

2020 Trinity 8

Isaiah 55:1-5 & Matthew 14:13-21

If we look back to the early church as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, we read of the willingness of the faith communities, to share equally and seek to be a community of abundance: Acts 2:44,45 says, 'All who believed were together and had all things in common, they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need.'

Looking further back to the gospels, we see many accounts of sharing and abundance, a prime example being today's reading, the feeding of the 5000.

Looking even further back to the prophets of the Old Testament, we see texts, like the one in Isaiah, that offer to exiled communities, the hope of abundance: 'everyone who thirsts, come to the waters.'

What all these texts have in common is a backdrop of an oppressive empire, where human beings are treated as commodities, where God's abundance is changed into scarcity.

In today's Gospel reading, Jesus had received news about how the empire, represented by Herod, had killed his cousin John the Baptist by cutting his head off and serving it on a platter at a birthday party where no doubt,

for the overlords, food and wine were in abundance, while those outside went hungry.

The news of John's death caused Jesus to withdraw to a safe place and He was followed by a hungry crowd. In this passage we witness the compassion of God as opposed to the cruelty of empire, we witness scarcity changed to abundance. We witness God's original plan for creation being reintroduced.

In the feeding of the 5000, the actions of Jesus were decidedly sacramental. Listen to the language and see if it sounds familiar?

He took, He blessed, He broke, He gave.

Every time the faith community takes, blesses, breaks and gives in the service of Holy Communion, we get a glimpse of the sharing of the abundance of the Kingdom of heaven; a glimpse of the messianic banquet and a glimpse of creation being restored to its original glory. So as we gather for communion today, let us thank God for His goodness, His generosity, and His restorative power, and let us resolve to bless others with a share of the things with which we have been blessed until we become the community of sharing and abundance that God intended us to be.