

**Matthew 14:13-21 : "Hints of the heavenly" :**

**Matthew's Jesus**

Parables of the Kingdom (Matt 13:1-52)

3 August 2014 – Carole Hough

**Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand**<sup>(A)</sup><sup>(B)</sup>

Sure many of us will have had picnics - barbeques  
over the last few weeks-  
Most enjoyable aspects of the summer-  
Having meal together in the sun-  
Maybe other opportunities-  
? Mission, or pilgrimage or Green belt-  
- well perhaps this reading is one of the earliest  
accounts of a communal picnic-

It is not difficult to picture the scene-  
People have heard about Jesus- maybe even been  
present when he has been preaching-  
Maybe already seen him perform miracles-  
They hear that he is in the vicinity- and want to go  
and hear him- maybe take a friend who is sick-  
Drop everything and go-

You need time out- to consider what comes next-  
to accept that things will change ....  
weary with the world- and ready to simply be  
with your thoughts and those closest to you-

away from the clamour of people-  
who want your ministry- your healing touch, your  
presence, to draw apart....

But then you see people gathering-  
coming to find you-  
To touch you- and you realise that you cannot be  
alone ....  
And you see the crowds and your heart goes out  
to the people- you feel compassion- and you  
respond to their needs-

At one level the story is one that we are  
accustomed to hearing-  
Jesus responds to the needs of people-  
Whether the Wedding at Cana- water changed  
into wine  
By performing miracles- of healing-  
And by using the ordinary to perform the extra  
ordinary-

Eg Wedding at cana- turns water into wine,  
Using clay & spittle to restore the sight of the blind  
man

And Here he takes the bread & fish & multiplies them-

This is not the only account of the feeding of a  
multitude in the Gospels-

There are accounts in each of them-  
And 2 of what could be the same or different but  
similar incidents in both Matthew & Mark-

Should this surprise us?

No . They echo a common theme in Israel's  
scriptures.

So as we have heard - manna in the wilderness  
provided daily sustenance for the Israelites.

Isaiah speaks of the abundance of food, drink and rich  
food for those without money to buy it (55:1-2).

the account of Elijah and the widow of Zarephath (1  
Kg 17:8-16)- where oil is multiplied

and Elisha feeding one hundred – in essence very  
similar(2 Kg 4:42-44).

Why is this significant?

- 1- Because it tells us about the purpose of  
Matthew's gospel-

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Matthew as we already know writes as a Jewish  
Christian-

a Jew who also believes that Jesus is the Christ- the  
Messiah- the fulfilment of the law-

Matthew is concerned with telling of the Kingship of  
Christ- or Messiah-  
And the coming of his Kingdom-

And the main point and argument of Matthew's 28  
chapters is to convince the Jews that Jesus is their  
Messiah King, the Anointed One,  
the Christ,  
the Son of God  
And in whom begins the kingdom of God.

Matthew's account uses the word "kingdom" 50 times,  
and the "kingdom of heaven" 32 times

So as we have seen woven into the heart of his gospel  
accounts we find the Old Testament-

Jesus' actions over the bread echo customs of Jewish  
meals - Giving thanks/ Blessing the bread

Other OT themes-

Each of the gospels place this episode after the news  
of the death of JtB-

While Mark and Luke disconnect these stories,  
Matthew seems intentionally to connect them.

According to Matthew, Jesus withdraws by himself into "a deserted place" (*ereḗmos*) upon receiving the report of John's death. – a wilderness-

John the Baptist preaches repentance in the wilderness.

Jesus was led by the spirit into the wilderness, immediately following his baptism by John- to fast and be tested in preparation for his ministry. Wilderness time can last a long time, forty days or forty years, ( - the Israelites ) or it may be brief. Wilderness is a good place to grieve, pray, repent, and fast.

Jesus response to JtB death – to go into the desert- and then to "break the bread" – is a direct analogy with what is going to happen to him- should not underestimate the implication of the death of JtB upon J-

Matthew also uses this passage, as he does throughout his gospel to show Who Jesus is-

He is the one through whom we see God's Kingdom

- This passage points directly to Jerusalem-
- And the breaking of bread at the Last Supper-
- Jesus goes to the Garden of Gethsemane
- He takes himself apart-

- and to the way of the cross
- Where the Son of Man is broken- and given to the broken world for restoration & healing-

- Now we have an understanding of how this miracle is unveiling both Jesus as the Son of Man- and that
- The Kingdom of God now arrived on earth-
- In himself-
- The fulfilment of all the OT promises,-
- The working out of God's purposes here –
- Our redemption through the broken bread- the broken body of Christ to the world-
- Matthew unlocks for us the treasure of the gift that we receive each time the bread is broken  
For us
- Just as here with this crowd of over 5,000
- They are healed as they receive this food- through it they are blessed and made new-

We hear of the compassion of Jesus to respond to the needs of those before him-

They are invited to receive from Him all that they need-

Finally Matthew speaks to what he sees as

The new community-  
The true Witnesses of God's unimaginable goodness

Receivers of his grace poured out for each one  
Breaking bread together is a communal and sacramental act that echoes through scriptures and through the centuries.

The symbols of the sacramental gathering and their many meanings resonate in this narrative of Jesus feeding the crowds.

Today here as we share this breaking of the bread  
We too are invited to share this gift of God's Kingdom-  
And to take it out into the world around us.  
Matthew 28 -

How do we share God's Kingdom?

We live in a broken world-

The broken world needs the broken body of Jesus-

God uses the very ordinariness- to give us a taste of his Kingdom- a taste of heaven-

Breaking bread together is a communal and sacramental act that echoes through scriptures and through the centuries. Sharing a meal is a primary means of creating and maintaining community. When Christians gather to break bread together, we remember and repeat Jesus' words and actions. In this sacred meal Christ satisfies our deepest hungers, heals our brokenness, binds us together as if one body, and strengthens us for service in the world.

Matthew 28 v 16 – And so he sends us- Go into all the world and preach the good news