

Matthew 14:13-21

August 6, 2017

“More than you could have expected!”

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church

9th Sunday af. Pentecost

Rev. Brent Hartwig

Grace, Mercy, and Peace be unto you from Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior and God our Heavenly Father. Amen! Dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

[*Introduction*]

More than you could have expected!

That is what I thought at the end of the day.

As we gathered around each other and watched the fireworks at the end of the day.

We had ridden many rides. I mean, the most we ever waited was 15 minutes all day long.

This was while we were just on vacation,

and no, we were not at Disney World.

We were at Kings Island in Cincinnati.

You know...

The theme park the Brady Bunch visited in 1973.

The theme park that boasts a 1/3rd scale Eiffel Tower.

The theme park that boasts the wooden roller coaster called the Beast.

The longest wooden rollercoaster in 1979 and still today!

Now that was a rollercoaster that was...

More than you could have expected!

BUT what was really more that you could have ever expected was the dining plan.

For \$30 you received a wristband that was good for a meal every 90 minutes from 10:00 am until 10:00 pm.

A meal every 90 minutes.

And the restaurants were name brand – Subway, Chick-fil-a, Panda Express.

And local chains of Skyline Chili and LaRosa Pizza

Before we went, I wondered what this was going to be like.

But it really was ... *More than you could have expected!*

[*Text*]

What happened in our text was ... *More than you could have expected!*

John the Baptist, the forerunner and proclaimer of the Christ,

has been executed – made shorter by a head thanks to Herod.

The beheading of a prophet like John is big news.
All of Galilee hears about it.
And Jesus hears about it.

But you know that's the way it goes with God's prophets.

Zechariah was stoned in the porch of the Temple
by order of King Joash (2 Chr 24:20-22)

Oh yeah... and ...

Isaiah the prophet was sawn asunder (Hebrews 11:37).
Split in two, and the magicians act never put him back together.

Unnumbered unnamed prophets of the Lord were put to death by Jezebel,
during the time of Elijah (1 Kgs 18:4, 13; 19:14).

How much more with the Christ, the Messiah, the Savior Jesus Himself!
He is rejected by his own hometown of Nazareth.
He has become the object of superstitious fear at King Herod's court.
Herod senses that the powers he feared in John
have returned from the dead in the person of Jesus.

What's happening in Nazareth and at the king's court is happening in all of Israel:
Jesus the Christ, the Messiah, the Savior is being rejected.
He suffers Himself to be rejected. He forces Himself on no one.

So He withdraws.

Goes off by Himself.

Takes a boat ride to be all by Himself.

Perhaps to mourn John's death.

Perhaps to contemplate what will happen to Him.

After all, He knows where His ministry is leading.

It's taking Him to the Cross.

Betrayal. Brutal suffering. A horrific cruciform death.

He wants to be by Himself for a while.

That doesn't last long.

Crowds from the cities look for Him. Crowds. A whole mass of people.

Jesus comes back to the shore.

And as usual, Jesus has compassion on them.

σπλαγχνίζομαι (splanchnízomai)

Bounding from His bowels is compassion.

More than you could have expected!

He's not there for Himself.

He's come as the Christ for all people.

Whether they reject Him or receive Him.

He heals their sick.

And after a long day the crowds are still there.

The place is desolate. Everyone is hungry.

He tells His disciples: "You feed them."

And their answer: "We have so little. Five loaves of bread. Two fish.

That's it! Nothing else.

How can we feed all these folks with that?

We can't possibly do it Jesus!"

They can't trust Jesus with five loaves and two fish.

How about you?

What is it in your life that seems so immense that you won't bother Jesus?

What problem is so gargantuan that you can't tell Jesus?

What sin is it that you won't trust with Jesus?

Too big for Jesus you say? Too hard for Jesus?

Nonsense!

With Jesus there's always enough and even more!

More than you could ever expect.

Whether it's your sin or guilt, death or hell,

or even 5 loaves and 2 fish to feed thousands.

Jesus is a bigger Savior than we could ever imagine.

Jesus is bigger than our problems, our needs

Jesus is bigger than our sin, our doubt, our fear

Jesus is bigger than our past, plans, or pain.

Jesus is bigger than death. Jesus is bigger

And His compassion has no bounds.

“Bring the bread and fish to me. Sit on the grass everyone.

Relax. I’ll take care of you.”

Then he looks heavenward. Blesses the food.

Breaks the bread and says to His disciples:

“Start handing it out to these poor folks.”

The miracle happens as Jesus makes as little fuss as possible.

No hocus-pocus.

No lengthy praying.

No holy exhortations like: “I’ll feed one you give Me your heart!”

Just break it up and pass it out.

“They all ate and were satisfied.” Jesus took care of them.

And much more than they ever expected.

Can you trust a Jesus with only five loaves and two fish? Can you?

Yes! And with anything else. In fact, with everything!

Especially the most troubling problems of all: sin, death, and hell.

For that there’s Calvary.

Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!

Salvation achieved. Salvation accomplished. He died for you.

Your sin is His. So His death is yours.

And now today He says to come forward.

Take a little bread and a little bit of wine.

What is that in the midst of all our enormous problems and sins?

It’s the Lord’s Supper. His Body. His Blood. And His promise.

Forgiveness of sins, salvation, life everlasting

– God’s grace for you!

His compassion for you knows no bounds.

No problem, no sin... no guilt, no death is too big for Jesus.

You can trust Him with anything and everything!

With Jesus there’s always more.

More than you ever expected. Amen!

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, ...
to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations,
for ever and ever! AMEN!
