

Coffee to Go. Proper 13

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SPEAKERS

Karin Peter, Blake Smith

Karin Peter 00:26

Welcome to Coffee to Go, where we center ourselves in the season scriptures and holy days of the Christian tradition. I'm Karin Peter, here with Blake Smith, and we welcome you on this journey. So where is Jesus this week in what we call proper 13? Or, the 13th Sunday in Ordinary Time? And Jesus is out in the wilderness. And that can mean a lot of things. But let's say it's a ways out of town. And this setting is meant to kind of evoke the Exodus, that part in the Old Testament where Moses and all the people of Israel wander around the desert for 40 years in the wilderness. And it's done on purpose. And the purpose is Matthew is always comparing Jesus to Moses, He wants all of the Jewish Christians to remember that Jesus comes in the same tradition. And so you'll hear a lot of things that Matthew puts in here, that are meant to call your attention to oh, that's kind of like Moses. So that's on purpose. Thank you, Matthew. So in the wilderness, and which, by the way, to me, it's not desert, it's like some of our campgrounds. Like, when I'm at a camp, and when I'm at a reunion ground, I'm like, Oh, this is wilderness, at least it is for me. And maybe it's simply more like an outdoor sacred space, which is what our campgrounds and our outdoor spaces are for many of us. And so it's a place where people would go for spiritual retreat or healing, or in some sense, simply because they don't fit in. Kind of like people who would be pushed to the frontier. This space is still though near water. And we know that because Jesus alights from a boat at one point, but the crowds have followed Jesus, and he is in need of some time alone, and has returned, hopefully refreshed, and he comes ashore and immediately experiences and overwhelming compassion for the people. And let's see what he does. So our Scripture Blake?

Blake Smith 02:34

Yeah, our Scripture today comes from Matthew 14:13-21. And in case our listeners are just hearing this piece, and not completely familiar with the context, this is coming right after Jesus and the disciples have heard the news that John has been beheaded. So, with that in mind, we kind of get an idea of the mindset that they might be in. Now, when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion for them and cured their sick. When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a deserted place and the hour is now late, send the crowds away, so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves." Jesus

said to them, "they need not go away. You give them something to eat." They replied, "We have nothing here, but five loaves and two fish." And he said, "bring them here to me." Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass, taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples and the disciples gave them to the crowds. And all ate and were filled, and they took up what was leftover of the broken pieces, 12 baskets full. And those who ate were about 5000 men, besides women and children. And when you think about the context, so first of all, they've just gotten the news of the beheading of John. Now, they've been followed by this crowd. And it's not just a small group. We're talking 5000. And that's just counting the men then there's the women and children.

Karin Peter 04:23

We're talking about a small town following Jesus around.

Blake Smith 04:28

So I don't know about you, but I can totally identify with the disciples. They're tired. They're hungry. I mean, it's been a long day, probably a long several days, who knows even months and it's a long way back to town and they're probably ready to go and rest, get something to eat and rest. And, they want to just be done for the day. But Jesus in His compassion, doesn't turn the crowds away? He says, Let's feed the crowds. That's ... the compassion and generosity of God, in the midst of all circumstances, never fails. So we have before us this miracle of a few loaves of bread and a few fish, satisfying all these people. It's not a time for us to talk about... we don't need to take the time to talk about or rationalize the miracles. But simply live in the Scripture, let the Scripture be with us and live in the different experience happening between the disciples and the crowds, and Jesus. There's all kinds of emotions and feelings and things going on here, that I think we can spend some time in and understand just how deep this compassion was, and how, how much of a gift it was.

Karin Peter 05:52

So I can sense the energy of the crowds of what's happening as people are fed, and people are recognizing that, this group of people cares about them cares enough to feed them, which would have been unusual, obviously, because the disciples wanted to send them away to go into town, which would be the expectation. And so this was not only this blessing, but it was a completely unexpected kind of blessing, which really interests me, it also interests me, because I would be one of the disciples on the schedule, tapping my watch going, "Jesus, it's time to go back, we were scheduled to leave three minutes ago." And this makes me recognize that that's not always the appropriate response. So it makes me question myself, which is my segue into Blake, Do we have questions to consider this week?

Blake Smith 06:43

Yeah, definitely have some questions. I think that an important piece there that that I didn't mention is, not only are they hungry, and then this expectation is thrown on them. But the point is that this expectation is thrown on them. This passage is often called Jesus fed the 5000. But the reality is, Jesus said, you feed them. He did bless their efforts, but he required them to do yet more work. So yeah, there are some questions. I think one of them would be, when have you felt called to an otherwise impossible task? I think the disciples probably saw this as an impossible task. So when have you been called to an otherwise impossible task? And how did you respond? And even more, so how were your

efforts blessed? When you thought you couldn't do it? And you did, how were your efforts, blessed? But on the other side of that was this generosity, this idea of generosity. We need to ask ourselves if we accumulate more than we need with no regard for those who don't have enough. You know, I'm sure those disciples were thinking, look, we've only got this much and we're hungry. So what do we accumulate that's more than we need? How moved would we be to extend compassion to someone if it was an inconvenient time and place?

Karin Peter 08:04

Ouch. That's a hard one. Like, that's a hard one. I live in a culture that doesn't like to be inconvenienced. And I struggle with that balance. Yeah.

Blake Smith 08:17

So have you ever felt out in the wilderness? Or maybe you feel that way now? And how would you hope that someone else might respond?

Karin Peter 08:27

So all good questions, Blake for us to think about this week. And also to keep it in our mind this week to experience this living in that moment. Let's remember, the miracle wasn't just the food, it was the relationships that Jesus was modeling. So invite someone to share a meal with you at your expense, take someone to a meal, or to coffee, or that kind of a thing. Or even if you're a person that takes your lunch to work or school, pack more than you need and make a point to invite folks to come and share what you have with you at lunchtime. Or even take a bag of snacks to someone at work or at school or in your neighborhood and just stay and chat with them. So you know, grab that bag of Cheetos off the shelf and go over to a neighbor and share with them. Always to continue to live in this space of acknowledging that we Jesus blesses our efforts that we are called to actually build the relationships Jesus modeled for us. So do we have a blessing for today Blake?

Blake Smith 09:39

Absolutely we do. Our blessing focuses on that idea of generosity. And it's from "For Living Generously" by Meta Herrick Carlson, if you are waiting for a linear arrival, that abundance of life stage or a status that unlocks your inner philanthropist, you will have missed The point you will be as generous as you are at this moment. So participate in the promise that has already begun. The miracle that there is enough for everyone.

Karin Peter 10:14

Marvelous blessing.

Blake Smith 10:17

Well, as always, thanks for joining us on this episode of Coffee to go we invite you to join us again for coffee to go for the next part of our journey through the liturgical seasons and holy days of the Christian tradition.