



Calvary Presbyterian Church
Sunday, AUGUST 6, 2023

"Walking Again: Learning to Follow Jesus on Foot"
Rev. Eyde Mabanglo

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

Gracious God, we do not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from your mouth. Make us hungry for this heavenly food, that it may nourish us today in the ways of eternal life; through Jesus Christ, the bread of heaven. Amen.

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 14:13-21

Jesus Feeds Five Thousand

13As soon as Jesus heard the news, he left in a boat to a remote area to be alone. But the crowds heard where he was headed and followed on foot from many towns. 14Jesus saw the huge crowd as he stepped from the boat, and he had compassion on them and healed their sick.

15That evening the disciples came to him and said, "This is a remote place, and it's already getting late. Send the crowds away so they can go to the villages and buy food for themselves."

16But Jesus said, "That isn't necessary—you feed them."

17"But we have only five loaves of bread and two fish!" they answered.

18"Bring them here," he said. 19Then he told the people to sit down on the grass. Jesus took the five loaves and two fish, looked up toward heaven, and blessed them. Then, breaking the loaves into pieces, he gave the bread to the disciples, who distributed it to the people. 20They all ate as much as they wanted, and afterward, the disciples picked up twelve baskets of leftovers. 21About 5,000 men were fed that day, in addition to all the women and children!

SERMON

"On Foot" Matthew 14:13

"Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns."

"On Foot" Exodus 12:37

"The Israelites journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides little ones."

"On Foot" means that...

Following Jesus is an Exodus Journey

- Entering the Wilderness
- Relying on God's Provision
- Offering our Whole Selves
- Redistributing Resources
- Breaking Bread Together
- Leaving Empire Behind
- Experiencing Koinonia

Entering a Wilderness—

Like seeking a place of refuge and respite—my time at my aunt's after my surgery...a time of healing, recovery as well as rehab and preparation for new adventure...a place of transformation

...like the Israelites fleeing Egypt...like John preaching and preparing a way...like Jesus led by the Spirit...like the people seeking proximity with Jesus-- it is a walking—a walking away from the noise of empire, the distraction of materialism, and allowing our broken hearts to be healed, our hunger for justice and peace to be satiated, and our spirits to listen to the voice of wisdom and truth

Relying on God's Provisions—

Trusting in my God, my surgeons, my tribe—
family and friends for my health and healing
benevolence and abundance—renewed health and satisfied hunger

Psalm 107:9

"He has quenched their thirst, and He has satisfied their hunger with what is good."

Offering our Whole Selves–

Compassion is the heart of God

We need it for ourselves—and to be receptive of it in all its forms

Offering our self means becoming vulnerable

My self-compassion required me to rest, trust, and receive the compassion of others

...humility, stripped of pretense, expansive compassion for self, expansive compassion for others, expansive view of God's far reaching love

Redistributing Resources

Calvary understands this—you offered me ice packs, walkers, ice packs, meals, ice packs, an elliptical machine, ice packs, wine, ice packs, shower sleeves, ice packs, transportation, and ice packs

Jesus Heals Them

Jesus feeds them

Jesus uses the disciples to redistribute resources...

like communion...like every shared meal

Take! Eat! and Remember!

Breaking Bread (manna) Together

...is the primary way to build and maintain community

Calvary understands the importance of providing meals and sharing out of abundance. A community of farmers. A community of friends. A community of those who have experienced extreme hunger at one time or another or at least a season of sacred interdependence as they healed from a similar medical procedure.

During my recovery these last two weeks, you've given me gift baskets, gift cards, frozen lasagna and yummy pasta with dill and fresh fruit and green beans. You continue to feed the crowds through these ongoing endeavors:

Full Bellies

POM

Coffee Fellowship

Cafe Calvary

Communion is Family dinner

Church Picnic

Leaving Empire Behind

Yes—Jesus is political

"I tell you this: whenever you saw a brother or sister hungry or cold, whatever you did to the least of these, so you did to Me." (Mt 25:40)

"The Matthew 25 vision challenges the PC(USA) to "see the ways to reform, rethink and reimagine how we engage in this world that needs our witness now, to point people to another reality and another way of being that invites all God's children to the table," the Rev. Dr. Diane Moffett, president and executive director of the PMA."

...letting go of the trappings of empire

Some people are less than in Herod's empire

All people are beloved in God's kin-dom

Shall we compare Herod's party (in the verses before) to the feeding of the 5,000?

We gather to honor life, give life...like wanting to feed the crowd

Not to take life or deny life...like asking for John's head on a platter.

We leave pretense, tyranny, exploitation,

gaudy gold throne rooms or ballrooms, fame and abuses of power

We embrace the power of other and "we" and together and solidarity...

We take what we have (five loaves and two fishes) and we make it work.

And it does work, because we don't need as much,

because we had more than we thought, because the Lord provides,

because there are riches beyond measure within the realm of God's economy.

Acts 2:42–

"The community continually committed themselves to learning what the apostles taught them, gathering for fellowship, breaking bread, and praying."

Experiencing Koinonia

Saturday morning breakfast at our cabin...my Dad loved making a big breakfast on weekend mornings...Some people didn't get it, but I love how God is portrayed as Papa in the kitchen in the novel (and movie) THE SHACK.

Scripture tells us that Jesus wrapped a towel around himself and picked up a washing basin to wash his disciples' feet, so we should not bristle if a fictional

author decides to describe Our Almighty God as wearing a kitchen apron. It takes more power to set aside power and pour out compassion like clean water from a ceramic basin or perfume from an alabaster jar.

Jesus wants to feed us and then wants us to feed others...Jesus isn't an arrogant, power-monger, elite trying to coerce people into following him. He doesn't require death, except for a dying to self or to self-righteousness or to selfishness or to self-efficacy. He wants us to humbly walk with him and follow him on foot, join him in the wilderness or the kitchen or the shore or the dining room table for a shared meal to enjoy communion.

This is our Almighty God!

John 21

9When they got there, they found breakfast waiting for them—fish cooking over a charcoal fire, and some bread.

10"Bring some of the fish you've just caught," Jesus said. 11So Simon Peter went aboard and dragged the net to the shore. There were 153 large fish, and yet the net hadn't torn.

12"Now come and have some breakfast!" Jesus said. None of the disciples dared to ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord. 13Then Jesus served them the bread and the fish. 14This was the third time Jesus had appeared to his disciples since he had been raised from the dead.

15After breakfast Jesus asked Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?"

"Yes, Lord," Peter replied, "you know I love you."

"Then feed my lambs," Jesus told him.

16Jesus repeated the question: "Simon son of John, do you love me?"

"Yes, Lord," Peter said, "you know I love you."

"Then take care of my sheep," Jesus said.

17A third time he asked him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?"

Peter was hurt that Jesus asked the question a third time. He said, "Lord, you know everything. You know that I love you."

Jesus said, "Then feed my sheep."

Koinonia refers to ***intimate spiritual communion and participative sharing in a common religious commitment and spiritual community***. It is our experience, at times, in our own Christian communities...it is a Now reality as it is also a Not Yet hope...

I talked with Bruce (mentor and friend of the family) yesterday...about the recent passing of an old friend (a physician who I knew as a fellow camp counselor many years ago who just died of brain cancer).

Bruce expressed his own Wanting to live because life is good, but he also shared that our living is also comingled, perhaps, with an impatient waiting to live the next life!

He thought about what it would be to wake up in a renewed reality of God's all-encompassing hope and joy and celebration of praise and peacefulness.

Friends, like my getting a new knee and finding new mobility, let us learn to walk again.

Let us learn to follow Jesus on foot.

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We embrace this life in hope for the next life, waking up to a shared meal (the smell of pancakes and coffee, bacon and eggs, sweet rolls, and fruit...our Heavenly Papa in the kitchen preparing a meal for us—all of us—God's beloved).

I love you.

I forgive you.

Let's eat.

May it be so. May it be so.

