

Feeding the Four Thousand + Mark 8:1-9; Genesis 2:7-17

We confess in the Apostles' Creed that God is the Maker of heaven and earth.

He orders all things in heaven and on earth. Everything is according to His plan and purpose.

God made man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.

We are the clay, and God is our Potter; we are all the work of God's hand.

God forms and shapes us; we are fearfully and wonderfully made.

Man was created by God breathing life into him.

This is different from the rest of creation, where God spoke words and everything that is was made.

Man, however, you and me, male and female, are created by God breathing into us His breath, the breath of life.

This is what it means that God created man in His image, we look and are like God. We have God in us.

Because we are God's creation, He takes care of us, richly and daily providing all that we need to support our body and life.

We see this with the Garden of Eden, which God planted and placed us Adam and Eve in it.

After placing Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, God spoke the commandment, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day you eat of it you shall surely die."

God did not want evil, to be part of His creation. He gives us those things which are good for us, this includes His teachings and commandments.

He delivers us from every evil, sin, death and hell have no power over us.

He defends us against all danger and guards and protects us from all evil.

All this, the God who created heaven and earth did, not because we deserve it, not because we have merited or earned it, but because of His divine goodness and love toward us.

He gives us everything we need, even to those people who do not believe in Him.

He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love toward us.

Because Adam and Eve rejected and doubted the commands and promises of God, having eaten from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, having listened to the devil, they fell into sin.

God removed them from His garden, out of His presence, and now there was suffering and pain and death in the world.

A great crowd had gathered around Jesus. This is no small thing, since God had previously removed man from His presence.

They had nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples to Him and said, "I have compassion on the crowd, because they have been with me now three days and have nothing to eat. And if I send them away hungry to their homes, they will faint on the way. And some of them have come from far away."

God takes care of us, richly and daily providing all that we need to support our body and life.

The people had walked through the valley of the shadow of death, through the wilderness, but they did not complain, because Jesus was with them, His rod and staff comforted them.

Besides, only a short time earlier, Jesus had fed 5,000 with five loaves of bread and two fish; they knew what God would do.

This is just like us, this morning, in this place, we have gathered around Jesus to hear Him speak to us from the lectern, as we hear the readings from Holy Scripture, and from the pulpit, as we hear the sermon. We are here because we know what God will do for us.

The Garden of Eden, with a river flowing out of it to water the garden, divided and became four rivers. The four rivers which went to the four corners of the Garden are like the gospel of Jesus Christ, which goes out to the four corners of the earth: North, South, East and West, that all nations would hear and believe and be baptized.

The Garden of Eden is like the church, where the waters of Holy Baptism flow out, calling us to Jesus, gathering us together in His presence, enlightening us with His gifts, making us holy and keeping us with Jesus in the one true faith, that sin, death and hell would have no power over us. We gather here this morning, and we do not complain about what has happened in the past week, because just like the week prior, we were here and Jesus took care of us, making us to lie down in green pastures.

Jesus has strengthened us in faith toward Him and in love toward our neighbor; we can fight the fight of faith.

Just as it was with the feeding of the 5,000, so too today with the feeding of the 4,000, Jesus took the bread, gave thanks for it, broke it and gave it to His disciples to give to the people. The people ate and were satisfied.

And they took up the broken pieces which were left over, seven baskets full. The seven baskets full of left over bread are all those who have been gathered into God's presence, all those whose names are written in the Book of Life, all those for whom Jesus has gone to prepare a place for in heaven.

In creation, the seventh day is the day God rested from all that He had done.

On the day of rest, we gather in God's presence; we are not in want.

Just as it was with God on the sixth day of creation, where God made man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being; with the feeding of the 4,000, man now has the bread of life in him. With the bread of life in us, we have God in us, we look and are like God. We are alive, death is not in us. We are at peace.

The peace of God, which surpasses all human understanding, is in us. Our hearts and minds are kept with Jesus in the one true faith. Our souls have been restored.

As it is with baptism, so it is with the Lord's Supper, the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

With what Jesus blesses, breaks and gives, we are strengthened and kept with Jesus in the one true faith. This is why the Lord's Supper is so important for us as baptized children of God.

After they had been fed and the fragments gathered, Jesus sent them away. They departed in peace. They who were dead are now alive.

This morning, after we receive the Bread of Life and the Cup of Salvation, we who were dead are now alive. We now look and are like God. God is in us and we are in God.

We depart in peace according to God's Word. We have tasted and seen and heard our salvation.

We are the clay, and God is our Potter; we are all the work of God's hand.

God continues to form and shape us; we are fearfully and wonderfully made.

In this place, in this church, in this house of the Lord, we have walked with Jesus beside still waters. We have been recreated in God's image. We are forgiven of our sins. Our cup runs over. The goodness and mercy of God follow us all the days of our life.

He orders all things in heaven and on earth. Everything is according to His plan and purpose.

We leave here this morning, living as fathers and mothers, husbands and wives, sons and daughters, strengthened to live the baptismal life in love toward God and neighbor. Amen.