

Seventh Sunday after Trinity

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Preacher: Fr. Randall Russell

[0 : 00] In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. The account of how our Lord fed thousands using only a small amount of bread and fish is something that we hear read on at least three different Sundays throughout the church year.

! The first time we hear it read is on the fourth Sunday in Lent. The second time is today, on the seventh Sunday after Trinity. And the third time is on the last Sunday of the liturgical year.

So what am I going to tell you today about our Lord's feeding of the multitude that you haven't already heard during Lent and won't hear again until the end of the church year?

Well, to be perfectly honest, probably not a whole lot. Except for the fact that this morning's feeding narrative is found in Mark chapter 8, whereas the feeding narrative for the other two Sundays is found in John chapter 6.

And there are at least a few differences between these two texts. For example, in John chapter 6, Jesus feeds 5,000 men, which is something all four Gospels tell us he did.

[1 : 25] Whereas in Mark chapter 8, our Lord feeds only 4,000 men, which is something only the Gospels of Matthew and Mark tell us occurred sometime after the first feeding of the 5,000.

So the feeding of the 5,000 occurred first, while the feeding of the 4,000 occurred second. And this little detail, this little detail is important, since the feeding of the 5,000 also took place near the city of Bethsaida, a primarily Jewish area, while the feeding of the 4,000 took place in the region of the Decapolis, a primarily Gentile area.

Therefore, as St. Paul explains in Romans chapter 1, the Gospel is the power of God to salvation for everyone, everyone who believes, first to the Jews and then to the Gentiles.

For Christ Jesus came to feed and to save all men, first the Jews and then the Gentiles.

And many have even interpreted the number of loaves our Lord used to feed these two groups, as well as the number of baskets the disciples used to collect the leftovers to, at least symbolically, illustrate this very same point.

[3 : 05] But I'm not really going to get into all of that, other than to point out that the number of loaves our Lord used, as well as the number of baskets the disciples used to collect the leftovers, is just another difference that is found between the feeding of the 5,000 and the feeding of the 4,000.

But regardless of that fact, the main point remains the same. Jesus Christ came to save all men from sin, death, and the devil.

For God's love is for all men, which is why Jesus Christ came to feed all men, both Jew and Gentile alike.

And even though, even though that thought might not sound all that profound, because today I think we often take this good news that Jesus Christ came in order to save all the nations of the world for granted, let us not forget that even in our own day, such divisions between races, as well as false claims that one nation or group of people is somehow superior to another, well, that idea still very much exists in the hearts and minds of many, even today.

For turn on the news and what do we see? We see Russians fighting against Ukrainians and Ukrainians fighting against Russians. We see Jews fighting against Arabs and Arabs fighting against Jews.

[4 : 59] We see Americans in conflict with Mexicans and Mexicans in conflict with Americans. For no more gringos remains the angry cry of many, even now in Mexico City.

And sadly, those divisions and those conflicts just seem to go on and on and on. But as Christians first, and whatever nationality we happen to be second, let us not forget that God loves and feeds all men the same.

For all men were created in His image, and all men are in need of His justice, His mercy, and most certainly His love.

So let us strive to do good unto all men. For Christ's salvation is for all men, a light to light in the Gentiles, and the glory of all the Jewish patriarchs and prophets who have come before.

For Jesus Christ is King of kings and Lord of lords, which means that we must be Christians first, serving the kingdom, and whatever else second.

[6 : 27] For God loves and feeds all men the same. For all men are called to repent and to humbly sit at the Lord's table as brothers.

For once again, the gospel is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, first for the Jews, as well as for the Gentiles.

For Jesus Christ is Lord of all. And in this morning's gospel, we see just one more small example of this, as our Lord again feeds His people, both Jew and Gentile alike.

In the name of the Father and of the Son of the Holy Ghost. Amen.