

Title: God's provision and abundance
Theme: The miraculous feeding of the 5000+
Text: Matthew 14: 13-21

The Lord be with you,

Today's Gospel lesson is one version of the well-known story about the feeding of the multitude. We use the word multitude because there were more than 5000 people when we count the woman and children who are part of this amazing story. I sure for many it's a well-known story, we may not pay attention to it, but we have much to learn from it. The feeding of the multitude is more than a story about fishes and loaves. It is about Jesus' compassion. It is about Jesus teaching the disciples how to love people. It is about the generosity of sharing what was there and being overwhelmed with the abundance after.

When Jesus heard about John the Baptist's death, he got in a boat and went away by himself. But soon word got out about where he had gone and people from the villages walked around the lake to find him. When he saw them coming, he had compassion on them and healed their sick. However, evening was coming and it was close to dinnertime. The disciples said to Jesus, "We are out here in the country and it is getting late. Send the people back to the village so they can get some dinner. Jesus said, "We do not need to send them away. You give them something to eat." They told him that they only have five loaves of bread and two fish. Jesus told them to bring him the loaves and fish. Then Jesus had them sit on the grass and he took the bread and fish, lifted his face to heaven in prayer, blessed it, broke it, and gave the bread to the disciples. The disciples gave the food to the people and all ate until they were full. When everyone was done eating, they gathered and filled 12 baskets of food.

What do we gain or learn from the reading this morning?

1. Jesus was full of compassion

Even in the midst of his own despair after hearing the news that his cousin John the Baptist was killed. Jesus had compassion on the crowd. Compassion is a powerful factor in the life of God's people. Compassion is an action of genuine love. Compassion allows me to love others who feel less, hurt, judged, isolated, alone, marginalized or fearful.

2. The disciples were afraid and driven the fear of scarcity.

We see how fear influences the disciples. The fear of scarcity in this case causes them to tell Jesus that the people need to leave because there is no food. We live during a time scarcity and fear today. Scarcity says there's not enough for everyone and we need to look out for number 1...me

3. Jesus responds to their fear and give them a unrealistic task. "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat". (16)

I find this very funny as Jesus isn't moved by their calculated, rational gesture. I imagine Newlands Cricket ground, no food vendors, masses of people have come out and Jesus telling me to go and feed the people. This is an unrealistic task. It would take a miracle to do what Jesus asked the disciples to do.

4. 5 loaves + 2 fish = miracle

The maths here don't make any sense. A multitude of people and all they come up with is 5 loaves and 2 fish. Listen and look at Jesus' response. *"Bring them here to me," he said. 19 And he 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. 20 They all ate and were satisfied..."
Jesus, the disciples and people were all part of the miracle.

Now finally as I conclude. We notice...

5. God's provision and abundance a sign of the Kingdom of God

Remebneri said that the disciples were afraid and feared scarcity. We learn today that God meets our need with provision and abundance. There was 12 baskets of food after everyone ate and was satisfied. We need not fear scarcity but trust God and His abundance. Everyone ate, everyone was satisfied, and everyone experienced God's goodness. This is what Gods kingdom is all about.