

TRINITY 7

July 30 2017

Old Test: Genesis 2:7-17

Epistle: Romans 6:19-23

Gospel: Mark 8:19

Standing..

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

The basis for today's sermon is the Gospel lesson we just heard—the feeding of the 4000.

Let us pray. May the words of my mouth and the meditation of all of our hearts be acceptable in your sight, O Lord—our strength and our redeemer. Amen.

Sitting..

Have I ever told you how my father eats an orange?

He gets out his pocket knife,
because "real men carry a pocketknife."

(Don't tell him I opt to carry fingernail clippers.)

But with his knife in hand he takes the orange,
cutting a hole in the top

He then begins to slurp out the juice.

He squeezes the orange and slurps again.

Repeating this process until all the juice is
gone before

he opens it up to eat.

That's similar to our gospel text—

in that there's a lot here to squeeze out.

The text has already been read,

so it's like a hole has already been cut for us.

And upon our first squeeze—

we see the care and compassion Christ has for those
who leave things behind in order to hear from Him.

What do I mean?

Well, this miracle has happened before.

That was the feeding of the 5000.

Yet that feeding was for folks who were merely
curious—

interested more in Jesus' healings and
miracles.

Coming out to see the show.

They only spent a day with Jesus,
 not far from their cities,
 not far from their homes.

And after eating,
 most of them didn't stick around very long.

This crowd is different.
 They left things behind,
 They journey into the wilderness and were with Jesus three
 days

for no other reason
 than to hear Him,
 to learn from Him,
 to receive eternal life from Him.

It reminds me of the story of Martha and Mary. You know that
 one...

The group here is like Mary sitting at the feet of Jesus
 not realizing they've run out of food.
 They won't be able to make it back home without
 collapsing.

Yet the nature of God is compassion—
 a word that has to do with your guts—
 where the bowels are moved.

Jesus had compassion seeing the people as sheep without a
 shepherd.

He says, "I have compassion on the multitude,
 because they have now continued with Me three days and have
 nothing to eat."

As a result, everything turned out fine for those who stayed
 with Jesus,

for they Him to take care of them. And He does.

He has the people sit down and wait.

They're passive—which is a lovely picture of the
 gospel.

We do nothing—nothing but receive and Jesus does the
 work.

The compassion of Jesus didn't end there.

Jesus' compassion took Him all the way to the cross,
 where He died,

not only for the people He fed that day
 but for all of you as well.
 Compassion—it's the nature of our God.

Upon our second squeeze Jesus wasn't joking when we said we do not live by bread alone.

We need bread,
 but more importantly we need a steady diet of God's Word.
 Now look,

reading the Bible on your own is no easy undertaking.
 This is why the Church has referred the beginner in the
 Christian faith
 to the preached Word, where it is expanded and
 explained.
 The preached Word is easier to assimilate than the
 read word.

However, most of you are not beginners in the
 faith,

which is why my exhortation to you this
 morning is
 to read your Bible.

In order to do that,
 you've got to have a plan—determine a time and a place—and
 stick to it.

Reading the Bible in a year is fine, if you're in to that
 sort of thing.

But my experience is, it's just not possible for most
 folks.

Most of us need longer.
 Keep in mind,
 the goal of our reading is not for us to get
 through the Bible—

"I did it."

the goal is for the Bible to get
 through us.

Man does not live by bread alone,
 but by every word
 which proceeds from the mouth
 of God.

With our last squeeze we recall how Jesus does miraculous things
 with food and drink. Back in the Exodus wanderings

God fed those making their way to the Promised Land
 with manna and water from a rock.

And now, this One who can make seven loaves feed
 thousands

can and is present with His body in the bread and wine.

This miraculous provision for the body ultimately points to the miraculous provision for the soul—the Lord's Supper.

And Jesus gives it to us for the same reason He gave the food to them.

He fed them that day because He knew without His help they'd perish—

and He gives us His supper for the same reason.

He knows we're dying and without His help,
without the forgiveness of sin,
life and salvation that only He offers,
we too would perish.

Alright—so following my father's orange eating method,
after all the squeezing
and slurping up what we can from this gospel text,
what's left for us to do?

We eat.

We taste and see that the LORD is good.

In the Name of the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit, Amen.

Standing..

And now may the peace of God which passes all understanding keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Sitting..

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