

Home Service for 7/25/2021

Welcome and Announcements

You might notice a few changes. You may also find listening to some of your favorite hymns helpful in worship.

Call to Worship:

Today is a day especially created for you to find peace and hope.

In the midst of our hectic lives, we surely need such a time as this. Come, rest in the Lord. Our souls long for God's refreshing love. Let the demands of your week melt away in God's presence. Refresh and restore us, O Lord, we pray. AMEN.

Opening Prayer:

As we gather, nourish us with your presence, Bread of Life. As we worship, fill us with springs of faith, Living Water. As we learn, inspire us with holy wisdom, Eternal Spirit. Help us recognize our gifts and discern how best to share them for the healing of the world. Amen.

Prayer of Confession:

Miraculous God, inspire us to notice your miracles in every moment of our lives. When we doubt our own gifts, grant us the vision to see as you see. When we are afraid to follow, grant us the courage to go where you lead. When we are tempted to use our gifts selfishly, grant us servant hearts, that we may share our gifts generously in the service of others. Inspire us this day, Holy One, that we may be part of your miraculous love. In Jesus' name. Amen

Words of Assurance

*The love of Christ is beyond knowledge. Yet in that love, we are forgiven and reconciled to God. In that love, we are filled entirely with God's grace. This is the miracle of infinite love.*

## Read Psalm 14

The fool<sup>[a]</sup> says in his heart, “There is no God.”

They are corrupt, their deeds are vile; there is no one who does good.

<sup>2</sup>The LORD looks down from heaven on all mankind  
to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God.

<sup>3</sup>All have turned away, all have become corrupt; there is no one who does good,  
not even one.

<sup>4</sup>Do all these evildoers know nothing? They devour my people as though eating  
bread; they never call on the LORD.

<sup>5</sup>But there they are, overwhelmed with dread, for God is present in the company of  
the righteous.

<sup>6</sup>You evildoers frustrate the plans of the poor, but the LORD is their refuge.

<sup>7</sup>Oh, that salvation for Israel would come out of Zion! When the LORD restores his  
people, let Jacob rejoice and Israel be glad!

## Prayers of the People:

*What powerful images the scriptures present today, Lord, of Jesus feeding the thousands of people who have gathered. The Gospel lesson tells us that with the small offering of five barley loaves and two fish, he offered sustenance to the many. We wonder about this and have our doubts that such a thing could really happen in today's world. We see the big picture, the thousands of dollars that are spent on trivial things, but we do not hear about the small wonders that are performed everywhere in your name as good people reach out to those in need. Take away our blindness and our doubt. Surround us with a strong faith that, when we hear the words of healing, we may confidently know that you are in the midst of all our lives. Heal our wounded spirits. Restore in us a spirit of joy. As we have lifted names of dear ones in our prayers before you, O God, we ask your healing blessing on each of their lives and situations. We also ask your healing mercies on all areas in which there is strife, oppression, and despair. Comfort your people with your love. Empower your disciples to serve you fully in your world. We ask this in Jesus' Name, AMEN.*

## Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day, our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is The kingdom, and the power and the glory forever and ever. AMEN

Read the Lesson: 2 Samuel 11:1-15

In the spring, at the time when kings go off to war, David sent Joab out with the king's men and the whole Israelite army. They destroyed the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah. But David remained in Jerusalem.

<sup>2</sup> One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful, <sup>3</sup> and David sent someone to find out about her. The man said, "She is Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite." <sup>4</sup> Then David sent messengers to get her. She came to him, and he slept with her. (Now she was purifying herself from her monthly uncleanness.) Then she went back home. <sup>5</sup> The woman conceived and sent word to David, saying, "I am pregnant."

<sup>6</sup> So David sent this word to Joab: "Send me Uriah the Hittite." And Joab sent him to David. <sup>7</sup> When Uriah came to him, David asked him how Joab was, how the soldiers were and how the war was going. <sup>8</sup> Then David said to Uriah, "Go down to your house and wash your feet." So Uriah left the palace, and a gift from the king was sent after him. <sup>9</sup> But Uriah slept at the entrance to the palace with all his master's servants and did not go down to his house.

<sup>10</sup> David was told, "Uriah did not go home." So he asked Uriah, "Haven't you just come from a military campaign? Why didn't you go home?"

<sup>11</sup> Uriah said to David, "The ark and Israel and Judah are staying in tents,<sup>[a]</sup> and my commander Joab and my lord's men are camped in the open country. How could I go to my house to eat and drink and make love to my wife? As surely as you live, I will not do such a thing!"

<sup>12</sup> Then David said to him, "Stay here one more day, and tomorrow I will send you back." So Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day and the next. <sup>13</sup> At David's invitation, he ate and drank with him, and David made him drunk. But in the evening Uriah went out to sleep on his mat among his master's servants; he did not go home.

<sup>14</sup> In the morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it with Uriah. <sup>15</sup> In it he wrote, "Put Uriah out in front where the fighting is fiercest. Then withdraw from him so he will be struck down and die."

## Read the Epistle Lesson: Ephesians 3:14-21

For this reason I kneel before the Father, <sup>15</sup> from whom every family<sup>[a]</sup> in heaven and on earth derives its name. <sup>16</sup> I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, <sup>17</sup> so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, <sup>18</sup> may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, <sup>19</sup> and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

<sup>20</sup> Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, <sup>21</sup> to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

## Read the Gospel Lesson: John 6:1-21

Sometime after this, Jesus crossed to the far shore of the Sea of Galilee (that is, the Sea of Tiberias), <sup>2</sup> and a great crowd of people followed him because they saw the signs he had performed by healing the sick. <sup>3</sup> Then Jesus went up on a mountainside and sat down with his disciples. <sup>4</sup> The Jewish Passover Festival was near.

<sup>5</sup> When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, “Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?” <sup>6</sup> He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do.

<sup>7</sup> Philip answered him, “It would take more than half a year's wages<sup>[a]</sup> to buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!”

<sup>8</sup> Another of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, spoke up, <sup>9</sup> “Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?”

<sup>10</sup> Jesus said, “Have the people sit down.” There was plenty of grass in that place, and they sat down (about five thousand men were there). <sup>11</sup> Jesus then took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed to those who were seated as much as they wanted. He did the same with the fish.

<sup>12</sup> When they had all had enough to eat, he said to his disciples, “Gather the pieces that are left over. Let nothing be wasted.” <sup>13</sup> So they gathered them and filled

twelve baskets with the pieces of the five barley loaves left over by those who had eaten.

<sup>14</sup> After the people saw the sign Jesus performed, they began to say, "Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world." <sup>15</sup> Jesus, knowing that they intended to come and make him king by force, withdrew again to a mountain by himself.

<sup>16</sup> When evening came, his disciples went down to the lake, <sup>17</sup> where they got into a boat and set off across the lake for Capernaum. By now it was dark, and Jesus had not yet joined them. <sup>18</sup> A strong wind was blowing and the waters grew rough. <sup>19</sup> When they had rowed about three or four miles,<sup>[b]</sup> they saw Jesus approaching the boat, walking on the water; and they were frightened. <sup>20</sup> But he said to them, "It is I; don't be afraid." <sup>21</sup> Then they were willing to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the shore where they were heading.

## Message

Our gospel lesson this morning is the familiar story of Jesus feeding the 5000. We all know the story well as it is found in all four of the gospels. And since this story is so familiar to all of us, I would like to approach it from a different perspective this morning. And since it is only in John's gospel that we have mentioned the young boy with the loaves, I am glad that John is our Gospel this morning.

I would like you to for a moment to think about that young boy with the fish and the loaves and his importance in the story and this miracle. If you think about it, without that young boy being willing to share his five small barley loaves and two small fish, there could not have been the miracle of feeding five thousand. John takes the time to tell us that the loaves were made from barley, for that lets us know that the boy and more than likely the people were poor, for barley bread was the food eaten by the poor in those times. God uses ordinary people even children to do miracles. He does not ask only the rich and the famous, but for many in this world looking at how we live and how much we have we are rich.

Let us get back to look at the young boy and try to imagine what he is thinking. Imagine you are that young boy. Your day starts out pretty normal as you are wandering around the hillsides and you see this crowd gathering. You think: "Hey, I wonder what is going on? I don't have anything else better to do, and Mom did make me a lunch of fish and loaves so I don't have to go home soon, so maybe I will just tag along and see what is happening." As the young boy, you follow the crowd as they gather around the shore looking for Jesus. Then you see this man in a boat get out and begins to talk to the crowd. So you sit down on the grass and get comfortable as you listen to Jesus.

Jesus begins to teach the people about the kingdom of God. You listen and think to yourself: "Jesus is talking about the love of God for all people including me. He is not like those in the temple or our little place of worship that is always telling us what we have to do or what we shouldn't do. Jesus is telling us that God loves us just the way we are."

You listen some more and think to yourself: "Jesus is telling us that He is the Son of Man the savior and that we should believe in Him and he will give us salvation." "This Jesus is really powerful. He can heal the sick and the ill. Why I even heard that He raised someone from the dead. I really am believing that this Jesus is from God." Then as the young boy, you notice Jesus and the disciples talking. You can hear just a few of the words but you understand that the disciples want to send the people away as they have no food to feed them. Then you hear one of the disciples tell Jesus about the boy with the loaves and the fish. And then you see the disciples coming toward you.

You think to yourself: "Why are they coming to me. I only have five small loaves and two small fish." What could they possibly want with those. It cannot feed this whole crowd." The disciples come to you and ask you to come with them to see Jesus. You hesitate a moments and think: "Why do they want me to go see Jesus! Wait till I tell Mom and Dad when I get home that I got to see Jesus up close." You walk with the disciples to Jesus and Jesus asks you for your loaves and fish and you think: "Should I give them to Him. What is He going to do with them? I am hungry and I need them. But I do believe that He is the Son of Man the savior, so maybe He can do something with these fish."

And you say to Jesus and the disciples, "Here take the fish and the loaves." The disciples take the fish and the loaves from you and they give them to Jesus. Jesus commands the people to sit down and then Jesus turns to heaven and prays giving thanks to His Heavenly Father. Please take note that Jesus, even though He is God himself, still gave thanks to His Heavenly Father for these gifts that He had provided. Jesus was thankful that God had provided them something and had the assurance that it would turn out to be everything they needed and more.

You sit on the grass in front of Jesus and see a marvelous thing happen. Jesus breaks the loaves and the fish and hands them to the disciples to give to the people. And Jesus keeps breaking and giving, for what seemed like forever. You think: "This Jesus is amazing. He takes my small lunch and makes it into a meal to feed all these people." The disciples finally hand you some fish and bread and you eat and have plenty. You watch the disciples gather twelve baskets of the leftover

food. You are astonished that they did this all from your small lunch. You walk home afterwards in a hurry for you have great news to tell.

I think that one of the lessons of this story and there are many is a lesson of faith. The disciples learned about faith in Jesus and Jesus ability to provide for the crowds. We need to have faith that Jesus can provide for us, too. We need to have faith that when Christ asks us to give from our bounty, that there will be plenty for us too.

The disciples learned about faith in Jesus to provide as Jesus took the loaves and fish and provided for the crowd. We too, need to trust in Jesus to provide for us. To ask and to believe in His power. And that young boy with the loaves and fish had faith enough in Jesus to hand over his lunch even though he was hungry. And he was glad he did, for Jesus gave him much more to eat than those loaves and fish would provide. Jesus gave the boy the power of faith to believe in Him and Jesus gave that boy a very good supper.

Jesus and the disciples are role models, whether they are healing, teaching, or feeding thousands. Even the feeding of the crowd occurred because a young boy in the crowd shared his gifts. Meager though they may have seemed at the time, those shared gifts provided enough for the entire community. Thus it has always been when we use our gifts in the service of God and God's creation. Let us not forget when we hear God's call to step up and use the gifts He has provided us.

Let us pray: Dear Heavenly Father, through your Son, Jesus the Christ, you revealed your compassion and redeeming grace for our fallen world. Through the power of your Holy Spirit, open our hearts and minds to our Lord's continued presence among us, that as he fed the multitude by the Sea of Galilee, he might continue to feed and nourish us in faith. May He enable and encourage us to listen and answer His call to do our part to make a miracle happen, so He will be glorified and others may experience His Love. This we ask in His Holy Name. Amen.

Benediction:

*Go to follow Jesus, who gives us the bread of life.*

*God to walk in the ways of Christ, who strengthens us in our inner being through the power of the Holy Spirit.*

*Go to serve our living Lord, who gathers the fragments of our lives, that nothing may be lost. Amen.*