

John 6:1-14

NEW REVISED STANDARD VERSION

¹After this Jesus went to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, also called the Sea of Tiberias. ²A large crowd kept following him because they saw the signs that he was doing for the sick. ³Jesus went up the mountain and sat down there with his disciples. ⁴Now the Passover, the festival of the Jews, was near. ⁵When 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?” ⁶He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do. ⁷Philip answered him, “Two hundred denarii would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little.” ⁸One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, said to him, ⁹“There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many people?” ¹⁰Jesus 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. ¹¹Then 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. ¹²When they were satisfied, he told his disciples, “Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost.” ¹³So they gathered them up, and from the fragments of the five barley loaves, left by those who had eaten, they filled twelve baskets. ¹⁴When 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.”

Matthew 25:31-46

NEW REVISED STANDARD VERSION

³¹“When the Son of Man comes in his glory and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. ³²All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd

LANGUAGE NOTES & TEXTUAL CONNECTIONS

John is the fourth of the four gospels. According to tradition it’s written by John, the disciple that Jesus loved. It is different in language and structure from the other three gospels (synoptic), a disciple-intern of the apostle Paul. The story of the feeding of the 5,000 – that we hear today – is one of the stories that’s in each of the four gospels.

After this ...: in chapter 5 Jesus heals a paralyzed man on the sabbath (5:1-15) which engenders a conflict with the religious authorities. Healing shouldn’t be done on the sabbath, as that’s a holy day consecrated to rest and spiritual reflection, or worship, of God. Jesus verbally spars with them about the will of God. They insist that it’s about respecting the tradition spoken by Moses. Jesus paints a picture of creation moving from death to life (5:24).

the signs :: In John’s gospel the author uses the word “sign” σημεῖα /semeia/ in the place of the word “miracle” [δύναμις /dunamis/ meaning (miraculous) power, might, strength]. It points back to the sign of Jesus turning water into wine in John 2:11 “Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee and revealed his glory, and his disciples believed in him.” The major theory on the gospel of John is that the author structured the book [around 7 signs](#) – with the 8th being the resurrection of Jesus.

sat down :: Jesus sits down to teach, while the crowd stands, just as the rabbis did in that time.

twelve baskets :: Remember that the number 12 signifies the 12 tribes of Israel, and as a metaphor for the totality of God’s people – a sacred whole, or community.

Matthew is the first of the four gospel-retellings of the life, teachings, death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. Probably written with the intended audience of the church in the area we would call Lebanon and Syria today. Chapter 25 is a series of teachings of Jesus using parables. Our selection today is the last in that series that is inter-connected. In each of the parables, Jesus speaks about the coming Kingdom of God, and of himself as the Son of Man.

separates the sheep from the goats,³³ and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left.³⁴ Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world,³⁵ for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me,³⁶ I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.'³⁷ Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food or thirsty and gave you something to drink?³⁸ And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you or naked and gave you clothing?³⁹ And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?'⁴⁰ And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did it to me.'⁴¹ Then he will say to those at his left hand, 'You who are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels,⁴² for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink,⁴³ I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.'⁴⁴ Then they also will answer, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison and did not take care of you?'⁴⁵ Then he will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.'⁴⁶ And these will go away into eternal punishment but the righteous into *eternal life*."

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION & EXAMEN:

- What engaged, enraged, or surprised you in the text?
- What do these stories tell us about the connection between how God loves us and we in turn love each other? What does God give us to love in such a way?
- What invitation do you hear the Spirit of God speaking to you – or to us, – to act, speak, be, or change, through this scripture?

LANGUAGE NOTES & TEXTUAL CONNECTIONS

the Son of Man :: This title appears in the Book of Daniel, and most sources allude specifically to this particular verse. According to the Daniel 7, The Son of Man is seen "coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed." (Daniel 7:13–14). For centuries, the Christological perspective on Son of man ("man" referring to Adam) has been seen as a possible counterpart to that of Son of God and just as Son of God affirms the divinity of Jesus, in a number of cases Son of man affirms his humanity.

Separate ἀφορίζω pronounced /aphorizó/ :: meaning to mark off by boundaries from, set apart.

as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats :: This image also assumes the practice of keeping goats and sheep together in the same flock. These two animals are then separated just as wheat and chaff (Matthew 3:12), weeds and wheat (13:24-30) and types of fish (13:47-50). And the two men in the field, two women grinding wheat (24:36-25:30). Matthew (like the Hebrew Scriptures do) has already used the word sheep to designate disciples of Jesus (See Matthew 10:16; 18:12; 26:31).

All the nations will be gathered before him :: this phrase and image is typical of eschatological scenes (representing the judgment of creation by God) throughout the Hebrew Scriptures. It gives us a signal of the context and intended teaching purpose of the parable. See for example "I am coming to gather all nations and tongues, and they shall come and shall see my glory," - Isaiah 66:18 "I will gather all the nations ...and I will enter into judgment with them there, on account of my people and my heritage Israel, because they have scattered them among the nations." - Joel 3:2

eternal life :: in Greek the phrase is literally (life of the age [the new age of God's kingdom]) meaning maybe more about a life that participates in the full establishment of god's empire than living forever.