**Sermon John 6:1-21 25/7/21**

**Youtube Video Link:** [**https://youtu.be/miSSLWeyxDA**](https://youtu.be/miSSLWeyxDA)

On Thursday morning we found out that we had spent time in one of the Covid-19 exposure sites and had to quarantine for 14 days and get tested. As we sat in our car on Thursday waiting for over four hours to reach the testing station, I thought about the businesses who once again were forced to close, the employees who could not go to work and possibly would not get paid. I thought about the people whose funerals were being delayed and their grieving loved ones who had to wait. Then there are the thousands of people being tested and confined to their homes for at least 14 days, waiting to hear if they have been infected.

Earlier this week I spoke to someone who had experienced the extended lockdowns in Victoria. He said that in the beginning being in lockdown was quite novel. It gave him time to reflect, and the pace of life slowed down for a while but now he has had enough of lockdowns. Recently he had a loved one die in SA and the difficulty of getting to the funeral and the possibility of a last-minute change that may have stopped him going, all became quite overwhelming.

Philip and Andrew were overwhelmed when Jesus asked where they could buy bread to feed over 5000 people. Both thought it was impossible. Philip said it would cost at least 6 months wages. Andrew said that a young boy had three loaves and two fish which was nowhere near enough to feed so many people. The situation seemed impossible. The people would have to go hungry.

Yet Jesus was testing his disciples. The disciples could only see their lack of resources and the insurmountable problem of feeding thousands. What they did not see was who was with them in their difficult situation. Jesus was with them, and with a word of thanks for the three loaves and fish, Jesus proceeded to do what the disciples couldn’t do. He fed over 5000 people.

In the feeding of the 5000, Jesus was giving his disciples and the people a sign of who he was. He was demonstrating his compassion and at the same time revealing his power.

It was nearly Passover, that festival time when the people celebrated their escape from Egypt to freedom from slavery. The people would have known the story well. They would have remembered how the people grumbled a short time after being saved from Pharoah’s army because they had no food. They would have remembered how Moses had promised the people food in the desert and every day they received Manna from heaven. Now Jesus had fed over 5000 of them and they connected the dots. Perhaps Jesus was a new Moses. Perhaps he was the promised prophet and king who had come to save them from Caesar and the rule of the Romans. They were so convinced that they decided to make Jesus their king.

They were half right about Jesus. Jesus was like a prophet speaking God’s word and performing miracles, but he was not merely a prophet nor a political king. Soon he would teach the people who he was, but in the meantime, he retreated up the mountain to stop the people from making him their king.

Meanwhile, the disciples get in a boat and row several kilometres across the lake. The wind picks up and the seas become rough, and they get scared, even more so when they see a man walking on the water toward them.

It turns out to be Jesus revealing more about who he is through the miracle of walking on the water and by what he says to the disciples. Jesus calls out to the disciples, “It is I; don’t be afraid.” In English, we don’t get the full force of what Jesus says. The words translated as “It is I.” are literally the Greek words, “I am.” The same words God uses when Moses asks for God’s name. Here Jesus walking on the water is revealing who he is even more clearly. He is not a prophet or a new Moses, Jesus is the great “I am”, God wrapped in human flesh.

Once they realise it is Jesus the disciples take him into the boat and immediately the boat reaches the shore where they were heading.

When we find ourselves amid life’s difficulties, whether it is a pandemic, a personal crisis, illness, grief or physical need we may feel overwhelmed, or even scared. When this happens, we can look with comfort and hope at the signs Jesus has given us. The one who healed the sick. The one who was concerned for those with empty stomachs. The one who fed 5000 with three loaves and two fish is always with us. The one who can walk on water will walk through the darkest storms and come to us. Jesus will help us. He may not change the situation for us. We may still be in the boat in the storm, but he will come to us and stay with us until we get through the rough waters.

When the 5000 had finished eating there were enough pieces of bread left to fill 12 baskets. Jesus did not merely provide food for the crowd, he provided them with an overflowing abundance of food with enough left over for another meal. This too was a sign pointing to his character.

Jesus is not only concerned about our daily struggles, but he is also concerned about our future and especially our eternal future. The crowd whom Jesus fed did find him again the next day and when they did Jesus said to them, “You are looking for me not because you saw the signs I performed but because you ate your fill. Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you.” 6:26.

Jesus is more than a prophet he is God in human flesh who has come to feed our hearts and our souls. Jesus wants to feed us with himself. To fill us abundantly with the Holy Spirit. To dwell in our hearts and fill them to overflowing with the gifts that lead to eternal life. Gifts of both faith and love. Faith in him and love that so wide and long and high and deep that it is beyond measure. Amen

Pastor Rolf Lungwitz