

When King David had made Jerusalem the capital city,  
he brought the ark of the Lord there and set it in its place.  
We read that when David had finished offering the burnt offerings  
and the peace offerings, he blessed the people  
in the name of the Lord of hosts and distributed among all the people  
the whole multitude of Israel, both the men and the women,  
a cake of bread and a portion of meat and a cake of raisins to each  
one.

Then all the people departed each to his house.  
See now, Jesus, the son of David, is greater than David.

Jesus gave the multitude not only a piece of bread  
and a portion of meat, but enough to satisfy them  
and leave huge baskets left over.

King David gave food in the ordinary way by gathering  
and preparing it.

It must have taken weeks to get ready, but Jesus, the king of kings,  
gave food at a moment's notice in an extraordinary way by multiplying  
it.

This miracle we see not only that the son of David is God  
and Lord of creation, but also we see that he is good.

We confess this truth every time we celebrate the Lord's Supper.

We give thanks to the Lord who is good.

The one who comes to feed us this morning is both God  
and he is compassionate.

Now obviously, I know the feeding of the 4,000  
is not a passage directly related to the Lord's Supper.

But the comparisons are inescapable, aren't they?

In the Lord's Supper, Jesus also has compassion on us.

Just as he fed the crowds so that they would not faint on the way  
home,

so also he comes now to feed us so that we will not faint  
on the way to our heavenly home.

Just as he first taught the crowd, so we first hear Christ's word  
and preaching before we eat.

When Jesus fed the 5,000 earlier, a separate instance,  
they were inside the boundaries of Israel.

They were Jews.

But here, in this feeding of the 4,000, they are outside the  
boundaries of Israel

and they are mostly Gentiles.

So just as some of them even came from a long way off,  
so we Gentiles have come far off from Abraham's family  
to be grafted in.

He feeds us too, for the Son of David has come to give  
the bread of life to all Israel.

He came to seek and to save that which was lost  
and graft us branches back onto the vine.

We could go on.

Just as Jesus multiplied food, so in the Lord's Supper,  
Jesus gives each Christian his entire crucified and risen flesh.

It is not that I receive some of Jesus and you receive the rest of him.

No, we all receive the entire Christ so that we are satisfied.

When he fed the crowd, he gave thanks and broke it.

In the Lord's Supper, he does the same.

Just as he gave it to his disciples so that they would then distribute it to the multitude,

so in the Lord's Supper, Jesus gives us pastors who distribute his body and blood to the people.

And just as Christ dismissed the crowd, so he dismisses us from communion in peace.

Now maybe you can find even more connections, but that's enough for now.

Instead, what I'm going to do this morning is what I was taught in seminary you should

never do in a sermon, but I'm going to do it anyway.

I'm going to change gears and change topics.

So here we go.

I want you to turn your attention now to the question the disciples ask when Jesus says

he's about to feed them.

They say, how can one feed these people with bread here in this desolate place?

What kind of a question do you think that is?

It could be a question of despair, that it essentially means, well, how can we do anything

about it, Jesus?

But it could be a genuine question.

They could just be asking him, okay, how can we do it?

What's the game plan?

In fact, we find an example of this asking how kind of question in St. Mary.

You remember the angel Gabriel comes and announces to her that she will bear the Messiah, the Christ in her womb.

And Mary believes, yet she asks, how will these things be since I have not known a man?

She's not doubting.

She believes the promise, but for reasons of obvious personal interest, she's curious

as to how this will happen.

Then the angel assures her, nothing untoward, the power of the Holy Spirit will overshadow

you and you will conceive in your womb.

She asked how, but she did not doubt.

Maybe that's the case here.

Maybe not.

Whatever the case, Jesus does not rebuke them.

He simply asks them, well, how many loaves do you have?

To which they simply respond, seven.

They don't say, well, it's not enough, Jesus.  
They say seven.  
They just give what they have, even though it seems to them to be not nearly enough.  
They had seen, after all, Jesus feed the 5,000 men plus their women and children.  
So like the widow putting her only penny into the offering box, even though it didn't seem  
like much, they gave the Lord what they had and let him worry about the rest.  
We should have the same confidence.  
Those of you who are older, how much of your life's energy do you think, in the days that  
God has allotted you, have you spent in worry about having enough? Worry about paying the bills, worry about what's going to come. And yet looking back, you have to admit, don't you, that you never so much as had to skip  
a meal.  
It drives me a little bit crazy, but I did it to my parents, so what goes around comes  
around.  
But you know, kids open the pantry, it's full, there's nothing to eat. This is how we are.  
Another son, the son of David, another son of David, Jonathan, he said, come, let us  
go over to the garrison of these uncircumcised.  
It may be that the Lord will work for us, for nothing can hinder the Lord from saving  
by many or by few.  
The Lord provides from much or from little, from abundance or from lack.  
They could have said, not enough, Jesus, instead they said, seven, and see what the Lord did  
with that.  
Imagine if your forefathers here on the prairie, dirt poor, had said, we don't have enough  
to start a church, they're simply not enough for a school.  
But they didn't let that stop them, did they?  
They simply said, Lord, we got seven, or whatever the number was, and see what he's done.  
Now I'm not saying that the Lord always gives success to whatever we attempt, but I am saying  
that success always comes from the Lord whenever it is had, and when it is had, it almost always  
starts from something as small as seven.  
In salvation, of course, we contribute nothing, nothing but our own sins, not so much as seven,  
not so much as one.  
Jesus' work on the cross is all sufficient.  
He pays the full price that we could not even pay in part.

We are redeemed from our sins by his blood and rescued from death by his resurrection.

In the things of our lives that we are given to do by God, we are not to say, well, the

Lord has to do it, so I won't contribute anything.

I will just sit on my hands.

One of my favorite Proverbs, it's in the book of Proverbs twice, is the sluggard, who says,

there's a lion in the road, there's a lion in the streets, I'm not going out there, I'm

not going to do anything, I'm not going to try, I might get hurt, I might lose it, it

might come to nothing, there's a lion in the streets.

That's the cry of the sluggard.

The things we are called to do, we are not to cry lion, we simply say, seven, that's

what I've got.

We must do what we can and then put our faith and trust in God to do what we cannot.

So for example, you cannot force the alcoholic to stop drinking, but you can say, seven.

That is, you can do whatever little you can, you can take the bottles away, you can say

your prayers, putting your trust in the Lord to take care of the rest.

Again, you cannot predict the future, but you can say, seven.

That is, this is what I can do today, Lord.

It doesn't seem like enough, it doesn't even seem like it will make a dent, but Lord, you

must do the rest.

I've got seven.

Into your hands, I commend myself in all things.

So at the end of our reading, they end up with seven baskets full, more than what they

had when they started, and they gathered it together.

That was no sin or mark of unbelief.

I just want you to see that they were both generous with the seven loaves they had at

the beginning, and they saved up the leftovers for future use.

And both were good works.

Both the giving and saving are good works.

We're not cattle that eat our fill and then trample the rest into the ground.

They didn't think, wow, we don't need to work anymore or save up anything because Jesus

will always feed us with a miracle.

That's not faith either.

Our responsibility is to manage what we have been given, but leave the results and miracles

to God, trusting that he will act as he knows best.

So rejoice this day.

The son of David has come also to you.  
He brings you a feast.  
Moreover, this Lord has a use for you, no matter your abilities, your  
net worth, your  
age, whether you've only got seven or more.  
Do not think it's too little to matter.  
It won't make a difference.  
The Lord can save by many or few, by much or little.  
And he asked them, how many loaves do you have?  
They said, seven.  
Come soon, Lord Jesus.  
Amen.  
The peace of God which surpasses all understanding, keep your hearts  
and minds in Christ Jesus.  
Amen.