



6/23/19 Luke 9: 11-17 & Gn. 14: 18-20

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ENTERING THE SCENE:

The picture says it all; so many people, with so many needs. Jesus says it is well that they have come, and then tells them what it is like in God's kingdom. Next he takes care of any physical need that might get in the way of people hearing what he wanted to share with them. Now instead of a quiet retreat after a busy time of ministry, the disciples are once again stretched beyond their imaginations.

Common sense is not equal to this situation. It is the time for uncommon sense.

When was the last time you had to reach into your heart for an uncommon sense response? How can these memories help you understand this passage better?

Luke 9: 11-17

¹¹ When the crowds found out about it, they followed him; and he **welcomed** them, and spoke to them about the **kingdom of God**, and **healed** those who needed to be **cured**. ¹² The day was drawing to a close, and the **twelve** came to him and said, "Send the **crowd** away, so that they may go into the surrounding villages and countryside, to **lodge and get provisions**; for we are here in a **deserted place**." ¹³ But he said to them, "You give them something to eat." They said, "We have no more than **five loaves** and **two fish**— unless we are to go and **buy food** for all these **people**." ¹⁴ For there were about **five thousand** men. And he said to his **disciples**, "Make them sit down in groups of about **fifty** each." ¹⁵ They did so and made them **all sit down**. ¹⁶ And taking the **five loaves** and the **two fish**, he looked up to **heaven**, and blessed and **broke** them, and gave them to the **disciples** to set before the crowd. ¹⁷ And all ate and were **filled**. What was **left over** was gathered up, twelve baskets of **broken pieces**.

DISCUSSION QUESTION: Because of modern media we are confronted with so many unmet needs these days. How does this teaching help you reach into your faith for a response?

PRAYER: Servant Jesus, you served up the words that make my soul hungers go away, yet my body hunger comes back each day with regular demands. Too often I make sure that the body gets what it demands and only look to my souls needs when I get some spare time. Help me as I continue to meet my real body and soul needs in ways that heal my fears of not having enough. Amen.

WORD STUDY AND QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

WELCOMED: To be welcomed is to have someone say that it is well that you have come!

Do you experience this kind of reception when you sit down with others at the celebration of the Eucharist?

KINGDOM OF GOD / HEAVEN: In the kingdom of God/heaven is that reality where God's will is our well-being, and we are able to accept this truth.

Is there anything that prevents that in your life right now?

HEALED / CURED: Jesus healed all those who came to him in need that day.

What needs healing or curing in your life today, so that you can have that well-being that the kingdom of God brings?

TWELVE / DISCIPLES: Twelve signifies complete governmental perfection. The 12 tribes / the 12 disciples. Nothing is lacking.

How is the concept of Corpus Christi (the Body of Christ) connected with the concept of the number 12?

CROWD / CROWDS: The numbers of people flocking around Jesus grows day by day. We stand on the threshold of the completion of Jesus' ministry in Galilee.

If you had lived then, would you have been in that crowd that day? If so, why?

LODGE AND GET PROVISIONS: Food and lodging are two of the most basic needs of humanity. We spend a great deal of our time and energy providing for these two needs.

How does this feast of Corpus Christi address these needs for you?

DESERTED PLACE: In a culture that placed supreme value on togetherness and saw aloneness as threatening, a person risked misunderstanding if they sought out a quiet place to get away from everyone and everything.

What do you think Jesus was doing when he took the apostles off alone to get away? Do you have any place to get off alone with Jesus? Do the people in your life understand your need to do this?

FIVE: In the language system of the day, people used numbers to indicate more than simply facts. The number five often symbolized the number of grace.

Who is graced in this mystery of the Body of Christ?

LOAVES: Bread is probably the most universal staple of the human diet.

What makes bread a very good reality to bring to us the Body of Christ?

TWO: The number two affirms that there is a difference – there is another. It is the first number that can be divided.

What implications does this have for your understanding of this story?

FISH: A staple of the diet of the day was fish that was dried and therefore available at all times. In the days of Jesus, bread, wine, and fish was what you took along if you left the house for any period of time.

Do you think that this boy was the only one with something along for the day? What could this suggest happened?

BUY FOOD: Even after all this time, the disciples are still thinking in ‘logical’ categories, rather than in faith categories.

When was the last time you responded to a faith question with a factual answer? If you were able to move beyond this ‘common sense’ response to an ‘uncommon sense’ one, what helped you to do this?

5000 MEN: Combine the number 50 and the number 10 in any combination and you get the idea of completeness and deliverance. (See below)

What is complete in the passage? What is brought to perfection at this time?

50: The significance of the number 50 resides in the concept of Jubilee or deliverance. It points to cessation and rest, following on as the result of the perfect consummation of time.

What does this number suggest to you in this context?

EVERYONE SAT DOWN: It is late in the day and yet the people were told to sit down.

What do you think they expected when they were told to sit down?

FILLED: To be filled is to be sated: that is to be totally satisfied.

What in this scripture passage fills you?

TWELVE BASKETS: Twelve represented completeness: twelve tribes, twelve disciples, twelve baskets of leftovers. The people went from scarcity to having gifts to share, and they interpret this as the awaited sign of God’s messiah.

If you had been there that day, would you have come to this same conclusion? Why?

BROKEN PIECES: The broken people came to Jesus for healing. Jesus breaks the food into pieces so that everyone could share in the bounty. In the Eucharist, we believe that Jesus’ ‘broken’ and resurrected body makes his risen life available to each of us.

How does this feast help you to ‘feed’ on this mystery?

LEFT OVER: another indication of the poverty of this crowd is the gathering up of the leftovers. The rich most often do not do this. What is offered to God is not lost but multiplied.

What information about this sign does this add? When the people remembered this event, what implications about God might they make? Have you ever gone from need to having leftovers?

PARALLEL TEXTS: Lk. 9:11-17 // Mt. 14:13-21; Mk. 6:30-34; Jn. 6:1-13;

OTHER TEXTS OF THE WEEK: Gn. 14:18-20; [Ps. 110: 1-4](#); 1 Cor. 11:23-26; Lk. 9: 11-17; Revised Common Lectionary: 1 Kgs. 21:1-21; [Ps. 5:1-8](#); Gal. 2:15-21; Lk. 7:36- 8:3;

SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION:

Ministry is acting in the Name of Jesus. When all our actions are in the Name, they will bear fruit for eternal life. To act in the Name of Jesus, however, doesn't mean to act as a representative of Jesus or his spokesperson. It means to act in an intimate communion with him. The Name is like a house, a tent, a dwelling. To act in the Name of Jesus, therefore, means to act from the place where we are united with Jesus in love. To the question "Where are you?" we should be able to answer, "I am in the Name." Then, whatever we do cannot be other than ministry because it will always be Jesus himself who acts in and through us. The final question for all who minister is "Are you in the Name of Jesus?" When we can say yes to that, all of our lives will be ministry. Henri Nouwen

"Lord, take me where you want me to go; Let me meet who you want me to meet; tell me what you want me to say, and Keep me out of Your way." Father Mychal Judge

Discipleship is rooted in the experience of an encounter with Jesus Christ. -Gustavo Gutierrez

I wonder if every table is really an altar. Both our Eucharistic and daily nourishment comes to us because of someone's sweat and blood. John McHugh

19 We believe, or profess, that God's presence and power is everywhere all the time: everything that comes into being is a "wonder," because it is not necessary and thus surprising; everything that comes into being is a "sign," because it points beyond itself to God's implicit presence and power. [Luke Timothy Johnson](#) Can we still believe in miracles?

Don't ask yourself what the world needs; ask yourself what makes you come alive, and then go do it. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive. -Howard Thurman

Jesus shows us the way to be in the world without being of it. When we model our lives on his, a new world will open up for us. The Kingdom of Heaven will be ours, and the earth will be our inheritance. We will be comforted and have our fill; mercy will be shown to us. Yes, we will be recognized as God's children and truly see God, not just in an afterlife, but here and now. That is the reward of modelling our lives on the life of Jesus! Henri Nouwen

What we do is very little. But it is like the little boy with a few loaves and fishes. Christ took that little and increased it. - Dorothy Day

"We need to set out on the journey and we need to let ourselves be coaxed into the unknown. Sometimes unwillingly and sometimes in the hands of our friends, sometimes by the fact that there is no other direction to go." Corrine Cavanaugh, *Spinning Straw into Gold*

Lk. 9.10–11: Successful mission (Mt 14.12–14; Mk 6.30–34). 10: Bethsaida, north of the Sea of Galilee. 9.12–17: Feeding of the five thousand (Mt 14.15–21; Mk 6.35–44; Jn 6.5–14). See 2 Kings 4.43–44. 14: Five thousand men, Mt 14.21 adds that the five thousand did not include the women and children also present. 16: Blessed, traditional Jewish blessing before eating (see Deut 8.10; b. Ber. 48b; Num. Rab. 20.21; the traditional blessing over bread ["birchat ha-motsi"] is based on Ps 104.14). The scene here anticipates 22.17–20. 17: Twelve baskets, perhaps suggesting Israel's twelve tribes. Luke recounts a miracle, comparable to the giving of manna (Ex 16; 2 Kings 4.43–44; cf. Jn 6.31; b. Yoma 75a on the sufficiency of manna), and not a sharing of resources. Pg. 119.

[The Jewish Annotated New Testament](#)

Yet after finally hearing Paul's words in the context of the Lord's supper in which he placed them, I suddenly realized that when the apostle spoke about recognizing the body, he wasn't speaking about Jesus' body in the bread, he was referring to the body of Christ that comprises all Christians. In other words, those who refuse to recognize the body of the [risen Christ present in the others standing around them](#) during the Eucharist are not ready to receive the body of the risen Christ present in the bread. Fr. Roger Vermaalen Karban

There are so many hungry people in the world that God could only come into the world in the form of food." Gandhi

The table is one of the most intimate places in our lives. It is there that we give ourselves to one another. When we say, "Take some more, let me serve you another plate, let me pour you another glass, don't be shy, enjoy it," we say a lot more than our words express. We invite our friends to become part of our lives. We want them to be nurtured by the same food and drink that nurture us. We desire communion. That is why a refusal to eat and drink what a host offers is so offensive. It feels like a rejection of an invitation to intimacy. Strange as it may sound, the table is the place where we want to become food for one another. Every breakfast, lunch, or dinner can become a time of growing communion with one another. Henri Nouwen

A practical manual for those trying out this time tested way of going beyond the ordinary level of consciousness. "In approaching either a parable or an actual event, the secret is to become silent and concentrate on the picture or scene that is presented until it comes to life and begins to move." Pg. 215. Kelsey, Morton. *The Other Side of Silence*, NY. Paulist Press. 1976

The first century CE Jewish historian Flavius Josephus describes several Jewish miracle workers around the turn of the era. A certain Eleazar expelled a demon in the presence of the Roman emperor Vespasian (who was also said to be a miracle worker). Eleazar

commanded the demon to overturn a nearby bowl of water, proving that the demon had in fact left the man. (Antiquities of the Jews 8.46-47)

Honi, a certain Galilean charismatic, is said to have made it rain after a long rainless period. Whereas Josephus says he did this simply by praying, (Antiquities 14:22), the Mishnah, an early rabbinic text, says he drew a circle and adjured God that he would not move from the circle until it had rained. (Ta'anit 3:8)

Another Galilean charismatic, Hanina ben Dosa, was a famous healer. When the son of his community leader, Yohannan ben Zakkai, was taken ill, Yohann said to the healer, "Hanina, pray for my son that he may live!" Hanina put his head between his knees and prayed - and the boy was made well. (Babylonian Talmud, Berakot 43b)

Hanina could even cure from a distance. When Rabbi Gamaliel's son was afflicted with a very high fever, students were sent to Hanina's home in Galilee. Hanina went into his chamber, prayed, and upon returning, said, "Go home, his fever has departed from him." When the students came back, Galaliel confirmed that his son had been healed. (Babylonian Talmud Berakot 43b). Fossum, Carl. Jesus' Miracles. Bible Review, 4/94. Pages 18-19.

There are so many different ways of being healed. The best way, and by far the commonest, is to be loved. To be loved by God, and to know it and live it, is to be healed indeed. The Good News first of all is that you and I are accepted and loved by God. From all eternity you and I have been in the mind of God. God's love for us is utterly reliable and has no conditions whatsoever. - Cyril Brooks

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Levine, Amy-Jill & Brettler, Marc Zvi. The Jewish Annotated New Testament. NY. Oxford Univ. Press. 2011

Care rather than cure. Organize your life to support the process. You are incubating your soul, not living a heroic adventure. Arrange your life accordingly. Tone it down. Get what comforts you can, but don't move against the process Concentrate, reflect, think, and talk about your situation seriously with trusted friends. Thomas Moore

The hiding place of God, the revelation place of God, is the material world. You don't have to put spirit and matter together; they have been together ever since the Big Bang, 14.6 billion years ago (see [Genesis 1:1-2](#) and [John 1:1-5](#)). You have to get on your knees and recognize this momentous truth as already and always so. The Eucharist offers microcosmic moments of belief, and love of what is cosmically true. It will surely take a lifetime of kneeling and surrendering, trusting and letting go, believing and saying, "How could this be true?" Gandhi also said, "If I really believed what you believe, I wouldn't get up from my knees." The only trouble is that many fervent Christians kneel before the Eucharistic Body of Christ but not the Human Body of Christ that Paul brilliantly describes ([1 Corinthians 12:12-26](#)). Remember, it is much easier for God to transform bread than to transform people, and the bread is for the sake of the people. Richard Rohr

I am your food, but instead of my being changed into you, it is you who will be transformed into me. St. Augustine

All of the stories of healing and transformation, awareness and enlightenment that we find in the Bible come to people moving beyond the usual definitions of power (i.e., false power, temporary power, dominative power, cultural power) to discover their deeper soul and their true spiritual power. The Bible and all spiritual books are books whose primary focus lies outside of themselves. Sacred texts are not an end in themselves, but they must insert you into new and larger realities—through a necessary struggle with your present level of consciousness (Faith holds onto you during that time!). Religious texts and rituals are not a substitute for human experience. They are meant to invite you into a helpful struggle, and in a certain way, they actually create a conflict or dissonance for you! If you resolve that tension too quickly by glib belief, you actually learn nothing new and go to no new place. Richard Rohr

ADDITIONAL READINGS:

Links to all the books mentioned in this guide are on The Ark web site: www.theark1.com

Beck, Robert. Sunday Homilies: Cycle C 2012..

Beck, Robert. Sunday Homilies: Cycle B 2007.

Beck, Robert. Sunday Homilies: Cycle B 2010.

THE HOST

One day / Jesus looked up, / not to the drunken sky / lurching and weaving on its way,

Dazzling and darkening all beneath it, / but to the late afternoon crowd / rumbling lunchless toward him.

"Where will we find enough food?" / The eternal worry of the host. / But the bread he broke defied arithmetic, / multiplying while it divided; / and the blessed fish spawned baskets of brothers.

Afterwards, John says, the crowd / belched up a crown and forged / from their fullness a scepter.

But Jesus fled to the mountain alone / to council in the court of the only King.

Shea, John. Stories of Faith. Chicago. Thomas More Press. 1980, **THE HOST**: Page 168.

THE COMMUNION

Blind and alone she sat on her bed / and sang / an old hymn / from an old church. / She sang for herself.
Her sound came from somewhere / deep in her being, / to sing was her need. / Her needing made me stop.
And somewhere between her singing / and my stopping / something happened / That had never happened to me / before. / I entered
her room. / I said in the faulted Spanish: / I come with God / with Jesucristo / for you.
And she shook into tears. / I come with the Holy Communion / Cuerpo / de Jesucristo / por tu.
She began to nod / and her blind, closed eyes wept. / Somehow her desire had reached / me and the surprise and joy / could not be
contained in / words or smiles. / And she said: I was so alone./ And I said: Jesucristo has come; / I have come; / and I held her / and
tried to talk / but we were beyond words. Catharine Steward Roache

Grana, Janice, Ed. [Images](#). Winona, MN. St. Mary's College Press. 1976. THE COMMUNION: Page 98.