

Trinity 7

I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now been with Me three days and have nothing to eat."

Imagine being there as an eye witness to this miracle. You would not soon forget.

4000 people were fed that day with only seven loaves of bread and a few small fish.

But the disciples *had* been eyewitnesses to an almost identical miracles not very long before. On the shore of the sea Jesus had fed five thousand men and their families with five loaves and two fish.

They saw with their own eyes how afterwards there had been twelve baskets of leftover fragments gathered up.

And yet here, not that long afterwards they haven't an idea what to think when Jesus points out another bunch of hungry people.

Four thousand people had followed Jesus into the wilderness without a thought for their own provision.

All they were interested in was hearing the Words that He spoke.

When Jesus points out this fact all they can say is, "*How can one satisfy these people with bread here in the wilderness?*"

They have every earthly reason to know! No reason to worry.

But, then, neither should you worry. Because you too have seen Jesus' providence over and over and over again.

You have seen how God has given and preserved life all around you.

The miracle of birth. The many times when He has protected you from harm.

And you have heard the Scriptures--the feeding miracles of Jesus...

The feeding of the children of Israel with manna; Elijah with ravens; the widow of Zarahath with a never-ending bin of flour.

Having seen and heard these things, you also should say, whenever even the slightest need arises in your life, "There is nothing to worry about here. Jesus brought me to this place, if He wants to take care of it He can do it easily and if that is not best for me, I will do just fine without."

When you don't adopt that attitude and think instead, "What a mess I'm in. This is no place that Jesus would have led me — that is sure. I must break off from following Him and go fend for myself first..."

When you speak or act like that, it shows a faltering of the faith.

It is this unbelief that is at the root of every sin.

Misuse of God's name happens when you don't believe that God will hear and answer your prayers at all times.

Neglect of the Sunday Service happens when you don't believe that Jesus will take care of your needs when you follow Him out to hear His word.

Disobedience to authority happens when you don't believe that Jesus will serve you through the people He has put there.

Murder, fighting and slander happen when you don't believe God can protect you unless you take matters into your own hands.

Adultery happens when you don't think Jesus can fulfill your need for love and companionship under the arrangements that He gives.

Thievery and dishonesty happens when you doubt that Jesus can provide for you and your family in a dog-eat-dog world.

It doesn't matter how strongly or how often you are told to obey the ten commandments, it cannot and will not happen until you believe.

And that brings us back to the place of Preaching and Sacrament.

In the preaching, Jesus recounts again His awesome deeds so that your heart is stirred up to believe in Him.

But more than a pep talk, by Preaching Jesus calls new life into existence in you.

Jesus' voice causes you to want more and more to hear him so that you become like the crowd in today's Gospel — willing to follow Him anywhere.

As long as you are hearing Him, you are content and happy.

But then when you open your eyes to the appearances of the world around you, it is likely to scare you right out of your faith.

You see what you must suffer for the sake of this Gospel that you believe and you see no relief in sight.

You begin to doubt and wonder saying, "I know that the Word that led me here was God's Word and Preaching, but would Jesus really have led me to this desolate place?"

"Would my Lord who loves me really have brought me to a place so far from the comforts of the world that I might faint and fall on my way back home?"

"Maybe the voice that I thought was Jesus' voice is only an impostor..."

To address these kinds of doubts that arise, Jesus has instituted the Lord's Supper.

This is your weekly reminder that Jesus fed 5000 with five loaves and 4000 with seven loaves.

This reminds you that the desolate appearance of your life should not frighten you any more than the desolate landscape should have frightened the disciples.

But more than a reminder, this supper is, in fact, the very food that you need in order to keep you hearing and believing in the Word of the Savior.

Just as then, Jesus takes the bread in hand, gives thanks to the Father and distributes it to you.

And by this bread — although only a small wafer — you eat and are filled.

This Supper is able to completely satisfy you with abundant amounts available to all who are there to hear the Word and Preaching of Christ.