

9 S. after Pentecost 8/2/20
Matthew 14:13-21 13A

AND THEY ALL ATE AND WERE SATISFIED.

The eyes of all look to You, and You give them their food in due season. You open Your hand; You satisfy the desire of every living thing (Ps 145:15-16).

The feeding of the 5,000 teaches us that God gives us our daily bread without any merit or worthiness in us. In His love for us poor, miserable sinners, God opens His hand and satisfies the desire of every living thing. But, it's easier to say it, than believe it, isn't it?

Let me ask you this: We'll take a purely unscientific poll this morning. How many of you think you deserve God's grace and blessings? Don't be shy! Raise your hand high for all to see. You do. You do think you deserve God's grace and blessing. Here's why: You think that you are better than your neighbor. Or at least, not as bad as your neighbor.

Look at Jesus. Look at Jesus in the feeding of the 5,000. Look at how different His thinking is from our sinful reason and senses.

"When He went ashore He saw a great crowd, and He had compassion on them and healed their sick ... And they all ate and were satisfied" (vv. 14, 20). Isn't it interesting how Jesus sees and treats people? Far different from us, isn't He? He didn't have compassion on the fans of one team, and ignore the fans of that other team. He didn't heal the sick who were graduates from that certain university, and allow the graduates of that other university to remain infirm. He didn't let the sinners in that crowd of 5,000 go hungry.

Consider that crowd for a minute. 5,000 men, besides the women and children. Who were the ones who worshipped false gods? Was a

murderer among them? Who among them were the adulterers? Which ones were the thieves, the liars, the gossips, the alcoholics, those who blatantly despised and angered those in authority over them by driving over the speed limit?

He had compassion on them. You see them as the mass shooter, an adulterer, a thief, a liar, an alcoholic, the one who hurt you. But, you, YOU, are not like that at all, right? These are the “bad” people. They’re not “good” like you.

Want me to prove my point? Something bad happens, something just awful happens, to you, and what is your reaction: WHY? Why is this bad thing happening to me? And to state the obvious, when something “bad” happens to the adulterer, the thief, the liar, the one who hurt you, the one who got the promotion at work you so desired, you decree “it’s about time they got theirs”!

This morning, we learn, once again, that God does not treat us as our sins deserve. He treats us in grace. We see ourselves as “good,” certainly better than our neighbor, because we take our sin lightly.

“The law is but a mirror bright to bring the inbred sin to light” (*LSB* 555:4). When we look in the mirror of the law, we see our sin. No, you don’t worship a false god, but you think you are a lot smarter than God and things should be done the way you want them. And you have doubted the promises God has made to you. You have disobeyed those in authority over you by driving over the speed limit, often, -- and well over the posted limit at that. No, you have not ended your neighbor’s life, but you have been angry, awfully angry at your neighbor and wished a lot of harm on them. You would never do such a thing as commit adultery, but you’ve laughed hysterically when someone told an off-color joke. You haven’t

stolen your neighbor's property, but you've ignored them in their need so you have more and more toys. And the green-eyed monster of jealousy, it's no stranger to you when you cast your longing eyes on your neighbor's stuff. And gossip. Don't even need to mention that one, do I?

"The wages of sin is death" (Ro 6:23). As you yourself confess, the truth is that you do not deserve God's grace, and favor and blessing, you deserve only God's temporal and eternal punishment.

But here is the GOOD NEWS OF THE GOSPEL: "He had compassion on them". As true God, Jesus knew that the sinner would die. But, in love, He didn't want that to happen. So, He humbled Himself to become a true man to take on our sin and die as its wages. Upon Calvary's cross, He died for the murderer, adulterer, the thief, the liar, the gossip; He died for all. Look at what the Scriptures say, "in Christ God was reconciling the world to Himself" (2 Co 5:19). The Gospel in a nutshell teaches us, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son" (Jn 3:16).

He died for the sins of all, and that means that you are forgiven, Dear Child of God, even for all those times you have taken your sin lightly. And, He rose again the 3rd day to prove that God has accepted His sacrifice and death for the sins of all the world.

He lives. Jesus lives to pour His compassion all over you in the waters of your baptism. Because He has poured out that compassion on you in the water and the Word of your baptism, you are one with Christ in His resurrection from the grave and His ascension into the glory of heaven. You have a seat at the marriage feast of the lamb in heaven.

This day, as you walk by faith through the valley of the shadow of death, "Through the LORD's mercies we are not consumed, because His

compassions fail not. They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness” (La 3:22-23, NKJV). His compassion does not fail you today – this day -- because He speaks it into your ears; feeds you with it in His Body and Blood in, with, and under the bread and wine, to forgive you all of your sins and strengthen you in your faith.

And, He opens His Fatherly hand, to give you your daily bread, all that you need -- not want, but need -- for your body and life, this day.

All this He does without any merit or worthiness in you. No, you don't deserve it. But, the Good News of the Gospel is that God does not treat you as your sins deserve. It's not about your nature. It's about the nature of God, who has compassion on us. The Christian faith is all about why good things happen to bad people.

Take one more look at that crowd. The ones Jesus had compassion on. The sick ones He healed. The 5,000 men, plus the women and children, who ate of the five loaves and two fish, and were satisfied. Take a good look at that crowd. Do you know what you see in that crowd? You see the one who lied to you, the one who cheated you and cheated on you, the one who stole from you, the one who vandalized your property, the one who hurt you or your loved one in your body, the one whose hurtful words still ring in your ears.

What does Jesus do? He has compassion on them. You, Dear Child of God, living in Christ, and Christ living in you, have compassion on them. You forgive as God has forgiven you in Christ. You keep no record of wrongs, because that's what God does with your sin. You patiently bear with your neighbor in their weakness. Why? Because God is patient with you, not wanting you to perish in your sin (cf. 2 Pe 3:9). And, patience is a fruit of the Spirit working within us (cf. Ga 5:22).

“And they all ate and were satisfied,” because Jesus has compassion on all, including you, Dear Child of God.

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.