

## Sermon for July 28, 2024

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, on this 10th Sunday after Pentecost. Amen.

The gospel for today and the next four Sundays during this season after Pentecost are all taken from the book of John. In fact, they are all taken from the same chapter of the Book of John: Chapter 6.

The gospel for today and for the next three Sundays focus on Jesus as bread of life. I invite you to stick with me for the next few weeks and you will understand what I mean.

The first gospel of this series, the gospel for today, starts out with the feeding of the five thousand — the *only miracle* that appears in all four Gospels.

The fact that Jesus Himself feeds the five thousand will help us understand how Jesus professes to be the Bread of Life and our understanding of this.

When I met with my text study colleagues this past Wednesday in the Soo, we were picking apart the gospel; trying to see if there's something new that we discovered and, if so, how it might relate to our various ministry contexts today.

I just read the gospel so I'm not going to read it again. Most of us are pretty familiar with the story of the five barley loaves and two fish.

But listen carefully to this part again: Jesus told His disciples, “*Make the people sit down.*’ Now there was a great deal of grass in the place; so they sat down, about five thousand in all. Then Jesus took the loaves, and when He had given thanks, He distributed them to those who were seated; so also the fish, as much as they wanted.” (John 6:10-11)

Do you want to know what I realized? Jesus doesn't do take out!

Jesus told His disciples to make the people sit down. They most likely weren't sitting in an orderly fashion – lined up in rows. We are talking about five thousand people. There were probably family members sitting together in groups. There may have been children playing but then found their parents and sat down together.

**But they all sat down. Which, again, leads me to claim that Jesus doesn't do take out!**

**I found it a bit curious, though, that a part of verse 11 says, "*He distributed (the loaves and the fish) to those who were seated.*"**

**My text study colleagues and I contemplated what this might mean. Did it mean that *some* were not seated and those didn't get fed?**

**Or was it just a confirmation that they all sat because in the verse right before that it says, "*so they sat down, about five thousand in all.*"**

**I think it's just an affirmation that everyone sat down. And everyone ate. And there were leftovers!**

**So, then, I thought about how might this relate to our ministry context today. And here is my thought:**

**The third Thursday of every month, First Presbyterian Church hosts a free community meal. It is always delicious food and, if you haven't joined us yet, please do!**

**However, they have a policy set in place for these meals. They don't do take out!**

**The Newberry News even posted on social media that: *Everyone is invited to come for dinner, and because the intention is to get to know each other better, no to-go meals will be served.***

**This was the policy when Our Redeemer Lutheran Church served free community breakfasts. They didn't do take out, either.**

**And, so it was for the feeding of the five thousand. There were no take-out meals!**

**Can you imagine how long it must have taken to feed five thousand? And yet, they all sat there, patiently waiting to be fed; patiently waiting for *all* to be fed.**

**Because...Jesus doesn't do take out.**

**I assume some people sat and visited with one another. Some sat and prayed. Some sat and meditated. But they all sat down.**

**Jesus wants us to join together – here – in this place. This is part of what draws us into this worship space. We want to be together. We feel inspired by being here, sharing in worship, song, praise, prayer, and the sacraments. But we also share in fellowship.**

**Fellowship is also a part of our Christian life. It's a time when we can sit and listen to one another, catch up on what is happening in one another's lives, learn how we can help one another or someone in our community, and enjoy the companionship. And, of course, there are always treats!**

**And so I extend this invitation to you today: If you can, please stay for fellowship or plan on it for next week. Even if it's for five minutes or fifteen minutes. Grab a cup of coffee or tea or a glass of juice. Grab a cookie or whatever is served. Have a seat and share in fellowship with those around you.**

**We all lead busy lives; some busier than others. But let's imagine we are one of the five thousand who were invited to sit on the grass near Jesus, patiently waiting to receive a piece of bread and some fish until we were filled.**

**And remember: Jesus doesn't do take out! Amen.**

**Sources:**

<sup>1</sup>[www.sundaysandseasons.com](http://www.sundaysandseasons.com)

<sup>2</sup>Study Bible. The New Student Bible. New Revised Standard Version. Augsburg

<sup>3</sup><https://www.facebook.com/TheNewberryNewsMichigan>