

<sup>1</sup> After this Jesus went to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, also called the Sea of Tiberias. <sup>2</sup> A large crowd kept following him, because they saw the *signs* that he was doing for the sick. <sup>3</sup> Jesus went up **THE MOUNTAIN** and sat down there with his disciples. <sup>4</sup> Now the Passover, the festival of the Jews, was near. <sup>5</sup> When he looked up and saw a large crowd coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?" <sup>6</sup> He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do. <sup>7</sup> Philip answered him, "**SIX MONTHS' WAGES** would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little." <sup>8</sup> One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, <sup>9</sup> "There is a boy here who has five **BARLEY LOAVES** and two fish. But what are they among so many people?" <sup>10</sup> Jesus said, "Make the people sit down." Now there was a great deal of grass in the place; so **THEY** sat down, about five thousand in all. <sup>11</sup> Then Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated; so also the fish, as much as they wanted. <sup>12</sup> When they were satisfied, he told his disciples, "Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost." <sup>13</sup> So they gathered them up, and from the fragments of the five barley loaves, left by those who had eaten, they filled twelve baskets. <sup>14</sup> When the people saw the *sign* that he had done, they began to say, "This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world."

<sup>15</sup> When Jesus realized that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, he withdrew again to the mountain by himself.

<sup>16</sup> When evening came, his disciples went down to *the sea*, <sup>17</sup> got into a boat, and started across the sea to Capernaum. It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. <sup>18</sup> The sea became rough because a strong wind was blowing. <sup>19</sup> When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw

#### Language Notes & Textual Connections

**THE MOUNTAIN** :: Throughout the Bible mountains, or high places, are often the space in which humans experience the presence or word of God. Think of Moses and the 10 Commandments. Or Jesus on the Mountain for the transfiguration in Matthew 17:1 "And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James, and John his brother, and led them up a high **MOUNTAIN** by themselves."

**SIX MONTHS' WAGES** :: The text says 200 denari, 1 denari was the average daily wage. So this was 200 days of labor.

**BARLEY LOAVES** :: Historians state the bread was commonly made with wheat. Historical documents point to the notion that barley was cheaper than wheat, and so was the source for bread commonly used by the poor. This tells us something about the boy's gift and the probable audience listening to Jesus.

**THEY** :: It's believed that the 5,000 just included adult men (as they were the ones that were counted – and counted – in society. So odds, are it's well more than 5,000 considering the likely presence of women and children.

*Sign* :: In the Gospel of John, "sign" is also used to mean "miracle." Unlike the Gospels of Mark, Matthew and Luke, John does not record very many miracles of Jesus. There are only seven listed in John, but each tells us very special things we need to know about Jesus.

The seven signs are:

- Changing water into wine at the wedding at Cana (Jn 2:1-11);
- Healing the royal official's son (Jn 4:46-54);

Jesus walking on the sea and coming near the boat, and they were terrified. <sup>20</sup> But he said to them, "It is I; do not be afraid." <sup>21</sup> Then they wanted to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the land toward which they were going.

#### QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION & EXAMEN:

- **What engaged you, enraged you, or surprised you in the text?**
- **The multiplication of the loaves is the only miracle from the public ministry of Jesus that is narrated in all four Gospels. Why is this story so important?**
- **Imagine yourself in the story. With whom do you most identify? Why? How?**
- **How is the Spirit of God inviting you to *flourishing* faith through this text?**

- Healing the paralyzed man at the pool of Bethesda in Jerusalem (Jn 5:1-15);
- Feeding the 5,000 (Jn 6:5-14);
- Walking on water (Jn 6:16-21);
- Healing the man born blind (Jn 9:1-7); and
- Raising Lazarus from the dead (Jn 11:1-45).

*the sea* :: The text is talking about the Sea of Galilee which is a lake that you can easily see across – far from an ocean or sea. In the Bible – for the Israelite people – the sea was a scary place. They were farmers – not sea-going people. In the Hebrew Scriptures the sea is always associated with the forces of chaos and destruction – the power that is opposed to the creative and healing power of God. Think of the first Creation Story in Genesis 1:

<sup>1</sup>In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, <sup>2</sup> the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of *the waters*.

We see this also in much of the book of Job, in particular in the monologue of God in Job 38

<sup>8</sup> "Or who shut in *the sea* with doors  
when it burst out from the womb?—  
<sup>9</sup> when I made the clouds its garment,  
and thick darkness its swaddling band,  
<sup>10</sup> and prescribed bounds for it,  
and set bars and doors,  
<sup>11</sup> and said, 'Thus far shall you come, and  
no farther,  
and here shall your proud waves be  
stopped'?"