

Coffee To Go | Proper 13, Year B

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

bread, Jesus, crowds, God, divine presence, Ordinary Time

SPEAKERS

Karin Peter, Blake Smith

Karin Peter 00:27

Welcome to Coffee to Go, where we center ourselves in the Scriptures, seasons, and holy days of the Christian tradition. I'm Karin Peter here with Blake Smith, and we welcome you on the journey. So our question is always, "where are we with Jesus this week?" And, this is what's called proper 13 or week 13 in ordinary time of year B. Ordinary time is the period of time after Pentecost goes through until the beginning of the next calendar year and the first Sunday of Advent. We're about, I don't know, what are we a little over a little under halfway, I think through ordinary time, maybe by proper 13. And we're hanging out in John's Gospel this year. And today, we are watching the crowds, the people who, in the scriptures there, it's usually the crowds went, or the crowds followed, or the crowds gathered. And these are the people who might need or want something from Jesus as well as people who are just kind of onlookers, just observers. And this crowd of people basically are tracking Jesus down. It's, if you're, if you're willing to look at the Gospel story and include a little bit of humor, this is one place that happens, because you can tell it's like escaped to the other side of the lake and they tracked him down. And the question here is why? For what reason? Did they search around? So, let's find out the answer.

Blake Smith 02:11

Yeah. So so for those of you who are following along with us, or if you haven't been with us, last week, we were at the feeding of the 5000, and then the disciples going across the lake and Jesus joining them by walking across the water. And we pick up with the crowd, looking around, they really know that Jesus didn't get on the boat, but they're not sure where he went. And

Karin Peter 02:35

You can see it when it when it comes out, like, okay, they see that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, and they got into their boats and went to Capernaum looking for Jesus. [we're gonna find him] This is a melodrama. You can hear the music in the background,

Blake Smith 02:50

"The Days of Jesus' Life." So we're in John chapter six, and it's the 24th through the 35th verse.

So when the crowds saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they themselves, got into the boats and went to Capernaum, looking for Jesus. When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, "Rabbi, when did you come here?" Jesus answered them, "very, truly, I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. Do not work

for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you, for it is on him that God the Father has set His seal." Then they said to him, "what must we do to perform the works of God?" And Jesus answered them, "this is the work of God, that you believe in Him, whom he has sent." So they said to him, "What sign are you going to give us then, so that we may see it and believe you? What work are you performing? Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat." Then Jesus said to them, "Very truly I tell you, it was not Moses, who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." They said to him, "Sir, give us this bread always." Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."

I'm sure Jesus is just scratching his head when they say, What sign are you going to give us then? And he's like, okay, are we not all just together on the other side of this lake, on the side of a hill with five loaves and two fish? You know, what else do I need to do? They weren't but they weren't looking for a sign, then they were hungry. And it reminds me of a story a missionary once told in the middle of the sermon talking about, sometimes people don't care where they're going to spend their time after death, if they're not sure where they're going to get their meal from tonight. And so maybe, maybe to give them a little credit, that's kind of where they were at that point, they were hungry. And all they got out of that whole event was obviously that they were full, and they wanted to follow this guy. I'm willing to go with you there, Blake. But pardon me this the cynic goes. I'm up to that, except, except that I actually hear him go, "Hey, what do we need to do to perform the works of God?" It was almost like, "hey, how do we get to work this magic?" And so part of me... Like, yeah, So maybe if they could do it themselves, they wouldn't have to go out in boats across the lake looking for him? They could just handle it and be ...

Karin Peter 05:59

You know, I don't know, it's just the different questions that the crowd poses throughout the Gospels can be taken in so many different ways. And, it seems like we have a tendency to always take them in kind of this one religious-y kind of way, when we forget that these are narratives of people of human people that say stupid things and ask ridiculous questions. And, half the time don't get what Jesus is talking about. So I'm with them, I'm with that crowd, that I'm willing to say sometimes we're not our best selves, and our questions are not reflective of our best selves.

Blake Smith 06:35

That's a point well taken. And you may just absolutely be right. That's what had to do with how to make this easy on us, Jesus, just tell us how you did it. Yeah, what can we do? Yeah, you know, Jesus, Jesus, is aware that these folks are looking for him, because he can give them what they need to fill their immediate need. And whether it's bread or fish, many of them have come to him for healings. But Jesus is suggesting here that they're completely missing the point. That's not what this is all about. And, I think, that's not uncommon. I think we often miss the point. Because, and back on the grace giving side, you know, when we have a need, we're, we're focused on what that need is, and we don't think about the bigger picture. But he's suggesting that they need to go deeper into their journey of faith, and seek him out not just as a provider of an immediate need, but as a way of life, and making a practice out of following Him that leads to the Divine Presence and partnership at a deeper level for

them. And that's ultimately, what this is about. So, I mean, it's, it's, of course, the flashy works that seem to capture their attention. But he's asking them, is it really the flashy works that are important? Or are they willing to walk the way of God's reign? And that is what has been proclaimed and modeled by Christ through all of these miracles and encounters that they are having.

Karin Peter 08:17

Yeah, it is that willing to look more fully into what it really means to follow Jesus that, that he keeps alluding to in different ways and using different imagery that's around him for illustrations to help people understand. And as, as we've looked ahead, like you mentioned earlier, as we looked ahead, we're going to be, we're going to be living in this kind of a conversation for several weeks now. [Yeah.] So let's get ready.

Blake Smith 08:51

Yeah, as I say, we'll get the opportunity to dig into this a little deeper as we go. Because I think we're going to be in this for three or four weeks in this dialogue and discussion. But, for this week, some questions we might ask ourselves, are when do I seek out Divine Presence? And truly, at a depth, not just a precursor of precursory prayer, not just simply praying, but really seeking out Divine Presence? And is it a practice of gratitude in my life, or do I tend to pray when there's tragedy or crisis or fear or just an immediate need? And finally, what does that tell me about my understanding of God's way of doing things? I mean, is God just waiting again for to hand out gifts and meet needs, or is God truly seeking a deeper long term relationship with us? So how do we look at that?

Karin Peter 09:56

And that's what Ordinary Time's really all about it doesn't have the flashy holidays. Yeah, no presents going out during Ordinary Time. But, but it is this opportunity to really spend some time digging into what our life as followers of Jesus, what that really looks like. So thinking about how we could experience it this week, we're going to be living as we mentioned in these bread scriptures for the next couple of weeks. So my thing this week and maybe like to share with me in it is that every time I slice bread or eat bread, and I was gonna say bake bread, but I don't do that. So I go to the bakery and buy good bread. But whatever you do at your house, whether you open a plastic wrapper to get your bread, whether you bake it, however you end up with bread. When you are interacting with your bread, regular, gluten free, cornbread, whatever it may be, take that moment as a cue to connect God's physical sustenance, the gifts that we receive, that keep our bodies functioning, to God's spiritual sustenance, and our need to go deeper into that relationship with God that God feeds and nurtures us in all ways, not just our immediate needs. So make it a bread week, when you touch or eat your bread, Blake, you're gluten free bread.

Blake Smith 11:35

bread. On that note, I'm going to use this for a shameless plug. And if we've got listeners out there who have a great recipe for gluten free... [now is the time] where you know that good gluten free bread is hard to find. And I would love to participate in this practice. So don't hesitate to send or post recipes in the comments section.

Karin Peter 11:56

Or brand recommendations to Blake at Project Zion Podcast.

Blake Smith 12:02

I mean, really, it's for my spiritual health so I can participate in his practices. As far as it is, it's not selfish. It's definitely from for my well being. All right, well in series is how about a blessing. Although, I'm gonna say our blessing comes from none other than Johnny Cash today. So you might find that humorous as well. But this is from a song by Johnny Cash, and it's called "Breaking Bread."

Breaking bread, breaking bread, we are gathered here together to break bread. It's not the barley or the wheat. It's not the oven or the heat that makes this bread so good to eat. It's the kneading and the sharing that makes the meal complete. Breaking bread, breaking bread, we are gathered here together to break bread. Upon the water praise is cast. The last is first, the first is last. For everyone who eats this bread there are 1000s, maybe more that will be fed. Breaking bread, breaking bread. We are gathered here together to break bread.

Well, thanks everybody for being with us here at coffee to go we invite you as always to join us next time at coffee to go for the next part of our journey through the liturgical seasons and holy days of the Christian tradition.