

The Seventh Sunday after Trinity Sunday
St. Mark 8:1-9
July 23rd, 2023
Sts. Peter and Paul Ev. Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
All Saints Ev. Lutheran Mission, UAC
Pawleys Island, SC
St. Bartholomew Ev. Lutheran Mission, UAC
Fort Myers, FL
Pastor Jerald Dulas

They Ate, And Were Filled

In Nomine Iesu!

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

Sermon Text:

And they ate, and were filled: and they took up, of broken pieces that remained over, seven baskets. And they were about four thousand: and he sent them away.

Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, Whose mercies are new unto us every morning and Who, though we have in no wise deserved Thy goodness, dost abundantly provide for all our wants of body and soul: Give us, we pray Thee, Thy Holy Spirit, that we may heartily acknowledge Thy merciful goodness toward us, give thanks for all Thy benefits, and serve Thee in willing obedience; through, Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

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

Our Triune Lord God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost is very abundant in His gifts to us. Our Lord God provides all of our needs in two ways: He provides for our physical needs, as we see in this Gospel reading from the Evangelist St. Mark, and He provides for all of our spiritual needs, as we also see in this Gospel pericope on this Seventh Sunday after Trinity Sunday. Our Lord does not just provide us with our physical needs, that is, clothing and shoes, meat and drink, house and home, wife and children, fields, cattle, and all our goods. He does not just richly and daily provide us with all that we need to support this body and life. He also supplies everything good thing that we need for our spiritual life, that is, He forgives us all of our sins, He grants to us eternal life with Him in Heaven, and He guards and protects us from all evil that sin, death and the devil try to throw at us.

Our Lord God does not just give these gifts to us. He gives bread to the eater, and seed to the sower. He causes the sun to shine on both the good and the evil. He gives rain, and shelter, and all the needs of the body to both Christians and unbelievers alike. This is how compassionate He is. He gives from His abundant bounty regardless of whether we merit or not. There are many people who would be considered unworthy of the wealth that they have received, who have received their possessions in abundance. There are more people who are unworthy of their wealth than those who are deserving of it. Our Lord would have them realize this and thank Him properly for the gifts that they receive.

But sadly, this world is full of those who do not acknowledge that everything that they have is from the Lord God. They believe they have received these things because they deserve them. They believe that they have received these things because of what they have done. They completely ignore

the grace and providence of the Lord God. Either they do not acknowledge His hand in them at all, or they fail to thank Him for what they have rightly received from Him. Our Lord sheds His abundance on this earth so that we may properly thank Him for His good gifts, and that we may acknowledge Him as the giver of all good things. We are no different from the people of this world when we fail to thank and praise the Lord God for all that we have to support this body and life.

Our Lord provides what we need for our physical lives in abundance. He gives us all that we need to support this body and life. And like with the multitude of the four thousand in the Gospel reading for today, He gives us enough to even have more than we need. When we grumble about the little we have we show our unbelief. For this is how unbelievers behave. They behave in two ways: they either believe everything they have is from their own working and doing, or they grumble that they do not have enough; they always crave something more. This need to have more drives men into all sorts of evils. Men naturally covet what their neighbor has. They want to possess it for their own. Many will try to take it by a show of right, by using legal means to take what the Lord God has rightly given to their neighbor. And many, if they cannot get it by legal means, will take it by illegal means. This is especially true in the world outside of the Church, where men steal and plot in order to horde up the physical treasures of this world.

But this is not how we who cling in faith to the Lord + Jesus are to behave. We are to learn contentment. We can learn to be content with whatever physical benefits our Lord has given to us, because we know that we possess something far greater than anything that we can have in this world. For we know that our Lord God does not just provide us with the things we need to support this body and life, but He also richly provides us with all that we need to bring us into eternal life. Our Lord + Jesus came down from Heaven to be one of us in order that He might win for us the gifts of Heaven. He has made us co-heirs with Him of the abundant riches of Heaven. We have been adopted as sons, and made His brothers, so that we may receive that which He won for us by His innocent suffering and death on the tree of the holy cross.

We are given these gifts whenever we gather together in His Name. Our Lord has promised that wherever two or three are gathered in His Name there He is with us. He is here with us today, giving us His gifts. He is giving to us today the gifts that He won for us by His suffering and death on the cross. We receive the forgiveness of sins, eternal life and salvation that are bestowed upon us abundantly through the means of grace. Wherever His Word is preached in its purity and wherever the sacraments are administered according to His institution our Lord + Jesus is here with us forgiving us our sins, and leading us into Heaven with Him, and guarding and defending us against all influence from our evil foes. And He is teaching us to cling to Him in faith and rejoice in these gifts that He abundantly provides for us, so that we may rightly thank and praise Him for giving us not only our physical needs, but our spiritual needs.

We have a picture of this in the Gospel reading from the Evangelist St. Mark for today. We see a picture of how the Lord + Jesus gives to us both our physical and spiritual needs in the great crowd of four thousand that followed Him to hear His preaching. St. Mark tells us that the crowds followed our Lord + Jesus in the wilderness for three days. What do you think our Lord + Jesus did for three days? Did He just wander around aimlessly, and the crowds just followed Him aimlessly? No, most certainly not! Our Lord was preaching the good news the entire time. This crowd shows their faith in that they clung to His every word for three days. They did not want to miss a word of what the Lord + Jesus had to say. They knew that what He had to say was just that important. So, they followed Him where He went listening to Him proclaim the salvation found in Him alone.

In this we see our Lord + Jesus providing this crowd of four thousand with all their spiritual needs. For all of our spiritual needs are given to us through the pure preaching of the Word of God. Wherever the Lord's Word is found, there can be found the means that sustain our faith in Him; our spiritual needs.

This is why our Lord + Jesus attaches His Word to physical means as well as auditory means. It is a reflection of His abundance. He does not just forgive our sins, and lead us into eternal life in one or two ways, but in multiple ways. In these means, He provides the gifts of Heaven by being present with us through these means. Wherever two or three are gathered in His Name are receiving Him and receiving the gifts of Heaven. With the four thousand, our Lord + Jesus did not have to work through means, because He was already there with them. With us, however, He works through means to come to us and give us life and salvation.

How could we not want to be where our Lord meets us? The crowd of four thousand wandered with our Lord + Jesus in the wilderness to be with Him and hear His word. They did not seem to care about their physical needs. All they cared about was hearing the Word of the Lord. They were not concerned about how much or how little earthly possessions they had. They only cared about hearing the Word of the Lord. Why should it be different with us? Here we are gathered in the Lord's Name to receive His preaching—to receive His Word. Why should we have cares about our physical needs? Lack of sleep, or lack of food, or lack of companionship all pale in comparison to the gifts we are receiving right now. No earthly possession can compare to the gifts of forgiveness, life and salvation that we are receiving here today.

Our Lord + Jesus is abundant in His giving. He is certainly providing us with all of our spiritual needs. But like the crowds, He does not send us away hungry. The crowds ate, and were filled. They did not just receive the preaching of the Word, but the Bread of Life, our Lord + Jesus, also gave them bread and fish in abundance; as much as they could eat so that they were filled and satisfied. There were even leftovers—seven baskets full—after everyone had eaten and were filled.

Our Lord provides us with our spiritual needs here in this place today, but He would also not have us go hungry. He would have us see how richly and daily He provides us with all that we need to support this body and life. He would not have us be like the unbelieving grumblers who complain that they do not have enough of this or that. He would rather have us learn to be content—to be happy with the little or much that we have. For our Lord God provides us with earthly blessings not so that we may hoard them to ourselves, but that we might share them with our neighbors in need. He would also have us realize that the things that we have in this life will not be carried with us into eternal life.

Our Lord + Jesus gives us our physical needs in order to support our faith in the spiritual needs that He richly and daily supplies. This is why He fed the four thousand so abundantly in the wilderness. This miracle served as a witness to the preaching that they heard. It showed that He was indeed the Messiah—the Anointed One—of the Lord God come down to earth to dwell with them. They heard it in His preaching, they saw it and ate it in the abundance of the feeding of loaves and fishes. Our physical blessings in this life are meant to also lead us to faith in the Christ. If we have been blessed greatly with physical blessings, then we can cling faithfully to our Lord + Jesus by being as abundant with our wealth as He is with His. If we have little earthly possessions in this life, then we can cling faithfully to the Lord + Jesus knowing He has given us all that we need to bring us safely into our eternal home with Him.

Whether we have great or little earthly possessions, our Lord + Jesus desires us to cling in faith to Him and gather together like the crowd of four thousand and diligently hear His Word. For He desires to give us the means to receive the gifts of Heaven. He desires to richly forgive us all our sins, to bring us safely into our eternal reward in Heaven, and guard and defend us against all the attacks of our enemies: the devil, the world and our sinful flesh. He has brought us safely to this day and this place to hear His holy Word and to receive from Him the abundance of His grace and compassion. Thanks be to the Lord God for all His gifts! In the Name of our Lord + Jesus, the Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

Almighty God, be pleased to accompany Thy Word with Thy Holy Spirit and grant that Thy Word

would increase faith in us; bring into the Way of Truth all such as have erred; turn the hearts of the unrepentant; and for sake of Thy Name grant succor to all heavy hearts and those who are heavy-laden, that they may through the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ be relieved and preserved so that they succumb not to the temptation of despair but rather that they gain the victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil; through the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with the Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever One God, world without end. Amen.

The Votum:

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

Soli Deo Gloria!