

“Five Thousand Fed”
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Opening Prayer

Good Evening, hopefully this finds you well. It is a strange time we live in. Normally during this time of the year we would be talking about Spring, planting, being outside, and the glories of Easter. (At least in church!) However this is 2020, and we find ourselves often strained by politics and theological debates. But all this pales in comparison to the coronavirus pandemic that has gripped our world. Churches, businesses, schools, events... all are closed in the hopes of slowing the spread of this disease. The news cycle is endlessly talking about the dangers of the coronavirus detailing every minute aspect of it. Beloved Congregation, in the midst of this, I want to share with you one important detail. If you gain anything from the message tonight, whether you are listening to it or reading it, please understand this: **the LORD is in control.**

The Lord, Beloved Congregation, is still in charge. Things may be scary, but He is there to comfort us. The world may be in turmoil, but He still reigns. We may worry about everything from our stocks to our physical health, but it is in God's hands that we rest. If you call upon Jesus as your Savior, know that He watches over you and will guard you. We have nothing to fear knowing that we have eternity to look forward to. We have nothing to fear because the same Lord who rules is the same one who went to the cross out of love for us. Don't be discouraged, we will be ok because He is in control. (If you want a reminder of this check out Matthew 6:25-34) Believe it or not our reading for this evening helps to convey the wonderful power that our Savior possesses. In Jesus's feeding of the five thousand we see that He is God in human flesh, and we see that He possesses power over all created things.

John 6:1-14 comes right after the witnesses that Jesus gives concerning Himself. He has proven to all who were there listening (who would listen) that He is the Messiah. John the Baptist confirms it, His works confirm it, the Lord confirms it, and the scriptures confirm it. However after teaching these things Jesus leaves the city of Jerusalem and heads out into the countryside. He travels to a remote and desolate area on the edge of the Sea of Galilee. This is quite a ways away from Jerusalem, perhaps sixty miles or so, and a large crowd follows him. When He gets to where He wants to go, He has them sit down and He teaches them. Following His teachings, He takes pity on them and in verses 5-7 we read “Therefore Jesus, lifting up His eyes and seeing that a large crowd was coming to Him, said to Philip, ‘Where are we to buy bread, so that these may eat?’ This He was saying to test him, for He Himself knew what He was intending to do. Philip answered Him, ‘Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, for everyone to receive a little.’” This, it turns out, is a sufficient problem.

One denarii was equal to about one days worth of wages in Jesus's time. In verse ten we read that the men numbered five thousand. If you read this miracle in the other Gospels (which by the way, this is the only miracle that appears in all four), it is noted that there were women and children besides the five thousand men. It is truly a large crowd, well surpassing the capabilities of the nearby small towns to feed them. In the face of this overwhelming task of feeding all these people Andrew comes to Jesus in verse nine and says to Jesus "There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are these for so many people?" No doubt Andrew is right. In the face of overwhelming scarcity a few fish and loaves of bread are no match... except of course that Jesus is God in human flesh.

In verses ten and eleven we read "Jesus said, 'Have the people sit down.' Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. Jesus then took the loaves, and having given thanks, He distributed to those who were seated; likewise also of the fish as much as they wanted." This is a miracle of the highest order. If you have been in church much, then maybe this miracle seems like it is old hat... but it certainly is not. This is the only miracle that is actually recounted in all four Gospels, and there is good reason for it. It clearly shows Jesus's power over creation, specifically it shows that He has the power to create. The only one who can create like this is God... so Jesus shows His divinity in feeding the five thousand. After all the people have eaten, they pick up twelve baskets worth of fragments. In verse fourteen the people who were a part of this miracle rightly proclaim "This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world." They recognized that Jesus was the Messiah... although it wouldn't be long for these people to forget who Jesus really is. For us today this miracle should be a good reminder that we serve a Lord of power.

In our world it can be really easy to forget that we serve a Lord of power. Most folks will acknowledge with their lips that God is powerful, that He is in control, that He cares... but then when the stuff hits the fan that seems to change. When we are anxious, or afraid, or hurt, then we will devolve to our baser instincts instead of placing our trust upon God. Beloved, if the Lord can feed five thousand people easily, if He can speak the earth into existence, if He can forgive us our sins, then taking care of us in our time of need is well within His wheelhouse. If you take anything away from the miracle of feeding the five thousand, remember that the Lord we serve does in fact have power. God Bless, let us pray.

Closing Prayer