

This Sunday at DCPC

Scriptures: 2 Kings 4:42-44

John 6:1-21

Sermon: Scarcity or Abundance?

Scott Kenefake will preach at 8:30 and 9:45 in Lingle Chapel and 11:00 in the sanctuary

I am happy to be back in Davidson after two weeks of study-leave. I spent the first week at Kenyon College in Gambier, Ohio, taking a Spiritual Writing Class (rigorous, humbling!) and the second week at the Chautauqua Institution (Week 4—"Russia and the West") in southwestern New York (www.chq.org). Both were broadening, eye-opening, and rewarding experiences.

This week we'll look at John's account of the familiar story of the feeding of the multitudes (variants of this story are recorded six times in the Gospels!).

Contemporary Christians typically read this as a "miracle" story in which food is magically "multiplied," but first-century readers (steeped in the Hebrew Scriptures) would have seen something else in the imagery and symbolism of the story; namely, that John was connecting Jesus with Moses; i.e. the very heart of the Jewish religious tradition. Here is a shorthand interpretive key:

- Jesus=Moses
- Loaves & Fishes=Manna
- Jesus Walking on Water=Red Sea/Exodus

The theological point that John is making in story form is this: *to know Jesus is to discover that he meets the deepest hunger in the human soul, because he is the "bread of life."*

In fact, John goes on to transform this story into a *Christian Eucharist* by saying that only by eating the flesh and drinking the blood of Jesus has salvation been made possible (6:54). After all, the Jews at the Passover meal also feasted on the body and blood of the lamb of God, and now they appear to be saying in these various versions of feeding the multitudes that there was a sufficient presence of this God in Jesus to fill the lives, not only of the Jews, but of all the Gentiles, as well.

So, it's much more than a simple "miracle" story.

We will also briefly consider the *economics of abundance* that are reflected in the story ("enough for all") and think about this in light of Paul Ehrlich's book, *The Population Bomb*, (50 years since publication—what he got right and wrong!), the Climate Crisis, and hope for building a sustainable future and contrast it with the *economics of scarcity, and income inequality* that currently dominates our lives and world.

Genny Bosak and Colleen Harrison will sing *How Lovely Is Your Dwelling* at the 8:30 service.

The Summer Choir will sing *Jesus, Priceless Treasure* at the 11:00 service.