

“Running Over” – Pr Jim Sprengle – Pentecost 10

August 2, 2026

- I. **Matthew 14:13-14** – “¹³Now when Jesus heard [about the death of John], He withdrew from there in a boat to a desolate place by Himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed Him on foot from the towns. ¹⁴When He went ashore He saw a great crowd, and He had compassion on them and healed their sick.”
- II. **Today we heard the well-known story** of Jesus feeding a huge crowd with a few loaves of bread and a couple of fish.
 - a. Jesus had just been smacked with the news that His relative John the Baptist had been killed by Herod.
 - i. So, He decides to get away from things for a little while to spend some quiet time – I assume to grieve this loss... but what happens?
 - ii. The crowds hear about His little retreat and they follow Him.
 - iii. Not only does He heal the sick and care for many individuals, but then He feeds the entire mass through a tiny portion of food.
 - b. Times were tough.
 - i. Just think about all the things that were going on during this period in history.
 - ii. There was an oppressive government.
 - iii. The disciples were worn out by all the challenges of ministering to big crowds and dealing with the Pharisees.
 - iv. Jesus, in His human nature, needed a break to rest and grieve the loss of John the Baptist.
 - v. Food was hard to come by – no one could dial up DoorDash and have some food delivered.
 1. The curse placed on Adam in the Garden of Eden that he would have to toil and labor for food was very real.
 - vi. On top of that, people were sick and hurting... as even the smallest of infections could lead to death for a person, and life spans were very short.
 - vii. All of these pressures from a fallen and broken world were coming down on Jesus, His disciples, and the enormous crowd that had gathered for relief.
- III. **When you think about it**, how much has really changed from way back then until now?
 - a. Do we have any pressures from a fallen and broken world on us?
 - b. Of course we do – and no matter how much easier life has gotten with our modern conveniences and inventions, we still feel the effects of sin.
 - c. We see and read the news every day about tragic and senseless deaths like John’s from our reading today.

- i. From foreign countries putting to death Christians for their proclamation of the Gospel to the senseless violence that erupts in our cities as criminals murder innocent people.
 - ii. Not only that, but even though medicine has come so far even in our lifetimes, none of us are immune to deadly diseases... No amount of healthy living can give us a 100% chance of not contracting something – because we live in a broken and fallen world.
- d. And today in America, in a strange reversal, the food that was so hard to come by has now become our enemy.
 - i. We feed too much... as we eat junk food and processed everything until it makes us sick.
 - ii. In the vast majority of America, Jesus might have told the 5000, “I’m not going to feed you this evening, you could all stand to skip a meal...”
- e. And how about the spiritual and relational pressures that come down on us?
 - i. We are needed... Family, friends and acquaintances need our time and energy because of their own troubles – and we get tired.
 - ii. You might know the feeling of being drained spiritually and emotionally and needing a chance to recharge.
 - iii. However, for some people there is no “resting,” because the pressure never lets up.
- f. What we see in our text today is not exactly a mirror image of our lives in the 21st Century, but many things have not changed.
 - i. We are still bombarded from all sides by brokenness that we have very little power to change.
 - ii. What God gives as a blessing we change into a curse, and with any advances we make there are still hidden dangers lurking to create trouble in our lives again.
 - iii. There is no safety, no perfect place, no peace...

IV. **Without Christ.... The compassionate One.**

- a. Do you think that Jesus knows a little bit about having no safety, no perfect place and no peace?
 - i. Yes, He does, because His mission to become a man to save the whole world included living in this broken place.
 - ii. Rather than throwing His hands in the air and just giving up, Jesus walked through to the end, in perfect obedience to His Father.
 - iii. And He walked through it with people – restoring and reconciling them to each other and to God.
- b. As Jesus looked out on the crowd, remember, He was trying to get away from it all.
 - i. But He arrives at His supposedly solitary and peaceful place to find a huge crowd gathered!

- ii. And instead of getting upset, or turning around and finding another place to go, He was deeply moved...deeply moved... and He began to reverse the effects of sin and death by the miracle of healing.
- c. What a picture of our Lord and Savior.
 - i. Diving headlong into a crowd that should not have been there – but their passion to overcome the pain and suffering of the world would have them chasing after Jesus... and He began to heal them.
 - ii. No doubt He had to listen to the stories that accompanied the problems... had to immerse Himself in the troubles that were plaguing the thousands of people.
 - iii. These people were in desperate need, and only a miracle could change things.
- d. If your wife, your husband, your child or someone you loved were going to die because of some silly infection, how passionate would you be about getting to Jesus to ask for help, knowing that He could restore them?
 - i. This is the kind of pressure Jesus felt all the time in His ministry yet still had compassion and a desire to help.
- e. When I say “help” I do not only mean the temporary healing of a disease or the one meal Jesus provided for a horde of people.
 - i. Jesus is a big picture Guy – He was looking forward to the ultimate healing for all people as He went to the cross of Calvary.
 - ii. Jesus knew that giving these people one meal or healing them of whatever didn’t really solve the problem of sin... it was just a foretaste of what was to come in heaven and the resurrection.
 - iii. The bottom line is He was after their souls and the blessings of an eternal healing.... And that is what He wants for us too.

V. **We are the broken crowd that needs Jesus to help.**

- a. And let me be clear, the compassion Jesus showed on that crowd so long ago is still being given to us today.
- b. The real meal is not some bread and fish multiplied in a miracle, the real meal is the compassion Jesus has for all people, which led Him away from the crowds and to the cross.
 - i. That’s the miracle! The Bread of Life – come down from Heaven to save us from sin, death, and the devil.
 - ii. The compassion of Jesus stretches through the centuries and into eternity by His work on the cross.
 - iii. For you... All of this is for you.
 - iv. Jesus did not just overlook our sins and the sin of the whole world but took the punishment for it...paid for it... so that nothing might separate us from His love!!
 - v. I know of no greater victory than that.
- c. Back then, Jesus used miracles to heal the sick and bless some bread and fish to feed a huge crowd – amazing, wonderful!

- i. But just a little taste of the feast to come.
- ii. The real miracle, the real meal, is the grace and compassion of Jesus running over on us and all human beings by going to the cross and rising from the dead.
- iii. That is the victory that gives us assurance – and the victory that is ours. Amen.