

PREPARING AT HOME

July 23-29, 2018

Focus reading: John 6:1–21 (<http://bible.oremus.org/?ql=390298466>)

Other lectionary readings: 2 Samuel 11:1–15; Psalm 14; Ephesians 3:14–21

Theme: Into the Land of Faith

The Gospel of John contains many miracle stories; but by calling the miracles “signs,” John is telling us that the miracles themselves are not the main point. Instead, they are included in the gospel because of what they point to – the identity of Jesus. This week’s reading contains two miracles that help to demonstrate who Jesus was and what he revealed about God’s kingdom. The first is the feeding of the five thousand (which was actually more than five thousand when taking into account the women and children who were undoubtedly there but not counted). It is a lesson in the abundance of God’s grace. Even though the people are not complaining of hunger, Jesus wants to feed them. Food and the money with which to purchase it are scarce until Jesus prays and hands over food from a boy’s shared lunch. Miraculously, not only is everyone fed until satisfied, but leftovers are plenty! Later in this chapter (6:35) we hear Jesus call himself “the bread of life” and understand through this story that Jesus’ sustenance never runs out. In the second miracle, Jesus walks on water just as strong winds make the waters rough. Both of these miracles call to mind stories from the Hebrew Scripture, linking Jesus to Moses. Making the link even more apparent, John places these miracles as happening near the time of Passover, reminding us that under Moses’ leadership, God provided manna in the wilderness and rescue through the waters of the Red Sea. It is no wonder that the people want to make Jesus king! The miracles are impressive, but those who focus on the special effects miss seeing who Jesus really is. Jesus is not interested in earthly titles but brings God’s presence and abundant grace where there is scarcity and fear. He is for us and with us.

SHARING WHAT WE HAVE

Our culture and economy often operate out of a fear of scarcity. We need to buy an item before it disappears. We are afraid that desirable items will run out. Pay attention to ways in which that kind of thinking is introduced to your child. Think about how you can replace an attitude of “more” with an attitude of “enough” and encourage sharing. What can your family/your child share with others?

“DO NOT BE AFRAID”

When the disciple saw Jesus walking on the water, he said “do not be afraid.” How can remembering these stories help you when you are afraid? Make a poster that reminds you “Do not be afraid.”

PRAYER

Loving God,

We thank you for food and all of the gifts you generously give us.
Help us to share with others, so that all may have more than enough
and will know that we need not be afraid.

Amen.

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