

Worship on August 6, 2023 (CCLI: License Number #3156883)
(Welcoming Elder: Edwin Webster)

Sunday Order of worship

We Gather

- Call to worship
- Praise song – BOP 374 Oh for a thousand tongues to sing
- Prayer for worship + Lord's Prayer
- Words of Assurance
- Time for our children and youth
- Praise song – BOP 507 Break now the bread of life

We Listen

- Prayer for illumination
- First reading: Isaiah 55:1-5
- Second reading: Psalm 145:8-9, 14-21 (refrain 1)
- Third reading: Matthew 14:13-21
- Sermon: Jesus feeds five thousand
- Prayer for the people

We Respond

- Offering, Doxology (BOP 79 Praise God from whom all blessings vs. 1) & Dedication
- Song for the Journey – BOP 563 Let us talents and tongues employ

We Serve

- Benediction

As we come into the presence of our God, let us open our hearts and minds,
and focus on our Lord and King.

Responsive Call to Worship

Our God is faithful in words, and gracious in action.

Our eyes look to God for nurture in every season.

God is near to all who call out in truth.

God satisfies every living thing.

God watches over all who offer love and praise,

So we will praise God's holy name for ever and ever.

Praise song – BOP 374 Oh for a thousand tongues to sing

Prayer For Adoration and Confession

Mysterious and merciful God, we praise you for all the ways you offer us abundant life.

When the sun rises and the earth blooms around us, we are thankful for your gift of a new day.

When evening falls and we find ourselves in a lonely place, we count on your presence for comfort. For the times you show us the way and give us guidance, we praise you.

For the healing you offer when we are broken and hurting, we rejoice.

Your grace satisfies us in every situation, and so we worship you for you are the Source of life and love, comfort and courage day by day. Receive our prayers and praise, O God, this day and every day, now and always.

Gracious and merciful God, In Jesus you show us the way of compassion and forgiveness, yet we neglect the suffering of others. We blame and judge each other in the moments you call us to act with kindness and mercy. Free us from greed and from grievance. Open our hearts so that we may embody Jesus' teachings and walk in his way.

This time we come to you in prayer that you taught us how to pray: (The Lord's Prayer:)
Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Words of Assurance

The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. Know that in Christ, you are forgiven. Forgive one another, and be at peace with God, be at peace with yourself and be at peace with each other.

May the peace of the Lord be with you. Let us take few moments to greet each other and share this joy of our Risen Lord.

Prayer for children and youth

God of mystery, we believe that you are beyond our thoughts and understanding. Your works are beyond us. Unfathomable wisdom. With abundant wisdom, you always watch over us and you guide us in the right paths. We praise you and we worship you. And we pray to you for our precious children and youth. As you fed 5000 people with two fish and 5 loaves of bread, you are limitless. You are powerful. Not only powerful, but you are compassionate. Be compassionate on us. Be gracious to our next generations. Feed them with your amazing love and grace. Guide their steps with your wisdom and miracles. And, in the end, when they experience your great love and power, let them accept you just as you are, as their God, as their Master, as their all in all. Fill our children and youth with worshipping heart. Connect their hearts to yours, so they may come close to your love all through their lives. Be their guide and be their Lord. In Jesus' precious name, we pray. Amen.

Praise song – BOP 507 Break now the bread of life

Prayer for Illumination:

Holy God, your Word is bread for our journey. Send us your Holy Spirit so that we may know your wisdom and live it out for the sake of Christ, your Living Word. Amen.

First reading: Isaiah 55:1-5

Second reading: Psalm 145:8-9, 14-21 (refrain 1)

Third reading: Matthew 14:13-21

“This is the word of the Lord / Thanks be to God.”

SERMON: Jesus feeds five thousand

Today's sermon title is "Jesus feeds five thousand."

Jesus performed many miracles. Open the eyes of the blind, rose the dead, walked on the water, cast out demon, heal the sick. Among many miracles of Jesus, today's miracle is the only miracle of Jesus which recorded in all of the Four Gospels. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

But, surprisingly, Jesus does not say anything about this miracle. He does not give any parables. Today's miracle is full of actions, not a speech about it.

These are the action verbs: **Jesus saw. Jesus had compassion. Jesus ordered the crowds to sit down. Jesus took the bread. Jesus looked up to heaven. Jesus blessed. Jesus broke the bread and Jesus gave.** Many action verbs. But, this miracle began with Jesus trying to find time alone.

V13, "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." Jesus was trying to have his alone time with God. As we know, Jesus, from time to time, spent alone time with God in prayer. He wanted to have time with God. So, he took a boat in order to scatter the crowds. But, they still followed. Why did they follow Jesus? Did they care where they were heading? I don't think so. They just followed wherever Jesus went.

Then, why Jesus mattered for them? Jesus provided something people wanted. Otherwise, they would never follow.

V14, "When [Jesus] went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick."

The people had needs. They were sick. They were desperate. They needed Jesus. **The crowds were there because they were lack.** They wanted to fulfill their desires. For them, Jesus had a compassionate heart.

This is the emotional background of the crowds.

Then, what about the physical background of today's story?

V15, "When it was evening, the disciples came to [Jesus] and said, 'This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the village and buy food for themselves.'"

What time is this? We don't know the exact time, but we know it's evening, about supper time, which means, they were hungry. It was time to eat.

Where are they? They were in a deserted place.

Do they have something to eat? OR do they have any access to buy food? No.

Then, they were hungry, the disciples were hungry. But, the disciples might have only few amounts of food, or none. The disciples knew that they need food.

In this case, there is only one way to fulfill everyone's need: scatter the crowds and get some food. We do not have any way to feed you, so do it yourself. You are on your own.

To this helpless plea of the disciples, what's answer of Jesus? **V16, "Jesus said to them, 'They need not go away; you give them something to eat.'**

To the disciples, the answer of Jesus was totally shocking. They might not have enough food to feed themselves, but Jesus was saying to feed 5000 men, which means 20,000 people including women and children. So, they need a lot of food.

The disciples reported to Jesus. **V17, "They replied, 'we have nothing here but five loaves and two fish.'"** What is Jesus doing? It's like a comedy.

But, here comes the power of God.

Jesus received the five loaves and two fish. Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass.

At this moment, what would people think? **“Wow, we are getting some food.”** Unless you had an experience of preparing this kind of huge conference, as a participant, we don't really care about how they supply food. So, the crowds listened to the instructions with their hungry stomach. They sat and waited to be fed. And they focused on what Jesus was doing.

V19, “Taking the five loaves and the two fish, [Jesus] looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds.”

Simple. Jesus said the grace and gave food to the disciples and the disciples fed the crowds. We do not have the detailed image of this. But, they all ate and were satisfied. The meal began with only 5 loaves and 2 fish, but they ended up with 12 baskets full of leftover. This is the end of the story. And then, Jesus dismissed the crowds.

V22, Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds.

After fulfilling the need of the people, Jesus, as planned, left them. He went to have the alone time with God. What's the importance of this event? What made this event to be recorded in all of the Four Gospels?

It seems like Jesus just stopped by to feed the crowds on the way to have a prayer time.

For Jesus, being with God, spending time with God was the most important time. It is the time for intimacy with God and the reunion of the Triune God. It's like the time to experience the wholeness of himself. The prayer was the first priority of Jesus. But, what stopped Jesus?

It was the compassionate heart towards the crowds. In this, Jesus showed his love toward us. Compassionate heart for people became the main motivation of Jesus stopping by. Jesus puts us above his wants. **Jesus does not neglect our basic need.**

Jesus understands that we have to eat. **To make ends meet.** We all know how stressful and how difficult to put food on the table, not just any food, but something we can enjoy and satisfy.

Jesus understands this struggle of ours. How considerate of Jesus knowing the details of our lives. He cares for our practical needs. How encouraging!

Sometimes, there are people who gives us arm chair theories. Then, we feel that, 'you don't understand.' We all know that, the theories are different from actual practice.

Jesus is not giving us arm chair theories, but he stays with us in our reality, our practical needs.

This is the love of God. He loves us not just his own ways, but with something we actually need. He understands our reality. Many times, we don't struggle with big things. It's important, but we do not struggle with global warming every single day. What government does affects our lives for sure, but we are more interested in our daily realities. Egg price went up. Milk price went up. The bread is twice as expensive as it was before COVID. Gas price is shaking up and down as if dancing. The small details feel more real. Putting the food on the table becomes more difficult. Having truth of God in our hearts is great, but we have sickness in our bodies, we are hungry, we have struggles in relationships... We are facing practical problems.

Today's miracle shows that Jesus cares for our practical life. He cares about what we eat and when we eat.

Also, Jesus did not feed 5000, but the disciples did.

This also speaks something important to us.

As the followers of Jesus, are we considering ourselves the disciples of Jesus? YES, WE ARE.

So, this applies to us. Jesus said to his disciples, **“You give them something to eat.”**

We are supposed to give something to eat to the world. Jesus wants us to know what we have received from God and he wants us to use the gifts we have.

Lastly, the crowds. When they were dismissed, they went back home. If we experience something, it leaves a mark. They ate the outcome of the miracle of Jesus. **Without any lesson, they were dismissed. What does this experience mean to the crowds?** We experience the presence of God as we come and worship God. Sometimes, our desires are met in the presence of God. Then, what kind of changes do we experience? **What changes do we have in our daily lives?**

God showed that he cares for our daily lives. He guides you to the experience of satisfaction in realistic ways. Then, what? What changes in our lives?

Was it just a picnic prepared by a famous and popular teacher?

Jesus fed 5000. Jesus, as the ultimate source, gave loaves to the disciples. The disciples gave them to the crowds. **Jesus – Disciples – Crowds THEN WHAT?**

We were the crowds who received all the blessings. Now, Jesus is inviting us to become the disciple of Jesus handing out the blessings. We received the blessings and we experienced the love of God in the most appropriate way to fulfill our needs. Our desperate needs are met in the presence of God. In this love and power of God, would you live your life with God? Would you overcome your limit? Would you take the invitation as you go back to your daily life? Would you walk with God? God is waiting for us. He always welcomes us. Open your hearts and accept him.

This is the message of the Lord for us today. Let us pray.

Prayer for the people

God, you are gracious and abounding in love. You are slow to anger, but rich in love. When you fed 5000 men, you showed your love towards us. You know our needs. You care for our needs. You care for every single person you created. You neglect no one. We thank you for your love and grace. You never leave your children alone. Help us come close to you trusting your love.

Loving God, we believe that you know our needs. This time, we are going to come to you with our personal needs. Listen to our prayers and grant our prayers in the most appropriate ways for each person. Let us have a time for our personal prayers. Let us open our hearts and mouths asking God what we need. Let us have a personal prayer time for 2 min. (PERSONAL PRAYER)

Gracious and loving God, thank you for caring for us. Thank you for listening to our prayers. Be gracious upon us. With your abundant love, fill our hearts and lives.

We praise you and we love you. In Jesus' precious name, we pray. Amen.

Invitation to the offering: This is the time for offering. God is gracious to us. God is generous to us. So let us present our offerings with thankful hearts, grateful for all God's goodness to us.

Let us lift our hearts and lives as we present our gifts to God. (As we offer our gifts to God, let us praise God and glorify him.)

The Doxology (BOP 79 Vs. 1)

Offering prayer:

Blessed are you, God of all creation, for all your good gifts. Use the gifts we offer to spread your goodness in Jesus' name. Let your Holy Spirit work through us, so that your goodness will move through us into the world wherever we go. Be praised and glorified through us. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Song for the Journey – BOP 563 Let us talents and tongues employ

Now, it is the time for us to be sent to the world. Jesus lives again; earth can breathe again; pass the Word around; loaves abound. Jesus' love is abundant. Jesus becomes our ultimate source of power and life. Let us accept his love for us for our daily needs. And let us spread his love to all the people around the world. They need God. God invites you to be with him, to receive all his blessings, to spread out what he is giving you, and to live with him. Trust God and be with him.

Benediction: May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, And the Love of God, And the intimate fellowship of the Holy Spirit, Be with us all, now and always. Amen.