

Laetare
St. John 6:1-15
March 31st, 2019
Sts. Peter & Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
St. Michael and All Angels Evangelical Lutheran Mission, UAC
Augusta, GA
Pastor Jerald Dulas

This Is Truly the Prophet

In Nomine Iesu!

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:

O Lord, send out Thy Light and Thy Truth, let them lead us. O Lord, open Thou my lips, that my mouth may show forth Thy praise. O Lord, graciously preserve me, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected. Amen.

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

The Israelites in the wilderness after the Lord God had delivered them from the hand of Pharaoh and the Egyptians—after they were delivered from slavery—grumbled against the Lord God, and against the man of God, Moses. There was no food for them in the wilderness. They longed for all the good things that they had eaten in Egypt, forgetting that in Egypt they were in slavery and under oppression. They were so sorely oppressed in Egypt that they had cried out to the Lord their God for deliverance. So that the Lord God through His divine providence sent the man Moses to deliver them from Pharaoh and Egypt, by performing signs and plagues through him.

Moses, the man of God, delivered the Israelites from the oppression of slavery to the Egyptians. He was the prophet of the Most High God, who acted on the Lord's behalf, and led the people of Israel on the Lord's behalf. But in the wilderness, after the oppression of slavery was soon forgotten. The children of Israel complained about the lack of food, and sought to be returned to Egypt.

The Lord God had compassion on the children of Israel and sent them meat to eat in the form of quail, and sent them bread from Heaven in the form of manna. This manna sustained the Israelites for the entire forty years that they were in the wilderness. It was a testament to the Lord's compassion and love for His people. Even though they constantly grumbled against Him. The Lord God provided food for them throughout their wilderness journey for forty years. He gave them bread from Heaven. And everyone had enough to eat and were satisfied. Even though the number of the Israelites was about 600,000 men, plus women and children, they all had enough to eat.

Our Lord + Jesus is surrounded on the mountain by His Apostles and a large crowd of five thousand men, plus women and children. They only have two hundred denarii in the treasury, which as St. Philip says is not enough to buy enough food for the crowd, so that they could even get just a little taste. They also only have five loaves of barley bread and two fish, which would be donated by a little child. But, as St. Andrew points out, this is also not going to feed the large crowd. The Lord + Jesus tests His Apostles by asking them to provide food for the crowds. They know this is not possible with the earthly means that they have with them. Our Lord tests them to show them that they do not need to worry about their earthly means, because the Lord will provide them.

The Lord + Jesus, after praying to the Father and breaking the loaves, gave them to the disciples, who gave them to the crowds sitting down. In the same way that the Lord God fed the people of Israel in the wilderness with bread from Heaven. The Lord + Jesus, Who also is God, feeds the crowds on the mountain with the multiplication of the loaves and the fish. The Israelites in the wilderness had enough food to satisfy them from the manna. The five thousand men, plus women and children, ate to their heart's desire, as much as they wanted. And, there was still twelve baskets left after everyone ate to their fill.

This is our Lord's compassion and love for His people. He showed compassion on the children of Israel in the wilderness by providing quail and manna. Our Lord + Jesus shows compassion on the crowds who have come to hear His preaching by providing them with fish and bread. Both in the wilderness and on the mountain, no one went hungry. The Lord God—our Lord + Jesus, the Christ—provides all their earthly needs. He provides all that we need to support this body and life, too.

But He provides even more for us than that, for He provides also the needs of our soul—the things that lead to our eternal salvation. He sends us pastors to preach into our ears the good news of salvation found in Him—our Lord + Jesus—alone. He sends us preachers to preach into our ears all the good things that our Lord + Jesus has done for us. He has fulfilled the Law perfectly for us. He has suffered and died our punishment on the tree of the holy cross. And He sends to us His Holy Ghost, who creates and strengthens our faith through the Word and the Sacraments.

This is how our Lord + Jesus shows compassion and love for us, by seeing to both our earthly needs of bread and fish, quail and manna, and water from the rock. But He also gives us His very own Body and Blood in bread and wine, to give to us forgiveness of all our sins. He gives us the water of life in our Holy Baptism, to wash away all the stain of sin within us. We drink daily from this spiritual Rock, our Lord + Jesus Christ, when we daily confess our sins, and believe that for Christ's sake we have forgiveness, on account of His works and merits.

This is not a new thing for our Lord God, for He sent the man of God, Moses to be their prophet, and proclaim the Law of God to them, and tell them of all the good things that the Lord God desired to do for them as their God. And when Moses was to depart from this life, and no longer be the prophet for the Israelites, he prayed to the Lord God that He might send them a Prophet like unto himself from the people of Israel to preach the good things that the Lord God desired to do for them.

Joshua was certainly a forerunner and shadow of the Prophet to come into the world. Our Lord + Jesus Christ truly is the Prophet sent to deliver His people from sin, death and the power of the devil. The Lord + Jesus is truly the Prophet.

The crowds who were fed on the mountain make the connection between the man of God, Moses, who through the work of the Lord God, fed the people of Israel in the wilderness forty years with the bread of Heaven, manna, and between the man Who is God, the Lord + Jesus, Who fed the crowds to their fill with five loaves and two fish. They exclaim, "*This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world.*" Our Lord + Jesus, in the eyes of the crowds, is just like Moses. He is the Prophet Who is to come and redeem them from their enemies. So, the Lord knowing that they were desiring to take Him by force and make Him king, departs to be by Himself to pray.

The Lord + Jesus had come into the world to be the ruler of a kingdom, but His Kingdom is not of this world. His Kingdom is in Heaven. However, the time for His enthronement had not come. This event happened near the Passover, but it is the Passover a year before His betrayal, arrest, sham trial, persecution and death. His time had not yet come. The time was coming, as it is for us in our Church's year, as we today reach the halfway point of Lent. He would take His place upon the throne of the holy cross. Upon that throne He would suffer and die for us, and for our sins. He would make atonement

once and for all for the sins of all mankind. He would make atonement for our sins.

From His cross—from the place where conquered sin, death and the power of the devil once and for all—He rules as our suffering King. In the wilderness He gave the bread of Heaven to the Israelites. On the mountain, He gave the crowds bread and fish to their full. On the cross, and at our altar, He gives us His very Body and Blood in bread and wine. He gives us Himself—the Living Bread from Heaven—so that we might receive the forgiveness, which He suffered and died for on the tree of the holy cross.

The children of Israel complained of hunger and were filled through the Lord's compassion. The crowds on the mountain were fed, even though they did not give any kind of indication that they were hungry. We are fed in like manner. The Lord + Jesus Christ, gives us abundantly of His love and compassion for us, by giving us to eat His very Body, and drink His very Blood. By these means, He strengthens our faith in Him, so that we desire to love Him as He loves us. Truly this is the Prophet Who has come into the world. He has come for you to give you life and salvation.

Let us therefore not grumble and complain like the Israelites in the wilderness, but let us rejoice and be glad. For on account of our evil, sinful deeds, we deserve to be punished. We do not deserve any meal, or any good thing from the Lord God, but on account of His love and compassion—on account of His grace—He mercifully relieves us of all our misery and sin. Thanks be to God! In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy Name give glory! I will extol Thee, O Lord, and I will praise Thy Name forever and ever. Amen.

The Votum:

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.

Soli Deo Gloria!