**New Kilpatrick**

**21st August 2022**

**Matthew 14:13-21**

**Communion**

**Gathering**

My friends

There is a table waiting

It is plain fair

But its plainness is fair

It is compassion

It is grace

It is love

You are invited

Wherever you are

And whoever you are

To be at this table

This world-wide

Global table

And share the good news

And the grace

And the story of hope

Come to the table

There is a place for each of us

**Reading**

**13**Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. **14**When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick. **15**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.’ **16**Jesus said to them, ‘They need not go away; you give them something to eat.’ **17**They replied, ‘We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish.’ **18**And he said, ‘Bring them here to me.’ **19**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. **20**And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. **21**And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

**Reflection**

So who would you, or indeed might be, vote for in the conservative leadership election?… I’m not really interested but what is interesting is how people are changing sides making sure they end up at the right party… It’s important t to be seen with the right people… in the right place… at the right time…

Usually it is about power or status… Clearly that has been going on for millennia… because it is there in the bible too…

We’ve just read the story of the 5000… probably the biggest party in the bible … because if you were to include women and children… and the bible specifically says they weren’t counted (which is an insight into the place of both in that culture)… then… quite literally… you would be at a gathering bigger than most cities of the time…

There was another party going on just before the feeding of the 5000… It was perhaps smaller in the number attending… but has big consequences… it is the party where Herod… watches Herodias’ daughter dance and, as a reward, she asks for the Baptists head…

The passage today begins with, “when Jesus heard this’… and it is this event he has just received news of… and in grief… because John was his cousin… and he studied under him… and goes off to a lonely place… But the crowd follow… and the 5000 want to hear from him…

By the end of the day… Jesus is probably exhausted emotionally as well as physically… and the disciples fear the crowds hunger… that they are not able to supply their needs…

Against the backdrop of this story about Herod’s birthday… filled with fear, conspiracy and violence… a meal with those who speak truth to power are executed… Jesus, in contrast, takes a plain meal of fish and bread… enough to fill perhaps only himself and a few others… and brings in a new world order…

And the contrast is startling… You have the luxury of the wealthy and powerful… and their failed feast… against the plainness of bread and fish and everyone being fed…

The disciples are ready to send the folk off to get their own food… their own sustenance… but Jesus won’t have that… there is something bigger going on here… He shapes a community out in the wilderness… away from the centres of power… into a different economy… This economy is shaped by care… and compassion… and sharing… rather than Herod’s economy of fear… brutality…and power…

The version of society Jesus initiates out on the edge… makes no sense to those in the centre… where it is about power… which is perhaps our biggest lesson… Jesus here in the wilderness… actively prohibits a sense of everyone for themselves… and offers resources shared with all… especially the least… the women and children not counted… the invisible ones in the crowd…

The miracle… is surely that… How Jesus did it it doesn’t matter… The fact the miracle of sharing happened… and deliberately stands against the selfish party Herod attended… invites us to choose… which party?… Which party shall we be seen at?…

**Table setting**

The table set for us

Is one of bread and wine

Common fare

Filled with heaven

A feast

A party

For all

No matter who we think the world thinks we are

Here it is a different economy

So come to the table

You’re place is waiting

And be part of heaven’s feast

**Story**

There is a story of bread and wine that fed more than 5000… and still does… and had been doing so for millennia…

It began one night when a saviour… quiet and anxious… broke bread with his disciples… 12 of them… broke it and shared it… and there was enough to go around…

The bread was broken… and so was heaven that night… and love… and hope… for the saviour told a new story… not of freedom from Egypt and the passover escape… but of a new freedom… that was about to arrive… in his death… for this bread… broken… was his body…

The silence hit the disciples hard… Yes, there had been concerns… and rumours… but to hear such an outcome on the lips of the rabbi… was earth shattering… and silently they broke the bread… and passed it round… and if participating in some way in the death that was to come…

And before they could comprehend… the saviour took the wine and passed it too… asking them to taste it… the new covenant… sealed in his blood…

The wine was already bitter from passover… now it was sharp and full of edges…

And so they passed the wine…

Bread and wine… passed round the table… broken and everyone shared… and there was enough… and there still is… as we continue to break the same bread… pass the same wine… the miracle of the 5000 continues round this extended table… and all will have a share…

**Prayer**

Gathering God

Into this space

Into this moment

Into this feast

We gather

And in you

We meet

And in love

We share

And in hope

We find ourselves

May we have ears to hear

The voices of the generations before us

The great communion of saints

Who have met here before us

And those who will yet meet

In future times and places

Still with the bread

Breaking

And being shared

With enough for all

Enough heaven and justice

Enough peace and truth

Enough grace and love

To redeem

And renew

And rebirth the world

And in the many names we hear

May we also hear the angels sing

The song of love

That echoes down the ages

And heard among the heavens

Holy holy holy God of power and might

Heaven and earth are full of your glory

Hosanna in the highest

Blessed is the one who comes in God’s name

Hosanna in the highest

And in this community we create

Wherever we are

Around a plethora of tables

Scattered between us

We shape a space

Holy and worldly

Where your spirit dances with us all

And breathe through us the vision of the kingdom

And we give thanks

And we find this sharing space

One where grace never runs out

There is enough

And then some more

So be it

Amen

**Fraction**

Jesus took bread and broke it and said

This is my body broken for you

Eat of it all of you

There is enough for all

Jesus took wine, lifted it and said

This is the new covenant sealed in my blood

Drink of it all of you

There is enough for all

What began then

Continues now

What started in an upper room

Continues wherever we find ourselves

Taste and eat

The gifts of God for the people of God

**Peace**

Peace be with you

Peace be with the hungry and the poor

Peace be with the powerful and rich

Peace

Deep peace

The peace that comes in the rebalancing of the world

Be with us all

**News**

**Prayer**

We lay here on the tale those who have a place here

But not in the world

The hungry

The poor

Those in conflict

Those forgotten

Those anxious and worried

Those ill mentally and physically

Our families and neighbours

May the peace of this table

And the hope it offers

Be enough

Be enough for all

So be it

Amen

**Hymn**

**Benedition**