

The Seventh Sunday after Trinity

Hymns: 4, 348, 307, 45

The INTROIT

(Ps.47:1,3)

P: Oh, clap your hands, all ye people!

C: Shout unto God with the voice of triumph.

P: He shall subdue the people under us;

C: and the nations under our feet.

The COLLECT

O God, whose never-failing providence orders all things both in heaven and earth, we humbly beseech Thee to put away from us all hurtful things and to give us those things which be profitable for us; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end.

The FIRST LESSON

Jeremiah 31:23-25

Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; As yet they shall use this speech in the land of Judah and in the cities thereof, when I shall bring again their captivity; The LORD bless thee, O habitation of justice, *and* mountain of holiness. And there shall dwell in Judah itself, and in all the cities thereof together, husbandmen, and they *that* go forth with flocks. For I have satiated the weary soul, and I have replenished every sorrowful soul.

THE GRADUAL

(Ps. 34:11, 5; 47:1)

P: Come, ye children, hearken unto me:

C: I will teach you the fear of the Lord.

P: Look unto Him and be lightened:

C: and let your faces not be ashamed. Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

P: Oh, clap your hands, all ye people:

C: shout unto God with the voice of triumph. Hallelujah!

The EPISTLE

Romans 6:19-23

I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness. For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things *is* death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

P: Hallelujah! O Lord, deal with Thy servant according unto Thy mercy and teach me Thy statutes. I am Thy servant, give me understanding:

C: that I may know Thy testimonies. Hallelujah!

The HOLY GOSPEL

St. Mark 8:1-9

In those days the multitude being very great, and having nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples *unto him*, and saith unto them, I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat: And if I send them away fasting to their own houses, they will faint by the way: for divers of them came from far.

And his disciples answered him, From whence can a man satisfy these *men* with bread here in the wilderness?

And he asked them, How many loaves have ye?

And they said, Seven.

And he commanded the people to sit down on the ground: and he took the seven loaves, and gave thanks, and brake, and gave to his disciples to set before *them*; and they did set *them* before the people. And they had a few small fishes: and he blessed, and commanded to set them also before *them*. So they did eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken *meat* that was left seven baskets. And they that had eaten were about four thousand: and he sent them away.

Mark 8:1-9 — “From Whence?”

INTRODUCTION

I. JESUS CALLED HIS DISCIPLES UNTO HIM

II. FROM WHENCE

III. HOW MANY LOAVES HAVE YE?

CONCLUSION

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Mark 8:1-9 — “From Whence?”

Grace, mercy, and peace to you all from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
Amen.

The appointed Gospel reading for the Seventh Sunday after Trinity is Mark 8:1-9:

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In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

INTRODUCTION

Today’s Gospel reading presents us with a hunger that transcends our bodily cravings, and a nourishment that transcends anything that can be found in the elements of the universe. The wants and needs of our bodies are not the greatest of our wants and needs. Rather, what we need most is beyond the physical realm and comes to us from above in the body of Jesus. What we need most is that which brings all things into existence and orders them and maintains them everlastingly. What we need most, what we hunger for most deeply and urgently, is the Word of God, Jesus.

I. JESUS CALLED HIS DISCIPLES UNTO HIM

The opening sentence of our text presents us with an interesting contrast between two groups of people. The first group is the crowd or multitude of people who have gathered together to hear the preaching of Jesus and to observe His miracles and have followed Him into the wilderness. The second group is the little band of disciples whom Jesus called to follow Him. Those who followed Jesus to observe His miracles and to hear His preaching are not spoken of as His disciples. Only the twelve are counted here as disciples.

Mark records, “**In those days, the multitude being great and not having anything to**

eat, toward-called Jesus the disciples of Him.” With these words Mark sets before us the contrast. The people of the multitude followed after Jesus and the disciples and the rest of the crowd on account of hearing of Jesus. The disciples followed Jesus as those whom He had called, and whom He called toward Himself also now, for the same purpose for which He called them to be disciples from the beginning. Mark explains.

He says to them, “I am moved in the bowels over the crowd because days three toward-remained they to me and not have anything to eat, and if I should away-loose them fasting into a house of them they will out-loose in the way, for some of them from afar have come.”

Those of the multitude had heard of Jesus from afar. They heard of His miracles. These miracles affirmed His preaching. His preaching itself was powerful like they had not heard before. His preaching actually brought into being that which He preached. He did not merely preach about the peace of God but He preached the peace of God and the people received God’s peace. He did not merely preach about the forgiveness of sins, but He preached the forgiveness of sins and forgiveness was received. The effect was so complete that these people abandoned whatever else they had planned, and without any preparation, followed after Jesus to hear Him. They brought no preparations with them and they toward-remained to Jesus for three days. They did not merely continue with Jesus, but they toward-remained to Him. In other words, they were so absorbed by His doctrine that they concerned themselves with nothing else, not even their bodily hunger.

Notice that the people did not complain of hunger. Unlike the Israelites of old, who cried out against Moses and Aaron, these people were satisfied with the Word. It was the Lord Jesus who felt the pain in the bowels concerning the people’s hunger. It was the Lord Jesus who expressed concern over the people’s needs. It was time to send the people home, but they had lost track of the time so that the Lord Jesus had to consider the time. It was He who was unwilling for them to go any longer without food for their bellies.

And regarding the needs of the congregation, Jesus toward-called the disciples of Him and presented the needs of the people to them. Jesus called the disciples to hear from Him what the needs of the congregation were, so that through His called servants He could administer what He desired to give to the people.

II. FROM WHENCE

And his disciples answered him, From whence can a man satisfy these men with bread here in the wilderness?

This is exactly the doctrine that the Lord Jesus wants us to hear and to understand. **“From whence?”** is exactly the question that the called servants of the Word are to keep always in mind. Christ’s called servants are never to let go of this question concerning the ministry, **“From whence?”**

However, the answer to the question should be obvious to those who are called and ordained to be administrators in Christ’s Church on earth. From whence do all good things come? Who is the provider of Christ’s Church? Who truly is the administrator in Christ’s Church?

The administrator is simultaneously that which is administered. Christ is both the

provider and that which is provided. He is the giver of the bread of life and simultaneously the bread of life that is given. The disciples are merely those who receive the gifts from Christ to distribute to the congregation.

Here we observe the answer that the Lord Jesus answered to the devil when the devil tempted Jesus in the wilderness. **“It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”**

The people had subsisted for three days in the wilderness on the words of God that were freely pouring from the mouth of Jesus. But now in the wilderness Jesus repeated what had been done for the Israelites of old in the wilderness, by giving bread from heaven for their bellies as well as their souls. Through Moses the LORD provided manna for forty years to those who were in the wilderness. Moreover, for forty years the LORD prevented their clothing and shoes from wearing out. So for the entire time that the people were in the wilderness, they had no need of planting crops nor of mending clothes. They harvested a crop daily, except on the Sabbath, receiving a double portion on Friday, without ever tilling the soil or planting. Likewise, here in the wilderness the Lord Jesus provided bread for those who had nothing to eat, and fish, too. Every person ate until satisfied before the Lord Jesus sent them home from the congregation.

III. HOW MANY LOAVES HAVE YE?

Notice how the Lord Jesus emphasizes the manner of God’s providence. **“And he asked them, How many loaves have ye?”**

The LORD’s providence is already given even before we ask. The LORD had already provided the seven loaves of bread and the fish. Someone had brought these with them. From what God had already given, He multiplied the gifts to be sufficient for all who were congregated to Him.

This is how God works in His Church. The servants of Christ are not to look beyond the congregation for help. The Church does not need government aid. The Church does not need fund raisers. The Church does not need stewardship drives and pledge cards. The Church does not need to have car washes or bake sales or bazaars. But most importantly, the Church does not need secular advice.

Everything that the Church needs has already been given. God takes from what He has already given to the Church and multiplies His blessings through the preaching of the Word and the Sacraments. God’s Word knows no limitation. God’s Word called the cosmos into existence out of non-existence. God’s Word called forth the Light and all of creation. God’s Word sent dew upon the ground in the wilderness that turned to manna on the ground for forty years for ancient Israel. God’s Word entered the Virgin Mary and was born as Immanuel. God’s Word joined Himself to the bread and wine of the final Passover to be administered in His Holy Communion to grant forgiveness and life to those who congregate by His calling. God’s Word continues to come to us and work this miracle among us today.

How many loaves have ye? We have enough. We have all that we need. We receive our daily bread from God’s gracious hand even as He teaches us to confess in the Our Father. We receive the fullness of our daily bread in the forgiveness of sins and the leading of the Holy Spirit out of temptation. We congregate to the preaching of the Word and we are baptized into the Word and we eat and drink the Word and receive all that the Word promises us, most importantly forgiveness and everlasting life in God’s Holy Communion.

CONCLUSION

It seems odd and curious that people hear of this feeding of the four thousand and think of it as a big deal. Moses records that for forty years in the wilderness the LORD daily fed over six hundred thousand out of thin air. Moreover, for at least four thousand years before this miracle the LORD fed every creature of the earth from the abundance of nature. Moreover still, the LORD has continued to provide His Word and Sacraments to His Church up until this very day, even as He is providing for us now. Still more, by means of His Word, God has always and continues to reach beyond prison walls, and deep into antichristian nations and societies, to those who are newly born and to those who sleep and to those who are unconscious and to those who are near to dying. There is no place where God's Word does not reach. There is no place where the words that proceed from the mouth of God do not provide for those in need. The only thing that hinders God's Word from being effective among us is our unbelief. When we choose the way of doubting, we blind ourselves to God's gracious activity and providence. It is not that God withholds His grace, but that we allow no place for His grace in our hearts and lives. Thus, even though He pours forth His grace abundantly, we turn away from it and receive it not for ourselves. But the Word continues to come to us, where it is preached rightly and purely, and works God's will among us. Thanks be to God that He is continually moved in the bowels regarding our hunger, even when we are not. Thanks be to God that His grace continues to be proclaimed and properly administered by His servants who do not forget to ask, **"From whence?"** In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus forever. Amen.