

From The Rector's Study, Rev. Bryce Sangster
Sunday, July 25th, Pentecost IX, the Banquet of the Five Thousand
2 Samuel 11:1-15, Psalm 14, Ephesians 3:14-21, John 6:1-21

When we think of the feeding of the five thousand, and how it relates to us today, we may think of the pot luck supper and how very rarely in my experience have we not had food left over. You may have other ways of thinking about this, but Diana Butler Bass, in a sermon about Jesus appearing after the resurrection on the beach and they have fish together, makes me think of this passage in another way.....

It is not that the feeding of the five thousand makes me think of the pot luck, but when we gather at a banquet of any kind, it makes me think now of the feeding of the five thousand thanks to Diana Butler Bass.

It begins with the opening verse, and the name of the Sea. The Jews had always called it Galilee, but Herod had renamed it as a tribute to Tiberias Caesar, but it wasn't only the name but the sea and all in it belonged to Tiberias Caesar.

So did Jesus take from Tiberias for his banquet? We don't know, but after the feast, the people wanted to take him by force and make him king. But Jesus didn't want to be treated like a king, because at the end of the feast, the king or Caesar then demands loyalty from those who ate as the price to pay for being at the feast and being fed. Jesus did not come to rule the world but to serve the people of the world. And this means for us to respond by doing the same.

And in so doing we will come across storms in life, and God in Christ does not take us out of the storms but gets us through them, as he says today in the storm on the Sea of Tiberias, "*It is I; do not be afraid.*"

So Jesus does two things today, he feeds us, all of us, with a feast fit for a king, yet he asks us to serve as he serves, and is with us as asks us not to be afraid as he walks with us through the storms of life.

I was going to end there, but then I remembered it being said, that courage is not the absence of fear but the ability to act in spite of it.

Then one definition of faith in God is: Faith is not the absence of fear, but the strength to do what is right in the face of it.

And being fed at the banquet of the feast of God in Christ can help give us the strength to move through our fears in the storms of life.

Amen