

## Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

OLD TESTAMENT – Isaiah 55:1-5

**“Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. <sup>2</sup> Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the richest of fare. <sup>3</sup> Give ear and come to me; hear me, that your soul may live. I will make an everlasting covenant with you, my faithful love promised to David. <sup>4</sup> See, I have made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander of the peoples. <sup>5</sup> Surely you will summon nations you know not, and nations that do not know you will hasten to you, because of the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has endowed you with splendor.”**

**55:1-5** The battle that led to the victory of Isaiah 55 reaches back to the previous chapters, particularly ch 53. This great Suffering Servant passage does two tasks for this sermon. First, it identifies what comprises the meal of ch 55, but especially what the Suffering Servant did to set the table. Second, it provides the jump to Jesus and his work on Good Friday as the fulfillment of that prophecy. With Isaiah 53 providing the basis for the proclamation of the suffering and death of Christ, Isaiah 55 then follows up by opening the door for the proclamation of Jesus’ resurrection and his presence at the celebratory victory meal. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 3)

Reed Lessing (*Isaiah 40–55, Concordia Commentary* [St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2011], 665) summarizes this passage: Yahweh has prepared a victory feast (55:1–2) and has invited all to be incorporated into David’s everlasting covenant (55:3). The result is that the guests become his witnesses to the world (55:4–5). Deportees dare not drag their feet into this new life. “Seek Yahweh while he allows himself to be found!” (55:6). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 3)

**55:1†** The summons to salvation’s banquet, prepared by the servant, is issued to all people (see Lk 14:17). (CSB)

In the OT, longing for God and His wisdom is often associated with longing for water and food (cf Ps 36:8; Pr 18:4; Jer 2:13; for more on wisdom). (TLSB)

**LISTEN TO ME – HO (KJV)** – A cry arousing attention or expressing pity. It is like saying “attention everyone.” In Jerusalem the shopkeepers cry to the passer-by, “Ho, everyone that hath money, let him come and buy!” They indeed expect to get full value, though they offer for nothing. God intends a free and sovereign gift. This verse is a most urgent plea to accept freely all the good gifts that God has now in readiness for his own. (PC)

**COME** – This is almost an imperative but also a kind invitation. This as such shows us the nature of God, which is in itself a healing and satisfying nature, finding

expression in the incarnation and redemption of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is love – all things are now ready – come the banquet is open to us all.

Much like Lady Wisdom's invitation (Prov. 9:1-6), Is.55:1-2 sounds like a merchant's appeal to customers. The cry "come," three times in this verse mimics the sounds of a marketplace, where the staples of life – water, bread, milk, wine – are purchased for a price. This Vendor, however, offers food and drink at no cost. The Israelites had become thirsty and penniless through idolatry. Why stay in poverty when abundance is offered free of charge. (CC)

Repeated cry to come mimics the sounds of the marketplace, where the staples of life—water, bread, milk, wine—could be bought. Attendance at salvation's banquet, prepared by the Servant, is not restricted to the socially and financially elite. As a town crier, God broadcasts the invitation: "Come, for everything is now ready" (Lk 14:17). No one is forced to obey the summons. However, those who disregard it must reckon with the possibility that they have heard it for the last time (Is 49:8; Jn 12:35; 2Co 6:2). (TLSB)

Isaiah 64:6 "All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away."

Matthew 6:33 "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."

Matthew 11:28 "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."

1 Timothy 2:4 "who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth."

*thirsty*. Spiritual thirst is primary (see 41:17; 44:3; Ps 42:1–2; 63:1). (CSB)

The Holy Spirit poured out like water (32:15; 44:3; (see Jn. 7:37-39), and water is freely given by Yahweh to those in the wilderness (e.g., Is. 48:21; 49:10). He also likens his Word to life-giving rain (55:10-11). Similarly, Jesus offers the Samaritan woman "living water" (Jn. 4:10-15). Through faith in our triune God, our cups overflow. And it costs us nothing.

This is spiritual thirst. Thirsting differs from hungering in this – the hungering man will quietly lie down and die; the thirsting man will spend himself in mad striving. This invitation goes out to all who are spiritually dehydrated and starving. In every generation life apart from God proves unsatisfying. Luther says "This is an exhortation for Christians in the midst of their trials, lest disgust take control of all of them. For life-long Christians this exhortation is especially necessary lest they fall into contempt and loathing of the Word."

*waters*. Figurative for spiritual refreshment. Cf. Wisdom's invitation in Pr 9:5. Christ similarly invited people to drink the water of life (Jn 4:14; 7:37). (CSB)

Though readily available in many parts of the world, water was most precious in dry Israel. (TLSB)

Christ does not destroy the thirsting, but sets us down close beside the living spring. When the soul is quickened and feels new life, then is conscious of need – need of God – thirst for love and friendship – intellectual nature (Bible study to know more about power and love of God) The soul that has Christ has an up-springing well beside him; he lives near to the waters of life. What can better represent salvation than water – the well springs up into everlasting life? Waters, floods, overflowing streams or copious showers, are often used to denote abundant blessing from God. (PC)

Matthew 5:6 “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.”

Luke 14:17 “At the time of the banquet he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, ‘Come, for everything is now ready.’”

*no money*. In hard times even water had to be purchased (see La 5:4). (CSB)

It is especially addressed to the poor. No man can excuse himself for not being a Christian because he is poor; no man who is rich can boast that he has bought salvation. We frankly confess that we have nothing to pay, and he frankly forgives all. The reception of grace gifts are dependent upon nothing but a sense of need, and a readiness to accept the blessings offered.

This merchant offers staples at no cost, because the Suffering Servant has already paid the price (cf Is 53:11–12). (TLSB)

COME BUY – In this world you get what you pay for. Everything in the world costs something, must be paid for in money or labor, or in some act representing compensation for value received. The price here is the suffering and death of Jesus.

*wine and milk*. Symbols of abundance, enjoyment and nourishment. (CSB)

Wine and milk are figurative representatives of spiritual revival, re-creation and nourishment. These terms stand as symbols of impending salvation. This salvation is primarily thought of in terms of restoration from the prevailing exile. Luther says “Milk belongs to the children (young or new in faith), wine to adults (old or mature in faith.) In Scripture each person will find his appropriate remedies. As we grow in our faith the same text will have different application.

1 Peter 2:2 “Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation.”

*without money.* The death of the servant (53:5–9) paid for the free gift of life (see Ro 6:23). (CSB)

Who would ever “sell” anything so precious for free? This is revolutionary. Yahweh is no ordinary shopkeeper. His submissive Servant paid everything (“he poured out to death his life,” 53:12; see Rom. 6:23), so it costs us nothing. Ambrose writes: “For he who paid for us with the price of his blood did not ask a price from us, because he redeemed us not with gold or silver but with his precious blood (1 Cor. 6:19-20). The feast is for the least, the lost, and the last (Lk. 14:21). It is for us! (CC)

**55:2** *what is not bread.* Perhaps the husks of pagan religious practices. Cf. Dt 8:3. (CSB)

Describes false teaching. Also, mere bread, and water drawn even from Jacob’s well, cannot satisfy our spiritual needs (Dt 8:3; Ps 42:1–2; 63:1; Pr 9:4–6; Jn 4:10–14; 1Pt 2:2). (TLSB)

Idol makers are described in 44:12 in terms strikingly similar to those used in the summons in 55:1-2b: they get hungry, lose their strength, do not drink water, and wear out. Thus, when the second part of Yahweh’s question exposes the senselessness of spending “your toil” on what is not bread, it calls people to turn away from idolatry and toward Yahweh’s gifts. In contrast to Babylonian “junk food” (cf. 44:20), the true staples of life come through God’s Word (see 40:8; 55:10-11). “Man does not live by bread alone, but on every Word that comes from Yahweh’s mouth” (Deut. 8:3, quoted in Mt. 4:4). This Word is the agent of life, and it is digested through the ear. Either we block our ears to God’s Word and remain dead in idolatry, or the Spirit opens our ears so that we listen and live (Cf. Is. 35:5; 50:4; Ps. 40:6; Mt. 11:15; Mk. 7:35). (CC)

The nation with its many talented people is devoting much effort to the acquisition of the lesser values. The Jew in Babylon had made themselves quite comfortable in the possession of material comforts. The affections of the great mass of Israelites were set on worldly things, on enriching themselves – adding field to field and hose to house. (The good life – the more things change, the more they are the same.) This could not sustain them and spiritually will do them no good. Many people are overweight physically but underweight spiritually.

John 6:27 “Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. On him God the Father has placed his seal of approval.”

ON WHAT DOES NOT SATISFY – Men labor, as a general rule, during the greater part of their lives for that which that doesn’t satisfy. Only a fortunate few learn early to set their affections on spiritual things. (greener pastures on other side of fence) A strange plant, called the nardoo, grows in the deserts of Lento, Australia. Its seeds formed for months almost the sole food of a party of explorers who crossed the continent. It is lacking in certain nutritious elements. These men starved even while

eating fully every day. Luther says “We must constantly remain pupils of the Word, because practice and custom are always fighting us.”

*Listen.* By listening, people receive the Lord’s good, life-giving gifts (cf Is 6:9; 50:4–5). (TLSB)

*richest of fare.* Great spiritual blessings are compared to a banquet (see 25:6 and note; Ps 22:26; 34:8; Jer 31:14). (CSB)

Jesus reiterates this invitation: “Do not work for food that perishes, but for food that endures to eternal life” (Jn. 6:27). He goes on to promise: I am the bread of life. The one of who comes to me will never hunger, and the one who believes in me will never thirst” (Jn. 6:35). Hannah’s Song (1 Sam. 2:1-10), echoed in the call for the barren woman to rejoice (Is. 54:1), states “Those who are full have hired themselves out for bread, but the hungry hunger no more” (1 Sam. 2:5; cf. Lk. 1:53). If the deportees fail to embrace the Gospel and instead remain in Babylon, they will spend their “toil for that which does not satisfy” (Is. 55:2). (CC)

Deuteronomy 8:3 “He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your fathers had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.”

**55:3** *you.* Plural; includes Israel and the Gentiles. (TLSB)

*everlasting covenant.*† Cf. Jer 31:31–34. David had been promised an unending dynasty, one that would culminate in the Messiah (see 9:7; 54:10; 61:8; 2Sa 7:14–16 and notes). (CSB)

The promises regarding David include the Lord’s sworn oath that the Davidic house will endure forever (cf 2Sm 7:13–16; 1Ch 17; Ps 89:1–4; 110; 132). (TLSB)

The center of the reading is God’s everlasting covenant. This covenant is one of total grace, initiated and fulfilled by God alone. Hence, whatever is offered is done so free of charge. Despite the buying and spending language, the paradoxical completion of those sentences reflects this covenant of grace—without money or price (v 1). What is offered is in abundance as it fully satisfies, and the phrase “that your soul may live” (v 3) moves this from mere physical eating and drinking in the Promised Land to the fullness of God’s salvation. From our post-Easter view, we see that the soul lives fully in the final resurrection on the day of Jesus’ return. The wine and milk indicate joy and richness of this meal of blessings. The many imperatives are inviting, and everyone is included because everything is free and such things as status, wealth, power, and fame do not matter. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 3)

That everlasting covenant once made between God and man had been broken by man and by Israel. It would naturally follow from this that unless God gave up man

altogether, he would enter into a new covenant with him. The mediatorship of Christ promised to David.

Isaiah 54:10 “Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed,” says the LORD, who has compassion on you.”

*faithful love.*† Assuring the continuation of God’s direction of history. See 54:8 and note. Christ’s resurrection was further proof of God’s faithfulness to David (see Ac 13:34, which quotes from this verse). (CSB)

PROMISED TO DAVID – David is probably to be understood in a representative sense; he is radiant with the reflected light and the spirituality of the messianic age.

The illustrious reign God graciously granted David was in turn a prophetic guarantee of the eternal Kingdom that the Son of David would establish, as Paul proclaimed in Ac 13:34 (cf Ps 21:7; 89:34–37; Ezk 34:23–24). The prophet does not spell out the full implications of this new understanding of the Davidic covenant. But in the NT, the baptized reign with Christ forever (cf 2Tm 2:12; Rv 22:5). (TLSB)

The exiles are not to slavishly recall Yahweh’s earlier covenant with David to the extent that it excludes them from the future. On the other hand, as they recall Yahweh’s covenant faithfulness to the house of David, they will, in turn, understand God’s love for them. (CC)

**55:4-5** Attention turns toward how those who have received this good food are to respond. David is a witness, and so also the people are to call those who do not know the Lord to come to him. This reflects Is 42:6, where Israel is to be a light to the Gentiles; Jesus then reiterates (Mt 5:14) that all those who feast with him at this celebration meal are to be “the light of the world” (cf. Lessing, 663). (*These notes draw heavily from Lessing’s commentary.*) (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 3)

**55:4** *Him.* David’s Son, the Messiah. (TLSB)

*witness to the peoples.*† A reference to David’s Son, the Messiah, who was a light to the nations (see 42:6; 49:6 and notes). (CSB)

God’s testimony to “the peoples” through Israel’s king reached full clarity in “Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth” (Rv 1:5; cf Jn 18:37). (TLSB)

The righteous Servant (53:11) imputes divine “righteousness” to the “servants” (54:17), the new Israel consisting of all in Christ, Jew and Gentile alike. Just so, David’s call to witness is also given to the whole people. The democratization of the Davidic covenant renews the original vocational intent of the Sinaitic covenant. Israel once again will be “a kingdom of priest and a holy nation” (Ex 19:6; cf. 1 Peter 2:9). They will be a light to the Gentiles (Is. 44:6; cf. 49:6), indeed, “the light of the world” (Mt. 5:14). This extension is

highlighted by the twofold use of “peoples,” Is. 55:4). When the prophet makes God’s covenant with David a model for God’s commitment to Jacob-Israel, in contrast there is an implication that this is significant for the whole human race. (CC)

*leader ... of the peoples.* † Similar titles are used of the Messiah in Da 9:25; Rev 1:5. (CSB)

**55:5** *you will summon nations.* The attraction of nations to Zion and to the God of Israel is a major Biblical theme (see, e.g., 2:2–4; 45:14; Zec 8:22 and notes). (CSB)

Many nations, esp those thus far unknown, will stream to Israel because of the deeds of the Lord (cf 2:1–5; chs 13–23). This envisioned worldwide outreach begins with the Lord’s summons to Abram (Gn 12:1–3), who will be the source of blessing to all the families of the earth (Gn 18:18; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14). The election of Israel is the very means of salvation for the nations (cf Ex 19:5–6). At Sinai, Israel is distinctly marked and empowered to be an evangelist. (TLSB)

God chose them to witness and so he does with us. This was a type of reverse exile. Today people from many nations are coming to America, to us as it were.

Isaiah 49:6 “he says: “It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth.

*that do not know you.* The reverse of the exile, when Israel was sent to a nation unknown to them (see Dt 28:36). Ruth left Moab to live with a people she “did not know before” (Ru 2:11). (CSB)

The Parallel use, “behold,” that begins both 55:4 and 55:5 compares David’s past in 55:4 to what Yahweh’s renewed servants will now become. Is. 55:3-5 transfers David’s covenant and his role as a witness to Yahweh’s reinstated servants. Their witness will be effective, drawing the unknown and unknowing nations to the one and only God. His has “glorified” his redeemed servants, even as he was “glorified” by the Suffering Servant (49:3). (CC)

*Holy One of Israel.* See 1:4; 41:14 and notes. (CSB)

*endowed ... with splendor.* † See 4:2; 60:9. (CSB)

#### EPISTLE – Romans 9:1-5

**I speak the truth in Christ—I am not lying, my conscience confirms it in the Holy Spirit—<sup>2</sup> I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. <sup>3</sup> For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race, <sup>4</sup> the people of Israel. Theirs is the adoption as sons; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises. <sup>5</sup> Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen**

**Chs 9–11** Paul now addresses the question of Jewish rejection of the Gospel. How can it be that the Gospel for “the Jew first” (1:16) has failed in its appeal to Israel? Is it really, therefore, the Gospel “of God” (1:1), and is it consistent with His plan of salvation? See note, 9:6. “Paul first directs people to repentance [Romans 1–2], to knowledge of sins [Romans 3:1–20], to faith in Christ [Romans 3:21–5:21], to divine obedience [Romans 6–8]. Then he speaks of the mystery of God’s eternal election [Romans 9–11]. This doctrine is useful and consolatory to the person who proceeds in this way” (FC Ep XI 11). (TLSB)

Luther: “In chapters 9, 10, and 11 [Paul] teaches of God’s eternal predestination—out of which originally proceeds who shall believe or not, who can or cannot get rid of sin—in order that our salvation may be taken entirely out of our hands and put in the hand of God alone. And this too is utterly necessary. For we are so weak and uncertain that if it depended on us, not even a single person would be saved; the devil would surely overpower us all. But since God is dependable—his predestination cannot fail, and no one can withstand him—we still have hope in the face of sin. (TLSB)

“Here, now, for once we must put a stop to those wicked and high flying spirits who first apply their own reason to this matter. They begin at the top to search the abyss of divine predestination, and worry in vain about whether they are predestinated. They are bound to plunge to their own destruction, either through despair, or through throwing caution to the winds. (TLSB)

“But you had better follow the order of this epistle. Worry first about Christ and the gospel, that you may recognize your sin and his grace. Then fight your sin, as the first eight chapters here have taught. Then, when you have reached the eighth chapter, and are under the cross and suffering, this will teach you correctly of predestination in chapters 9, 10, and 11, and how comforting it is. For in the absence of suffering and the cross and the perils of death, one cannot deal with predestination without harm and without secret anger against God. The old Adam must first die before he can tolerate this thing and drink the strong wine. Therefore beware that you do not drink wine while you are still a suckling. There is a limit, a time, and an age for every doctrine” (AE 35:378). (TLSB)

Paul has, throughout the first eight chapters, emphasized the continuity, the wholeness and oneness, of the creative working of the Word of God in the past and present history. He has acknowledged that his Gospel has its roots deep in the promise given to Israel. (Franzmann)

**9:1 I SPEAK THE TRUTH...I AM NOT LYING** – Rhetoric, not a defense. He is setting up his new topic. (TLSB)

**CONSCIENCE CONFIRMS** – Paul’s clear conscience provides testimony to his truthfulness; he feels a deep compulsion to speak. (TLSB)

Far from being anti-Semitic in his dealing with the members of the Jewish race, Paul suffers “great sorrow and unceasing anguish” in his heart because of their rejection of the Promised Messiah. Paul emphasizes that thought with a tripe assertion: I am speaking the truth; I am not lying; the Holy Spirit has instructed my conscience. (PBC)



*in the Holy Spirit.* Conscience is a reliable guide only when enlightened by the Holy Spirit. (CSB)

Paul speaks as God's child having the indwelling Spirit (8:15-16). (TLSB)

**9:2 GREAT SORROW...UNCEASING ANGUISH** – Paul continually feels deep personal distress because of his sense of solidarity with his own people. (TLSB)

**9:3 *cursed.*** The Greek for this word is *anathema*, and it means delivered over to the wrath of God for eternal destruction (see 1Co 12:3; 16:22; Gal 1:8–9). Such was Paul's great love for his fellow Jews. For a similar expression of love see Ex 32:32. (CSB)

Luther says: "A most excellent and entirely apostolic way of speaking here of love both toward Christ as well as toward the Jews." (TLSB)

**BROTHERS** – This is the only place where Paul uses this term for Jews, his kinsmen by race. (TLSB)

**9:4 *people of Israel.*** The descendants of Jacob (who was renamed Israel by God; see Ge 32:28). The name was used of the entire nation (see Jdg 5:7), then of the northern kingdom after the nation was divided (see 1Ki 12), the southern kingdom being called Judah. During the intertestamental period and later in NT times, Palestinian Jews used the title to indicate that they were the chosen people of God. Its use here is especially relevant because Paul is about to show that, despite Israel's unbelief and disobedience, God's promises to her are still valid. (CSB)

Sacred name that marks the Jews as elect and favored recipients of the revelation, the grace, and the promises of God (cf Eph 2:12). Spanning the OT, Paul gives a compact summary of the magnificent privileges belonging to God's people. (TLSB)

*adoption.* Israel had been accepted as God's son (see Ex 4:22–23; Jer 31:9; Hos 11:1). (CSB)

*glory.* The evidence of the presence of God among his people (see Ex 16:7, 10; Lev 9:6, 23; Nu 16:19). (CSB)

*covenants.* For example, the Abrahamic (Ge 15:17–21; 17:1–8); the Mosaic (Ex 19:5; 24:1–4), renewed on the plains of Moab (Dt 29:1–15), at Mounts Ebal and Gerizim (Jos 8:30–35) and at Shechem (Jos 24); the Levitical (Nu 25:12–13; Jer 33:21; Mal 2:4–5); the Davidic (2Sa 7; 23:5; Ps 89:3–4, 28–29; 132:11–12); and the new (prophesied in Jer 31:31–40). (CSB)

*promises.* Especially those made to Abraham (Ge 12:7; 13:14–17; 17:4–8; 22:16–18) but also including the many OT Messianic promises (e.g., 2Sa 7:12, 16; Isa 9:6–7; Jer 23:5; 31:31–34; Eze 34:23–24; 37:24–28). (CSB)

Especially messianic (2Sm 7:12, 16, 28–29; Is 9:6–7; 53; Jer 23:5; 31:31–40). (TLSB)

**9:5 patriarchs.** Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and his sons. (CSB)

Lit, “fathers”—Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and his 12 sons, the recipients of the promises. (TLSB)

Lit, “from whom,” i.e., the patriarchs. (TLSB)

*Christ, who is God.* One of the clearest statements of the deity of Jesus Christ found in the entire NT, assuming the accuracy of the translation (see NIV text note). See also 1:4; Mt 1:23; 28:19; Lk 1:35; 5:20–21; Jn 1:1, 3, 10, 14, 18; 5:18; 2Co 13:14; Php 2:6; Col 1:15–20; 2:9; Tit 2:13; Heb 1:3, 8; 2Pe 1:1; Rev 1:13–18; 22:13. (CSB)

Some scholars place a period after “Christ” (the Gk text was originally not punctuated), ascribing this praise to “God.” However, “God” is a direct reference to Christ, who is “blessed forever.” Calling Jesus God would not be unusual for Paul, given what he says elsewhere (8:32, 34; Php 2:9–11; Col 2:9; see note, Rm 10:13). “Christ Jesus is now in one person at the same time true, eternal God, born of the Father from eternity, and a true man, born of the most blessed Virgin Mary” (FC SD VIII 6). (TLSB)

FOREVER PRAISED! AMEN – ESV has “blessed forever.” These words were a common devotional language of Jews, who daily prayed the “Eighteen Benedictions” or blessings. Always doxological for Paul (cf. 1:25; 2 Cor 1:3). (TLSB)

GOSPEL – Matthew 14:13-21

**<sup>13</sup> When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns. <sup>14</sup> When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick. <sup>15</sup> As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, “This is a remote place, and it’s already getting late. Send the crowds away, so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food.” <sup>16</sup> Jesus replied, “**They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat.**” <sup>17</sup> “We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish,” they answered. <sup>18</sup> “**Bring them here to me,**” he said. <sup>19</sup> And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. <sup>20</sup> They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. <sup>21</sup> The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children.**

**14:13–21** See Mk 6:32–44; Lk 9:10–17; Jn 6:1–13 and notes. (CSB)

Significant event recorded in all four Gospels. (TLSB)

The day begins with the news of the death of John the Baptist. It continues with the return of the disciples from a short-term missionary journey. Following the disciples are

five thousand men and their families. Jesus tried to get away from the crowd by crossing the sea, only to find the crowd waiting for him on the other side. He wanted to mourn in solitude, but instead he was surrounded by people. He wanted to spend time with just the disciples, but instead he got a crowd. He wanted time to think, but instead he and people to face. (A Gentle Thunder – Hearing God Through the Storm – Max Lucado p. 90)

The *Gospel* is the feeding of the 5,000. This is the only miracle recorded in all four Gospels. Each Gospel focuses on the specific aspects of the story that best fit their account of the life of Christ. According to Matthew, the crowd is hungry and helpless in a lonely place. Jesus gives them “manna” in the way that God provided for Moses and his people in their wilderness wanderings. The Messiah has compassion on the crowd and turns scarcity into abundance. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 9, Part 3)

**14:13 WHAT HAD HAPPENED** – Matthew notes Jesus’ personal response to the news of John’s execution. (TLSB)

The “what had happened” is identified in the preceding paragraph. Jesus and his disciples are told (*apēngeilan*) about John’s fate. This is why Jesus leaves for a private, lonely place (*kat idian* means “privately for one’s self”). John was his cousin; John had baptized him. There was a strong relationship between these two people of God. The death of John provides an ominous prelude. In the other Gospels, the occasion for his trip to the desert was the return of the disciples, who told him all the things that they had done and taught. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 9, Part 3)

Jesus heard about John’s senseless death, which was brought about because Herod made a boast at a party. The disciples were also returning from their first apostolic journey, and Jesus would be hearing their report as well as giving them relief from the crowds (Mk 6:7–31; Lk 9:1–10). He brought them to the wilderness. It wasn’t far enough to escape the determined crowds. The determination of the crowd was fueled by their many needs. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 3)

**HE WITHDREW BY BOAT** – This does not mean that Jesus was running from Herod but that he was seeking a sequestered place to be alone with the disciples.

Jesus was seeking to withdraw “to a desolate place by himself.” The context identifies Jesus’ grieving the martyrdom of his cousin (14:1–12). John the Baptizer was put in prison for the cause of Christ, when along came silly Salome, who fooled her stepfather into making and keeping an oath that literally cost John his head. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 3)

As John's death evidences, the tide is turning adversarial toward Jesus. Counterintuitive to reasoning, Jesus tells us a prophet is dishonored among his own (Mt. 13:57). Jesus' kinfolk were so disbelieving that among them he did not perform many miracles (Mt 13:58). Away from there, he still ranked as an attraction. Like paparazzi, crowds swarmed Jesus. Some were curiosity-seekers; others sought spectacle and amusement. Some limped with legitimate needs. Swallowing his grief, Jesus continues touching the crowds with healing hands and teaching words. The disciples again assume their bodyguard response, trying to shoo away the crowds from their solitary place. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 3)

Practitioners of prosperity religion often are crowd-seekers and crowd-pleasers. They raise the ire of the apostle Peter, who labels their words *plastoī*; *lovgoī* (2 Pet 2:3). Some modern-day "apostles" have mastered the media as a means for selling a fast-food religion. Jesus disavows aiding or abetting our poverty of spiritual things by supplementing us with wealth in worldly things (2 Pet 1:5–8). His food is bread for the life of the world, and participants in his sacrificial giving will live forever (John 6). Jesus himself is sacrificed for the sin of the world. This self-giving character is anticipated in the eucharistic pattern of our text: taking, blessing, breaking, and giving. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 3)

*desolate place.* Jesus and His disciples (Mk 6:32) crossed the Sea of Galilee to an isolated place on the northeast shore near Bethsaida (Lk 9:10). (TLSB)

FOLLOWED HIM ON FOOT – People came in droves on foot from the surrounding towns. The Gospel message had attracted them like it does in Luke 15.

**14:14** SAW A LARGE CROWD – This was after they had landed and he sees them from the sequestered place. He did not hide from them because they had needs only he could supply.

HAD COMPASSION ON THEM – *splagchnizomai* – This refers to the inner organs – heart, kidneys, liver, intestines, lungs – and later spoke of them as the seat of emotions such as anger and anxious desire. The Latin literally means to "suffer with, to feel the pain and suffering of another." Compassion comes from identifying closely with another. He had this desire because they were as sheep without a shepherd, going about aimlessly and lost.

Jesus was deeply moved at the needs of the crowd and healed their sick. Mark reports that Jesus was deeply moved at seeing the crowd as sheep without a shepherd and taught them (Mk 6:34). This combination of teaching and healing confirms the varied nature of the needs of the crowd. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 3)

The verb communicates the inner attitude of Jesus and also implies the kind of action that He will take. Matthew employs the verb both in his narration and in Jesus' own words, and he uses it more than the other Synoptic authors. (CC)

Although the death of John prompts Jesus to withdraw (*anechōrsen*) to the desert, it does not dissuade the crowds from following him on foot (*pezēi*). Jesus travels to his location by boat (*en ploiōi*). As he disembarks, he sees a huge crowd and has

compassion on them (*esplangchisthē* : see Mt 9:36). Matthew, however, omits Mark's comment that they were "as sheep having no shepherd." Neither does Matthew indicate that Jesus taught them. Matthew notes that Jesus immediately began a healing ministry. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 9, Part 3)

**14:15 AS EVENING APPROACHED** – These words signaled that the disciples were getting worried.

As the hour for the evening meal approaches, the disciples come to Jesus asking him to send the people away so they may buy food (*brōmata*: plural indicates the many kinds of food that the people might buy). Jesus reminds the disciples that the people do not have reason to leave, because Jesus can feed them. Therefore, he tells the disciples, "You (*humeis*, placed for emphasis) feed them." Matthew does not include the derogatory question of whether 200 denarii could buy enough food for the crowd. Matthew does state that the disciples had already reviewed the crowd and found only five loaves of bread and two fish—food common to the poor of the Galilean district. (The rabbis said that in the messianic age, the Leviathan would be salted and given to the people as food [Ps 74:14].) Jesus said authoritatively: Bring "them here to me." And like the widow of Zarephath (1 Ki 17:15), the disciples brought their small supply to Jesus. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 9, Part 3)

A REMOTE PLACE – *eramos* means "deserted" in the sense that no people live there.

SEND THE CROWDS AWAY – **6:5 Philip**. Since he came from nearby Bethsaida (1:44), it was appropriate to ask him. – Keep in mind that Philip has been forcing out demons and healing the sick (Mark 6:13). We'd expect him to be optimistic. A bit of faith would be appropriate. After all, he had just spend several weeks seeing the impossible happen. He can recite the stats, but can't see how to help. He can crunch the numbers, but he can't construct the answer. (manager vs. leader) And though the answer to prayer is standing next to him, he doesn't even pray. Equally disturbing is the silence of the other disciples. It never occurred to the disciples to turn the problem over to Jesus. God's faithfulness has never depended on the faithfulness of his children. He is faithful even when we aren't. No, we don't give up. We look up. We trust. We believe. We remember of baptism. And our optimism is not hollow. Christ has proven worthy. (A Gentle Thunder – Hearing God Through the Storm – Max Lucado pp. 90-93)

The disciples seem to have gained some compassion, but even though Jesus had given them power for their apostolic journey, they didn't realize what they could do in this situation. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 3)

The disciples' suggestion makes sense from a human point of view. (TLSB)

**14:16** Unexpectedly and forcefully, Jesus challenged the disciples to provide food for this vast crowd. He planned to teach them an important lesson. (TLSB)

DO NOT NEED TO GO AWAY – Jesus is saying: “That this place is deserted and that the hour is late, these facts do not cause a need.

GIVE THEM SOMETHING TO EAT – Very plainly he is expecting them to find help in Him.

**14:17 FIVE LOAVES AND TWO FISH** – They apparently bought these from the little boy mentioned in John 6:9. Perhaps they were thinking that this would be enough for their small group.

Staple foods in Galilee, especially for the poor, but barely enough to feed the 12 disciples and Jesus. (TLSB)

Bread and fish were not banquet food. They were subsistence food. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 3)

**14:18 BRING THEM HERE TO ME** – Jesus condescends to their smallness of faith. Luther says: “The great need of the disciples on this occasion was that, though they could think and figure, they did not believe or realize what kind of Lord they had in Christ. And that is the universal need even today, not only when we need food but also when we realize all sorts of necessities. We know how to figure and calculate carefully so that our needs might be filled. But when help does not come immediately as we would like it, we get nothing out of our careful figuring and calculating except sorrow and loss of spirit. It would be much better for us to commend the whole matter to God and not think so much about our needs.”

This is language and action associated with a meal, and it sounds sacramental because later the Lord’s Supper would also be associated with a meal. Without question, though, it signals Jesus’ messianic role with all that was to follow. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 3)

**14:19 LOOKING UP TO HEAVEN** – Jesus begins in the right place and overlooks no spiritual detail.

Jesus probably spoke a traditional Jewish blessing such as “Blessed are You, O Lord our God, King of the universe! You bring forth bread from the earth.” At the Last Supper, Jesus likewise spoke a blessing before giving the bread. (TLSB)

Notes from Mark 6:39... Grass is green around the Sea of Galilee after the late winter or early spring rains.

Only Mark records this detail, possibly a vivid recollection from the disciple’s memory. (TLSB)

FIVE LOAVES...TWO FISH - labw;n tou;" pevnte a[rrou" kai; tou;" duvo ijcuva", "taking the five loaves and the two fish." Grace chooses us; we do not choose God (Jn 15:16). The journey of faith begins beside still waters. In Baptism, we are snatched from the evil one's jaws and taken into the hands of God for life in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 3)

Nearly a millennium ago, Hugh of Saint Victor summed up the two-sided character of human persons: "By one the body lives from the soul, by the other the soul lives from God. Each has its own good by which it is invigorated and nourished so that it can subsist" (*De Sacramentis Christianae Fidei*, ca. 1134, ed. by J. P. Migne, PL 176 [Paris, 1854], col. 417–18). All people require bodily sustenance, daily bread. But no one lives by bread alone. We are created in the Divine image for a spiritual existence requiring Divine nurture. Unless we are taken into God, by faith, this cannot ever be satisfied. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 3)

GAVE THANKS - eujlovghsen, [he] "said a *blessing*." The God who begins our faith through Baptism continues to bless us with the Word of faith. Believers are recipients of God's sacramental initiative, splashed in the triune name, with life's paramount blessing: salvation that cannot be snatched away. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 3)

So-called "pie-in-the-sky" Christianity emphasizes primarily the blessing of an afterlife with God, paying little attention to the earthly benefits of being a believer. This truth is lopsided. Concern for spiritual life offers only a partial picture. By contrast, when our prayer for daily bread becomes "give us this day an *abundance* of bread," the distinctive good of our two-sided character is distorted in the other direction. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 3)

"Prosperity" systems may emphasize being blessed by things: rust rots up, moths eat up, mold covers up, floodwaters sweep up, fire burns up; we, however, believe, teach, and confess we're blessed because we, ourselves, are named and claimed in Baptism. This *thing* we seek first, trusting that all these other *things* will be added (Mt 6:33). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 3)

BROKE THE LOAVES - klavsa", he "*broke*" the loaves. Life's primary pattern is cross-shaped. Bread is broken. So, inevitably in life, are we. God takes our brokenness to work more goodness than we could ever anticipate through us; he takes us to solitary places, to desert existences, to places of discipline for those he loves (Heb 12:4–13). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 3)

Serious concerns must be raised also about prosperity religion's notions of being cursed: especially regarding HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis, and the reemergence of polio—once conquered. Or, what is the response toward the millions of unemployed young women and men who crowd burgeoning city centers. Chiefly, these are educational and economic issues, not the result of the suffering ones' lack of faith, inability to pray rightly, or the sins of ancestors haunting their health and stifling their wealth. Jesus does not blame those hobbling toward him for possessing ailments. But neither does the theology of the cross paint over life's tragically broken dynamics with a brushstroke of denial or excusing or anesthetizing or philosophizing. At the cross, God faces for us and our salvation, face-to-face, these realities. The crosses of brokenness we carry are conquered at the cross of Christ. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 3)

GAVE THEM - e[*dwken*, “he *gave*” them to the disciples. Rarely do the Gospels record a meal in the evening, v 15. The customary time for eating had passed. Middle Easterners ordinarily partook of two meals per day—a simple breakfast between 10 and 11 in the morning, and a large meal in the late afternoon, around four o’clock. In the colloquial piety of some African Americans: The Lord may not come when you want him (*crovno*”), but he’s always right on time (*kairov*”).(Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 3)

In the presence of the self-giving transcendence of Jesus, time flows into insignificance. Who cares what time it is when Jesus is giving the meal? Jesus gave to his disciples, who gave to the crowds. The gifts of God beg being given away. Divine giving begets more giving. God gives to us the gift of salvation, the gifts of the Holy Spirit, the gift of the faith-inducing Word, the gifts of a victorious promise and Jesus’ real presence in, with, and under bread and wine. God then gives us away, sending us gifted people into the world with the nutrition of salvation. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 3)

As we review what happened, then we can think of Jesus as the mediator between God’s compassion and the sick and hungry crowds. Just as Moses provided manna in the wilderness, so did Jesus. Jesus, once again, answers this familiar prayer: “Give us this day our daily bread.” But the miracle also points to the banquet that will take place before their eyes, the Eucharist meal. Then, Jesus looks up to speak with his Father those four important words (v 19): (1) he took (*labōn*); (2) he gave thanks (*eulogēsen*), expressing his dependence on God for all of man’s needs and gratitude for his constant goodness (John uses *eucharistēsas*); (3) he broke the loaves (*klasas*); and (4) and he gave them to the disciples (*edōken*). (See Mt 26:26; Mk 14:22; Lk 22:7–23; and I Cor. 11:24.). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 9, Part 3)

**14:20 ALL ATE** – No one was overlooked.

In the Church of the Multiplying of the Loaves and Fishes in the Holy Land, the mosaic artwork in the floor depicts the loaves and fishes of the eucharistic meal. The disciples in the Upper Room receive a foretaste of the feast of the messianic banquet in heaven. The line of service that enables all to eat and to be satisfied runs from God through Jesus to the followers. In Matthew’s day, wilderness hunger and isolation made the people dependent on Jesus to feed them. Jesus’ command to feed the crowds transforms their meager resources of food into an ample supply for a hungry multitude. All ate and were satisfied (*echortasthēsan*, an effective aorist). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 9, Part 3)

WERE SATISFIED – They were satiated (to satisfy fully – to indulge excessively – gorge). (CC)

All of the people had enough to eat, and none went hungry. (TLSB)

PICKED UP TWELVE BASKETFULS – The left-overs amounted to many times more than the original five loaves and two fishes. One commentator makes an



interesting point here that each disciple had a basketful and each then ate from his own basket for then or for the next day.

That Jesus had provided an abundance of food was impressed on the disciples, whose baskets were full of leftovers. (TLSB)

Similarly, this can only be suggestive—not fully illustrative—of the heavenly banquet. Although the crowds were satisfied and there were leftovers, this surely wasn't banquet food! (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 9, Part 3)

The broken pieces (*klasmata*) indicate the pieces into which the Lord had broken the food, not the pieces the crowd had wastefully thrown to the ground. Matthew's adding the 12 baskets of leftovers merely indicates the generosity of our Lord when he feeds the needy. Each disciple gathers a basket of crumbs larger than the original supply of food. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 9, Part 3)

**14:21** *besides women and children.* Matthew alone notes this. He was writing to the Jews, who did not permit women and children to eat with men in public. So they were in a place by themselves. (CSB)

After noting the food remaining, Matthew adds that the number of eaters (*esthiontes*) besides (*chōris*) the women and children was about 5,000. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 9, Part 3)

**14:13–21** This miracle is obviously important because all four evangelists have recorded it. The account here makes no mention of the crowd's reaction. They seem not to realize that a miracle has taken place. But the disciples know. Each has a basketful of leftovers to testify to what Jesus has done. They will also be privileged to feed the nations spiritually with the bread of life, a resource that will satisfy and never be exhausted. Whenever you have doubts about God's power to supply your needs, whether physical or spiritual, recall this miracle. Jesus is able to provide. • Heavenly Father, thank You for abundantly answering my prayer: "Give us this day our daily bread." Amen. (TLSB)