

## BRING IT ALL TO JESUS

Matthew 14:13-21 | Ninth Sunday after Pentecost | August 3 & 6, 2017

*Jesus replied, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat." <sup>17</sup> "We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish," they answered. <sup>18</sup> "Bring them here to me," he said.*

### Jesus

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

Parents of teenagers will often tell them: "If you ever have a problem, if you ever need something, come to me, no matter what it is. You can talk to me about anything." You have to encourage teenagers in this way, because often they won't come to you. They'll try to solve the problem themselves first.

It wasn't that way when they were toddlers. No one ever has to encourage a toddler: "Come to me if you need anything." They're there. All the time. **[SHOW PHOTO]** Perhaps you've seen this meme or one like as you've scrolled through your Facebook feed. It's pretty true to life, isn't it? Moms can hardly even escape to the bathroom without needy toddlers hunting them down.

I thought of that photo when I studied the portion of God's holy Word before us this morning. Let me give you the context. Jesus had just found out that Herod had beheaded his friend and forerunner John in prison. This hurt Jesus. In his sorrow he sought solitude. He got into a boat and sailed across Lake Galilee to find a quiet spot for prayer and reflection. But like an army of needy toddlers, the crowds found

him. They actually ran ahead on foot and beat him to the landing place.

Was Jesus irritated? Was he annoyed? Did he say, "Can't you guys give me a moment's peace?" No. None of those things. Our text tells us, **"When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick."**

That's what our Lord is like – a compassionate Savior who is never too busy to help us in our time of need. God's Word reminds us today that there is someone to whom we can bring all our sins and sorrows, all our trials and troubles and needs. Jesus says, "Bring it all to me." The miraculous feeding of the 5,000 assures us that we can entrust everything to Jesus. We can trust him to satisfy our spiritual hunger. And we can trust him to satisfy our physical hunger as well.

### **I. Trust Jesus to Satisfy Your Spiritual Hunger**

It was quite a crowd of people. Conservative estimates say that there were about 20,000 when you factor in the women and children. By comparison the Kohl Center in Madison seats just over

17,000. So what is that moved all these people to run around Lake Galilee and meet Jesus as his boat landed. Well, they knew that he was the promised Messiah. Unfortunately, the vast majority of them totally misunderstood what the Messiah was all about. They were looking for a political Savior. They were looking for a warrior who would finally kick the hated Romans out of the Promised Land. They were looking for a bread-king. And they were serious about it. In Saint John's account of this miracle we learn that the crowd intended to make Jesus king *by force* if necessary (6:15). They knew what they wanted, and would stop at nothing to get it.

Sometimes we think of Jesus as shallowly and treat him as shabbily as they did. Often we think of Jesus as provider first and Savior second. We look to him as the One who should keep our fuel tanks full, our refrigerator stocked and our bank accounts flush. Of course, we should trust in him to care for our bodily needs (more on that in a bit). But first and foremost we should look to him as the One who can satisfies our spiritual hunger.

What is that? What do we hunger for? What are our spiritual needs? Let me summarize that with three words. We hunger for pardon, peace and purpose. These are the things we really need. Jesus provides them.

The reason that Jesus came into this world, the reason that he lived, died and rose, is to provide us with the forgiveness of sins. You've heard the old expression

“Without your health you don't have anything.” In reality, you can have poor health and still have a lot. But without forgiveness, you truly have nothing. Without forgiveness all that's left is life of crushing guilt and eternity of hellish suffering.

“Without forgiveness.” Those words don't describe us. We are forgiven. Jesus lived, died and rose to make sure of it. God's Word is clear about this. Paul told the Colossians: **“When you were dead in your sins ... God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins”** (2:13-14). To the Ephesians he wrote: **“In him we have redemption through this blood, the forgiveness of sins”** (1:7). Notice: Paul didn't say that in Jesus have the potential of being forgiven or that we may be forgiven. No he says in the clearest language possible: WE HAVE THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS. We have complete pardon in Christ.

This pardon brings peace. Relationships are important. It's no fun when spouses bicker and argue or family members aren't getting along. Infinitely worse is when our relationship with our God is on the rocks. Our sin ruins that relationship. Sin separates us from God. But Jesus has repaired the rift. He took away our sins. And so now **“we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ”** (Romans 5:1). We are no longer God's enemies, but his forever friends in Jesus.

With pardon and peace comes purpose. Paul expressed this beautifully to the Corinthians: **[Jesus] died for all, that**

**those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again** (2 Corinthians 5:15). Our purpose in life is to serve the One who lived and died for us. Our wants and desires go into the background, his Word and will come into the foreground. We walk this earth with the high and clear purpose of serving both God and neighbor in love. And we do so with willing hearts, grateful for the pardon and peace Jesus won for us.

When the disciples realized that they had five loaves, two fish and thousands of mouths to feed, they saw only problems and impossibilities. Jesus said, “Bring them here to me. I’ll take care of it.”

Our problem is much bigger than too many people and not enough food. Our problem is sin. We can’t fix the problem of sin. So Jesus says, “Bring it to me.” Nothing is impossible for him.

My friends, the miracle of our text is one more proof that Jesus is the promised Messiah. It identifies him as the only Savior of the world. And so you can bring it all to him. All your sin. All your guilt. You can trust that in him you have pardon and peace.

## **II. Trust Jesus to Satisfy Your Bodily Hunger**

Let’s get back to our text: **[Jesus] directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave**

**them to the people.**<sup>20</sup> **They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over.**

Twelve basketfuls of leftovers. Not only did Jesus feed thousands of people with a boy’s picnic lunch, but they ended up with more leftover than what they started with. And, no, this isn’t a story about sharing. You know, Jesus shared a few morsels of food and his example moved others to share what they brought so that everyone had something to eat. This is a miracle where thousands of people ate and were satisfied. And when their bellies were full there were still lots of leftovers. What an amazing miracle performed by the Almighty Son of God!

Do you see the simple lesson here for us? The One who could feed 20,000 or so people with a few rolls and couple of perch can certainly take care of our daily bodily needs.

It’s so easy to forget that. We lie awake at night wondering how we’re going to pay for it all: mortgage, taxes, insurance, tuition, groceries. The mechanic tells us the repairs will not cost hundreds but thousands, and we think: “Now what?” We look at bare cupboards and an even barer checkbook with growing concern: “How am I going to feed my family?” We listen as the doctor reads the test results, explains the x-rays and lays out a course of treatment. The whole time we’re thinking, “How am I going to get through this? Am I even going to survive?”

When the disciples saw all those mouths to feed they figured it wasn't possible. How quickly they forgot the miracle of Cana? They should have known that the One who could turn water into wine fine enough and abundant enough for a wedding feast, could certainly turn a few morsels of bread and fish into all-you-can-eat banquet.

We're forgetful too, aren't we? It's so easy to forget all the times God has seen us through tough times. It's so easy to focus on our problems while forgetting the promises he has made to us.

My friends, when times are tough, when you're wondering how you're going to get by, when "adulting" is wearing you down, when it all just seems impossible, bring it to Jesus. **"Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you"** (1 Peter 5:7). He turned water into wine. He healed the sick with a touch. He fed thousands with few loaves and some fish. He raised the dead. He created the world out of nothing. He can certainly provide you with your daily bread. As the psalmist wrote: **"Where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth"** (Psalm 121:1-2). The Almighty Creator and Savior is our Helper too.

Remember that picture I showed you early of the toddler's hand coming under the bathroom door? No wonder moms are sometimes tired and irritated and long for a just few moments of peace. Toddlers can be relentless.

My friends, be relentless with Jesus. He won't get tired. He won't get annoyed. He won't run away and hide. His heart is filled with compassion. His ears are open to your cry. His mouth speaks forgiveness, and his hands are filled with power to help in every time of need. With trusting hearts, bring it all to Jesus. Amen.

**S.D.G.**