

for all the things that you need, whether it is wholeness, whether it is forgiveness, whether it is patience, whether it is joy, whether it is simply being content with what God has blessed you with.” Look to Him because He has always been enough. Every other place that you have looked to find that satisfaction has not worked. And it will not. But in Jesus. In Jesus, there is enough.

As we continue walking through the book of Mark, you are going to see people struggling, and every time Jesus is going to point them back to Himself. And He does the same thing with us. I hope today that you see Him more clearly. I hope today that as people who live on this side of Easter, you see His sacrifice and His life as the center point of your life, that no matter what you are going through today, that He is there with you and for you, and that He will feed you exactly what you need.

Let’s close with a word. Heavenly Father, we thank you for being with us today, for leading us, for guiding us, for feeding us with what exactly we need.

Lord, you know what the people here today are going through. You know the things that they are worried about and anxious about and suffering because of. You know what they are joyful about. You know what they are thankful for. In all of this, Lord, I ask that you would be present in their lives through your spirit, that you would give them patience and peace, that you would guide them when they turn to you for direction, and that in all things, you would remind them that you give them more than enough, that the relationship with you has already been bought and paid for and that in you, they are connected. They are connected through your Son, Jesus, each and every day. Let that connection be strong. We pray this in the name of our savior and our Lord Jesus who satisfies all the time. Amen.