

Matthew 14:13-21

Jesus withdrew in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick. When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves." Jesus said to them, "They need not go away; you give them something to eat." They replied, "We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish." And he said, "Bring them here to me." Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

**Prayer:** Lord, may your wisdom guide us as we work together to build your Kingdom. May your grace and peace be with our essential workers and their families, as they work for us, to save lives and ease our burdens.

AMEN

**Sermon:**

Scholars often talk about the fact that

the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke,

tell many of the same stories.<sup>i</sup>

But the Miracle of Jesus feeding the 5,000 <sup>ii</sup>

is mentioned in *all four* Gospels.<sup>iii</sup> That Miracle was a big deal.

But<sup>iv</sup>, it was only a part of Jesus's very busy day! <sup>v</sup>

In less than 24 hours,

- Jesus told two different sets of parables. *And then explained them.*
- In between telling those parables Jesus learned that King Herod had killed Jesus' cousin, John the Baptist.
- Heartbroken, Jesus tried to get away, by rowing out to a quiet spot. But a crowd of more than 5,000 hungry, sick and tired people still found him.<sup>vi</sup>

- So, Jesus healed them, *and* when it got late ... he fed them all. Then, he told his followers to row back across the lake. Jesus climbed up a tall hill, to talk with his Dad.<sup>vii</sup>
- Then it got dark and windy. Jesus knew his guys would be freaking out, so walked out to them, across the water.
- He said, “It’s me”. “Don’t be afraid.”<sup>viii</sup>

The carpenter from Nazareth had a *very busy day*.

Americans love to be busy.

BusyNess is as American as Apple Pie.

But it isn’t always much fun.

Dana and I raised our two girls, in Bakersfield.

We lived in an antique two-story bungalow,

with no air conditioning!

Our historic home was built in 1911,

By Col. Thomas Baker’s Grandson.<sup>ix</sup>

Our big downtown has an even older building, built in in 1895.

Overshadowed by magnificent old pine trees,

we called it The Barn.

We had 3 dogs, kitties, Koi Fish and little bunnies,<sup>x</sup>  
but we kept our TV in the Barn.

Watching TV or movies was an event.

We all read a lot. And we still do.

The girls had a book about a little girl named Jessica Jacobs.

*Jessica got so busy that one day when she went to school,  
she forgot her head. xi*

That book was about the cost of being too busy.

Being Busy is a very American thing.

*Busyness is our Business. And Our Business is Busyness.*

Every society has its own unique burdens.

These days, bored and restless...

stuck in the Virus shutdown doldrums.

*It's hard to remember that our burden is Busyness.*

“Busyness” is a form of materialism.

It thrives in our commercially driven desire to have more stuff.

Busyness shows up in all sorts of odd ways:

The craving for a huge family, or a huge bank account.

Or a huge car or a huge steak or a big dessert.<sup>xii</sup>

Still. We really value Busyness.

For us Busyness is a positive good and a top priority.<sup>xiii</sup>

We think of “busyness” as a sign of our “success”.

We measure our “success” by our “busyness”.

Even though we value “busyness”,

Jesus calls us to value generosity, and kindness, and patience.

We value the racket of busyness.

But in his Busy Day, The Lord sought a quiet hilltop moment.

Don’t get me wrong. I know that I am preaching about my own sins!

I’m like anybody else.

The Real World gets to me,

and I make dumb mistakes, just like any other man.

*Ask my Wife and Kids!*<sup>xiv</sup>

Even Jesus was overwhelmed by his busy day.

But he sought solitude and prayer and peace.

His was a good plan. Let's be like Jesus!

Walk away from the racket and ceaseless chatter.

Let's put our cell phones down. Turn the TV off.

Let's cherish God's gift of peace.

Let's walk away from noise, calamity and action—

“Busyness” can be an all-consuming contagion,

But God has given us this Holy Place, as shelter. <sup>xv</sup>

Whether live or on-line, St. Christopher's is a quiet, safe place.

*Do stop by. Do come in.* <sup>xvi</sup>

These Virus days let's set aside our “busyness”.

- Read a good book. *Then read another.*
- Call your kinds or grandkids. *And then write them a letter.*
- *Talk to your spouse. Build something together.*
- Pray. Reflect.
- Watch the water flow and the sky change.

Don't be too busy. Rest easy. All will be well. -AMEN

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<sup>i</sup> Some scholars say that Matthew and Luke borrowed from Mark. But that was OK; there weren't any copyright codes back then. It was a compliment to have someone use your idea.

<sup>ii</sup> 5,000 men, plus women and kids.

<sup>iii</sup> The "5,000" is reported in Matt 14:13-21, Mark 6:31-44, Luke 9:12-17 and John 6:1-14. A similar, mostly forgotten miracle, where Jesus feeds "4,000", is reported only in Matt 15:32-39 and Mark 8:1-9.

<sup>iv</sup> According to Matthew.

<sup>v</sup> The Miracle of the 5000 is about a lot more than Jesus feeding people who were hungry for food; it is about Jesus feeding people who were starving for Truth. Just like Today.

<sup>vi</sup> Matt 14:2-14

<sup>vii</sup> Only Jesus knew that he was going to walk out to them later.

<sup>viii</sup> Peter tried to walk on the water too but started to sink. And Jesus said to him, as he has often said to me: "You of little faith ... why did you doubt?"

<sup>ix</sup> Our house had a few oddly incomplete parts, because Colonel Baker's Grandson was killed in the first fatal car accident in Kern County, before the house was finished.

<sup>x</sup> For FFA.

<sup>xi</sup> She did manage to get to school that day, though. "Jessica Jacobs Did What?" by Nancy Ellen Hird.

<sup>xii</sup> Or when we seek total control, if not over the entire world, at least over the part of the world nearest to us.

<sup>xiii</sup> But the Lord has called us to prize Service Above Self. Thanks, Bakersfield East Rotary Club!

<sup>xiv</sup> But I know that I am called -- and that each of us is called -- to "take, bless, break and give," and to reject Satan's contrary message: "Go, do and take."

<sup>xv</sup> Busyness proclaims, "I have arrived," when, we are actually lost. Busyness tells us that should be in control of every little thing, but it denies us an authentic relationship with the Creator of those things.

<sup>xvi</sup> Where peace - and not "busyness" - reigns.