

***SERMON on Matthew 14:13-21***  
***August 2, 2020***

(Jeff finishing a call on a cell phone – “Thanks for calling. Take care. Bye”)

Carol: I don't think Jesus would have wanted to have a cell phone.

Jeff: How come?

Carol: In the gospel stories, Jesus is often trying to get away from everyone to have some time alone with God.

Jeff: I guess it would have been easier before most people had phones.

Carol: Well...not really.

Jeff: No?

Carol: In this week's reading from the Gospel according to Matthew, Jesus tried to get away to be alone. In fact, he got in a boat and sailed along the lake shore until he found a deserted place.

Jeff: You might say that he set sail for solitude.

Carol: You might, but his deserted spot wasn't deserted for very long.

Jeff: Even without phones people figured out where he was going and got there first.

Carol: Just imagine...Jesus has had some quiet time in the boat. Perhaps he stopped rowing to allow the boat to drift to the shore, to the empty shore. He bowed his head and prayed for a few minutes and then looked back up and...the shore was teeming with people!!

Jeff: Waving and shouting, saying ‘Hey Jesus, did you miss us?’

Carol: They have come so he can heal them. And Jesus, says the scripture, had compassion for them – God's love for the people became Jesus' love for the people, so he surrendered his quiet time and embraced comforting and healing those were had gathered.

Jeff: As the hours pass, the disciples start to think of practical matters. They tell Jesus that this is a deserted place – which probably made Jesus smile, because that was why he had chosen it, but then he discovered that you cannot desert the call to love others.

Carol: The disciples say that the people will be getting hungry, so Jesus should send everyone away to find something to eat in nearby villages. Jesus has spent the afternoon caring for the people, and then the disciples say, time to let them fend for themselves.”

Jeff: I think Jesus’s response suggests that he did have a sense of humor. He said to the disciples, “Naw, they don’t have to leave. I now appoint you as the hospitality committee, so you give them something to eat.”

Carol: The disciples realized they had to explain to Jesus the theory of supply and demand: “But Jesus, we have just five loaves and two fishes *-after all, we didn’t expect to be out here all day* – and there are at least 5,000 people here! DO THE MATH!!”

Jeff: The disciples may have said “we didn’t expect to be here all day” but they may have been thinking “we didn’t expect to be in this God-forsaken place all day!”

Carol: So Jesus, knowing that no place and no person is forsaken by God, did the math – the holy, divine math of love. He took the loaves and fishes and he blessed them – he gave thanks to God for what they had.

Jeff: Then he broke the loaves and fishes, because holy, divine love often emerges from the places of brokenness.

Carol: Then he gave the fragments to the hospitality committee and told them to trust God, have faith in the fragments, and share what they had!

Jeff: And the story says that everyone ate and that when everyone was full, the disciples collected up 12 baskets of leftovers – enough for each disciple to have an ample take home supper.

Carol: A fun and amazing story – a story that some consider a basis for faith, and some consider to be an expression of faith – faith of Jesus’ companions who trusted that God’s love is more abundant than we imagine; that no place is deserted by God.

Jeff: That blessed, broken, shared and filled are the way of God...that prayer occurs both in places of solitude and in the expression of compassion for others.

Carol: Jesus went off to be alone, knowing that he was never alone, that God was with him always; that God is with us, always. Thanks be to God.

Jeff: AMEN

Carol: and AMEN!