**Passover Meal?**

**John 6:1-15**

Laetare – 4th Sunday in Lent

03.26.2022

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Laetare Sunday? Remember what I said about this Latin terms naming our Sundays, and the meaning being able to be found in the Introit? That is why I said it as a question, “Laetare? Rejoice Sunday?” It is Lent! It is that season of penitential reflection! The alleluias are gone from our liturgy! The Gloria in Excelsis has been removed until Easter. How are we to rejoice? ***WHY*** should we rejoice?

Looking at our Old Testament lesson, we see ourselves reflected in the Israelites. No, we are not walking in the wilderness, recently released from slavery, wandering for a place to call home. We are doing much better than they were. We have a home! In fact, if we were ever to sit back and be honest with ourselves, what we have is incredible plenty.

Look around this sanctuary. Who do you know as part of this congregation that has, except when they have done so by choice, missed meal? What I mean is, who has missed a meal because there was no food or drink available? Which one of us has only one change of clothes, the stuff we have on our back? How about only one pair of shoes?

How about the vehicles you drive? Ever have travel, only having a bicycle for transportation? Or maybe poor enough up that you can't even afford that mode of transport?

Imagine being in the financial position where all you have is $1,500 to pay for all your meals and your lodging for a year. No, in America that probably would not work, but there are other places in our world where people wish they had even that much.

And yet, we will grumble, wishing we had more. If only I had…then my life would be complete. Meatloaf? Again? We have to eat chicken again, and only baked potatoes?

The riches of the bounty that we enjoy are provided by the gracious provision of God. I wonder how many of us even realize just how wealthy we truly are?

Even an income of $30,000 a year, places you in the top 15% of the world's richest people. To add more perspective, more than one third of the world's population lives on less than $2 per day.

When we worry about how we will survive, we egregiously violate the first commandment – we do not fully fear, love, and most especially, ***TRUST*** God above all things.

This brings us to our gospel lesson for today. There were 5,000 people present. It takes place as the Passover was at hand. I wonder if we truly understand the significance of Jesus performing this miracle at the yearly remembrance of the Passover.

We know **about** the Passover, that after this 10th plague the people of Israel were set free by Pharaoh and their slavery in Egypt. But do we fully understand how this event was a constant, a yearly reminder of the gracious provision that God provides? When they celebrated the Passover every year, it was an incredible ritual that reminded the people of God's incredible and miraculous intervention to save His people.

With that in mind, that His disciples should fully understand the miraculous intervention of God to provide for his people, Jesus sits down with His disciples. After sitting, Jesus looks up to see a large crowd approaching.

Jesus' disciples had seen Him perform miracles. Many were already angry with Him, claiming that He had broken the Sabbath to heal – and that He was calling God his father. The disciples understood, that He was making Himself equal to God.

Now, as the Passover was at hand, He asks Philip, "where are we to buy bread, so that these people may eat?"

Our Lord Jesus Christ knew what He was going to do, a miracle. God's gracious provision would accomplish the impossible, providing food for all the crowd gathered.

Of course, Philip, with eyes wide open like yours and mine, answers, “200 denarii worth of bread would not be enough for each of them to get a little.” He can only see what human reason discerns – five thousand people. There is no way even two hundred day’s worth of wages could provide even enough bread for each to get a little.

Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, jumps to Phillip's doubtful defense, “There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are they for so many?” His eyes too, wide open with worldly reason, fail him as well.

Of course, Jesus, true God in human flesh, has a plan, “Have the people sit down.” Jesus then took the loaves, gave thanks, and breaking them, He distributed them to the disciples to give to those who were seated. (I pray you see where this is going.) From that incredibly meager supply, 12 baskets of leftovers were picked up after all had eaten their fill.

Jesus knows full well how our human eyes, corrupted by our fallen, sinful, human nature, see things. There is no recrimination, no rebuke, from Jesus. He simply gives from His gracious abundance, accomplishing the miraculous

Today you have gathered, prayerfully wanting God to open your eyes to see with more than just sinful, human reason. In repentance, we gather in God's house to receive from His gracious abundance, the incredible gifts He desires to give.

And so He does! He takes from us our fear, and grants to us His bounty. “Your sins are forgiven,” He declares.

Then He feeds us! It is not just simple bread and wine as it appears to be, but so much more! This is a meal that feeds us in body and soul. It is holy food grants us strength to trust Him for all things in this life, a life lived in the world. It feeds our faith! It grants us life eternal, and salvation.

We see bread and wine, but He gives us His own flesh which was pierced upon the cross for our forgiveness. We drink his blood shed to quench our desire for something more than just the support of this life. It opens our eyes to see our future in Him.

This is our Passover meal. As we eat and drink, death passes over us, and we are fed and strengthened to pass over from this life into Paradise.

We pray in thankful devotion for the merciful, loving kindness of our Savior who knows our needs, even better than we know them ourselves. He provides even more than we can imagine or desire.

Thanks be to God for our Passover Lamb, Jesus, God's Christ, our Savior. Amen.