

A song to sing or to read: Table of Plenty

Refrain:

Come to the feast of heaven and earth. Come to the table of plenty.
God will provide for all that we need here at the table of plenty.

O come and sit at my table where saints and sinners are friends
I wait to welcome the lost and lonely, to share the cup of my love.

Refrain

O come and eat without money; come to drink without price.
My feast of gladness will feed your spirit with faith and fullness of life.

Refrain

My bread will ever sustain you through days of sorrow and woe.
My wine will flow like a sea of gladness to flood the depths of your soul. **Refrain**

Your fields will flower in fullness; your homes will flourish in peace.
For I, the giver of home and harvest, will send my rain on the soil.

Refrain

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Closing Prayer

Go now into the world, strengthened
by the gifts with which Christ has fed you.

Be generous to others,
for Christ has given extravagantly.

Live by God's word.

Walk in God's paths and never stray.

And may God's wonderful love be with you everywhere

May Christ Jesus feed you with his body and word

And may the Holy Spirit confirm the truth in you

and fill you with God's presence always.

Amen

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Church in a Bag
Sunday 2 August
Dubbo Uniting Church



A Gathering

As we open our bag it becomes a time for seeking
for seeing and then being found.

In this time may we be asking
from One who knows our needs before we even speak.

May we be more satisfied, O God to wake up to your likeness within us.
Amen

Preparation

Loving God, as we gather in a new way
we come to learn of you and trust you
to cherish and serve you, to love, worship and adore you.

Open our ears, eyes and our hearts
all from different locations as one
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen



Reading: Matthew 14:13-21 – Feeding of the five thousand

Reflection

The miracle of the feeding of the five thousand was recorded in all four gospels, which indicates that it was especially important to the early church.

In 2 Kings 4:42-44, we read Elisha was given 20 barley loaves to share with a hundred people. The servants protested and asked what they should give them all to eat. Elisha reaffirmed the order, promising: “They will eat, and they will have leftovers”. This linkage is greater with John’s gospel account in John 6:9 where it specifically mentions barley loaves. It is worth noting that Elisha and Jesus both involved other people to help implement their miracles.

In today’s reading of Matthew 14 verse 13, the situation described is one to which we can all relate. We often try so hard to have quiet/alone time and things just get in the way - kids, phone calls, people asking questions or things just not going to plan. Okay, you are denied that time to realign. Jesus experienced this too. He had a good reason to be angry with the crowd for interrupting his solitude. Instead, he showed compassion and healed their sick. **Jesus’ compassion** trumps his need for solitude. Jesus not only showed compassion for the crowds, but so did the disciples. They could well imagine the misery that awaited the crowd unless action was taken.

“You give them something to eat” was the instruction. The obedience of the disciples was super important for this miracle, and still for today: **our obedience for the kingdom.** Christ takes our contributions,



however modest they may seem, and makes them enough. Sometimes the solution is in front of you. Now read 2 Kings 4:1-7 – Elisha helps a poor widow. This is a conferring blessing; God often uses what we have at hand.



It is funny how the disciples are very quick to tell of what they do not have. The disciples only see the problems and not the possibilities. They decided that the **five loaves and two fish** were never going to be enough - that it would feed one family only. The disciples urged Jesus to send the multitudes of people away. Sometimes I feel this is some churches – seeing problems rather than possibilities. Many churches are struggling to keep their doors open. We need to remain open to the knowledge that Christ will provide and will use us as his disciples to enhance his kingdom. What we have God will be able to make use of.

Jesus ordered everyone to sit on the ground. He gave thanks for the bread and sent his disciples to hand it out. Just in the same way today we can share a meal or communion, **remembering Jesus blessed, broke, and gave.** The crowd was unaware of the miracle that was happening before their very eyes. You may wonder if they had much to eat? Five loaves for five thousand men plus women and children? Then the story continues, and reveals that they all had their fill and at the end they collected 12 **baskets of leftovers.**

My questions are these.

Do you believe God intervenes in our lives, in our world?

How do we see this?

If we acknowledge God intervenes in our lives is there any reason why we would not believe that Jesus did not provide the masses of people with enough food to fill them?