

July 31, 2011
Sermon The Seventh Sunday after Pentecost
St. Peter Lutheran Church
Bowie, TX
Larry Knobloch, Pastor
Matthew 14:13-21 (ESV)

J.J.- Jesu Juva—Help me, Jesus

Matthew 14:13-21 (ESV)

¹³ Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a desolate place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. ¹⁴ When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them and healed their sick. ¹⁵ Now when it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, “This is a desolate place, and the day is now over; send the crowds away to go into the villages and buy food for themselves.” ¹⁶ But Jesus said, “**They need not go away; you give them something to eat.**” ¹⁷ They said to him, “We have only five loaves here and two fish.” ¹⁸ And he said, “**Bring them here to me.**” ¹⁹ Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass, and taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing. Then he broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. ²⁰ And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up twelve baskets full of the broken pieces left over. ²¹ And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

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¹ *The Holy Bible : English Standard Version.* Wheaton : Standard Bible Society, 2001

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God, our Father and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

From our Text, we understand that God intends to multiply riches into the lives of *true* Christians! God's chief desire is to satisfy you materially with overflowing blessings! And what's more, God will do this even if you bring only meager resources—say, five loaves and two fish. All it takes is your offering to Jesus (preferably through the church or church leader), which he is able to multiply superabundantly—even with 12 baskets full of the leftovers! It's all here in our text this morning. Just read it!

Don't be misled. Modern day "Prosperity gospel" or the "Word of faith movement." The "Name it, claim it." Or Positive confession faith has trapped many people into expecting monetary or physical, earthly blessings because they drop their dollar in the plate.

As the crowds in our text clamored toward Jesus, people today are often attracted to this twenty-first-century theology of glory, looking for the physical rather than the spiritual. But that's not Jesus' way. No, the increasingly popular prosperity religion movement may point to Jesus' feeding five thousand as proof of their claims, but, in fact, Jesus fed all those people to offer something much better.

JESUS PROVIDES A GOSPEL BEYOND PROSPERITY.

Unlike prosperity "gos-pelers", Jesus isn't a crowd-seeker (vv 13–14). He was looking for a place to be alone, to contemplate and possibly weep over John's death.

Yet, the practitioners of prosperity religions are often crowd-seekers and crowd pleasers. What they offer does indeed attract and please our sinful, selfish desires. And popular following serves the sinful, selfish desires of many prosperity practitioners. Rather than asking if their worship pleases God, the main concern is does this person or group please me.

Does the music make me feel good, am I getting warm and fuzzies or am I following God's Word?

In the Gospel text, Jesus was instead seeking a solitary place. He wished to be alone after the death of His cousin John the Baptist. He didn't seek the crowds, He wasn't out to satisfy the curious or amuse the crowds. In fact, it seemed that Jesus was trying to stay away from the multitude of people that were seeking Him.

But when the crowds came to Him, He had compassion on them. Jesus left His own time of contemplation to willingly served *their* needs, not His own. That my friends is compassion. We don't fully understand compassion, probably because we can't. Only by looking at the perfection of Christ, can we even begin to comprehend compassion.

We do our best, we have been moved to help our neighbor, but unlike Jesus, we offer, help or give from our excess rather than our substance.

Jesus offered and continues to offer us every fiber of His being. From leaving the perfection of Heaven and living among us to dying on the cross for our sins where His true body and blood, were given and shed for the forgiveness of our sins.

As Jesus reacted in compassion to the crowds, so He acts in compassion towards us. That is always Jesus' way—serving all of mankind; whether we appreciate it or not.

And it is not the empty, earthly prosperity gospel. Rather than prosperity, Jesus' Gospel gives & provides truly.

Prosperity gospel offers false provision—a theology of glory and worldly things. Promising earthly things that will rust and rot away.

But Jesus' Gospel provides Himself to us.

Properly understood, bread and fish and all earthly providing are expressions of the reconciliation we have with God by Jesus' giving Himself on the cross.

In particular, the providing of this miracle reflects the Eucharistic provision (taking, blessing, breaking, giving) by which Jesus gives Himself and by which we have forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

When we have Jesus himself, “all these things” will be added—according to His perfect will.

Conclusion: Many Christians remember St. Ignatius of Loyola on this day, July 31. He died in the year 1556. He writes of our giving: “Teach us, good Lord, to serve Thee as Thou deservest: To give and not to count the cost; to fight and not to heed the wounds; to toil and not to seek for rest; to labor and not to ask for any reward save that of knowing that we do Thy will.” No prosperity gospel there. We don't need it. We have Jesus instead.

He came down to this earthly realm, leaving behind the perfection of heaven. Born of a woman, born under the Law so that He could fulfill the Law for us. The Jesus went further as He took our sins upon Himself and died the death that we couldn't. In His death we have life. And in His resurrection we have the promise of eternal life. Through faith in Him as your Savior, you are forgiven and indeed, have the promise of eternal life.

Amen

The peace of God passes all understanding keep your hearts and minds unto Christ Jesus.

Amen.