



Raquette Lake Chapel Sunday Blast for July 25, 2021

“The Feeding of the 5000”: John 6:1-15.

Last Sunday the Gospel from Mark 6:30-34, 53-56 told two stories: Jesus’s desires to take the disciples to a place of rest, and Jesus and the disciples’ continued ministry. The gap in last week’s lection left out a major miracle almost everyone is familiar with: the feeding of the 5000. This week’s gospel turns to John 6:1-21 tells that story. (by the way the feeding of the 5000 is told in all four gospels Matthew 14:13-21; Mark 6:30-44; and Luke 9:10-17.)

Two Ways the Story is Told

In Mark, Matthew, and Luke, the “Synoptic” Gospels,” the story is told something like this:

Jesus’s disciples came to him and said, “This is a deserted place, and the hour is now very late; send the people away so that they may go into the surrounding country and villages and buy something for themselves to eat.” But Jesus answered them, “You give them something to eat.”

John has a different point of view:

When he looked up and saw a large crowd coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, “Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?” He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do. Philip answered him, “Six months’ wages would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little.” One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, said to him, “There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many people?” Jesus said, “Make the people sit down.”

A World of Abundance

Of the many themes and messages, we can follow in this Gospel, we can look at them as a lesson – not in scarcity – but in abundance, the abundance of God’s grace. In the story told in the Synoptic Gospels Jesus is challenging the disciples’ faith, especially “that God will provide.” But in John’s version, Jesus shows them, shows them, not tells them, what God’s vision is: “The Abundance Model” with the help of a young boy who has given up his food to share with all. (And sometimes “the least of these” will lead us.)

A Prayer for Balance

Gracious God, your word states that you sent Jesus to bring us life in abundance and for our joy to be full. Lord, in this moment in our lives, may it be a moment where we receive an abundance of joy from you. Regardless of what may happen or what is happening now, we want to look back in memory of how joyful this time was. Teach us the true joy of childlike trust, like the boy who gave up his food for the crowds. May it be so. AMEN.