

PENTECOST 9, A – August 2, 2020
SCRIPTURES – Psalm 95; Isaiah 55:1-5; Romans 9:1-5; Matthew 14:13-21

Now when Jesus heard [about the death of John], he withdrew from there in a boat to a desolate place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them and healed their sick. Matt. 14

When was the last time you sat outside at night, with no music on and no TV to distract you, looked up at the stars, and just sat and thought? When was the last time you gazed upon the clouds during the day... or got lost in a book? Our world today, with its ever-present noise and you-have-to-answer-this-now messages, rarely allows such opportunities; although, the shut-downs and distancing because of Covid19 have presented us with them. I encourage you to take advantage of them; and, as you do, think especially about this: Who is God? What is He like? And, who are you? Get lost in the Bible as you do... consider God's wisdom; don't rely on your own!... and God will teach you much.

Regarding God Himself, He teaches us today that He is powerful. Jesus takes five loaves and two fish, blesses them before God, and they are miraculously multiplied so that there is more than enough for 1,000's of people to eat and be satisfied. Meditate upon this. Consider it in light of the Venite, the words of Psalm 95 that we sang:

The Lord is a great God and a great king above all gods. The deep places of the earth are in His hand; the strength of the hills is His, also. The sea is His, for He made it, and His hand formed the dry land.

Truly great is God! When you stare at the stars, or look around from the top of a high hill, you are looking upon His handiwork... at least, if you believe what the Bible says, that He is the Creator of all things. Reject this, and you miss the greatness of God.

More importantly, you miss this far more important truth that God reveals about Himself: that He bows down and becomes lowly, even a creature like us, and uses His creation to help us. As Jesus takes the fish and loaves into His hands and multiplies them so that they feed thousands He shows Himself to be the great God who, as Ps. 95 says, holds the earth in His hands. Jesus controls it and uses it – and for us! He is the true God! And, He is no grudging provider. There are twelve baskets of leftovers! **“O come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker. For He – Jesus! – is our God!”**

So much is revealed about our God when you see Him in Jesus. He is, like us, an emotional being. This should be no surprise, really, when you consider that we have been made in His image and likeness. Are we not emotional beings? We get this from God! We see great emotion in Jesus at the beginning of today's Gospel. We are told: **“Now when Jesus heard [about the death of John], he withdrew in a boat to a desolate place by himself.”** He was sad... discouraged... perhaps even depressed; and so, He wanted some time to Himself. It was not only the death of John the Baptist

that weighed upon Him. It was also the fact that He had just been teaching in Nazareth, His hometown... and the friends and neighbors He had known from childhood had rejected Him. ***“Where did this man get this wisdom and these mighty works?”*** they said as He taught the Scriptures and declared them to be about Him. ***“Is not this the carpenter’s son? Is not Mary his mother? And are not his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? And are not all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all these things?”*** They took offense at Him and rejected him. Discouraged and sad, Jesus needed to get away.

Think about that. Think about it, and know this: our sins – *your* sins and *my* sins... our rejection of Jesus by our hesitancy to confess His greatness before our family and friends and neighbors... by our unhappiness with the things He says and the lowly ways that He works – these sins of ours disappoint our God. They bring sadness and discouragement. How sad it is also that God has created a wonderful world, and directs it for our benefit and enjoyment; and we, as Isaiah says, ***“spend [our] money for that which is not bread, and [our] labor for that which does not satisfy,”*** focusing more upon this life than the life to come! How sad that we get so wrapped up in the attainment, and then the spending, of money that we allow so little time to meditate upon the Word of our God that we might learn of Him, and of His will for us and His blessings for us. We are truly lowly in our sins. We burden our God with them.

But, our Lord Jesus: see how He sets aside His own sadness and His own desire for time away and serves the lowly people who come to Him! ***“When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them and healed their sick.”*** Jesus has compassion on the lowly; so, don’t be afraid to be lowly! It is those who have no money whom God invites to buy – at no cost – His blessings. It is those who have been wasting their money upon that which does not satisfy whom God invites to receive His bounty. Be a sinner! Confess the lowliness of your sinfulness! Your God in Jesus will have compassion. Then, come to delight yourself in the rich food of forgiveness that He lavishes upon you in Christ. Incline your ear to His Word... listen to Him and meditate upon it. Listen and believe, and your soul will live.

You won’t just live, just exist. Your God gives in abundance! Wine and milk... rich food... baskets full of leftovers to continue to enjoy. God has made an everlasting covenant with you in His Son. His love for you is steadfast and sure; nothing can change this. Meditate upon this, and your life and world will be transformed!

God’s Word bursts forth with His joy. Ps. 95: ***“O come, let us sing to the Lord, let us make a joyful noise to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come into His presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to Him with songs of praise. For the Lord is a great God and a great king above all gods... He is our God; we are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand.”*** Oh, how wonderful it is to know that He holds you in His hand and loves to be with you! How wonderful to see the magnificence... the beauty... the amazing complexity of creation – and to know that God made it all *for you!* How wonderful it is to hear of Christ’s amazing miracles:

- Calming a threatening storm on the sea with a word;
- Multiplying the fish and bread;
- Healing every sickness and disease;
- Raising people from the dead;

and know that they foreshadow His healing of you and of all creation when He returns from heaven in glory!

Meditate upon this. Listen diligently to your God and eat the good food He gives. Incline your ear to His Word, and your soul will live. God will make an everlasting covenant with you in Christ, and you will have an enjoyable, fruitful, and truly blessed life with Him; here and now, and forever in heaven! Amen.