“*And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full.” 14:20*

1. Introduction
   1. Food as something essential to community life
      1. Shared meals bond families together
      2. Meals are where we often get to know friends or partners better
      3. Food as part of our biggest life events (weddings, funerals, birthdays etc.)
      4. Food as essential to the church – everyone knows everything goes better with food!
         1. Every week we gather around a table to celebrate a ‘meal’ and then gather again for coffee/tea/snacks
2. Mention of food or eating and drinking is prevalent throughout the Bible
   1. Adam and Eve in the Garden (Genesis 2-3)
   2. Manna and Pheasants in the desert (Exodus 16)
   3. The Lord’s promise of the eternal feast (Isaiah 25)
   4. Peter’s dream of God declaring all food clean (Acts 10)
   5. The great narrative of scripture even ends with the abundance of good food in the new heaven and new earth (Revelation 22)
3. Much of Jesus’ ministry is also concerned with food
   1. Eats with tax collectors and sinners (Mark 2)
   2. Declaring all food clean (Mark 7)
   3. Parable of the sower (Matthew 13), Parable of the Wedding Banquet (Matthew 22)
   4. And of course the story we heard today – the feeding of the 5,000 (Matthew 14)
4. Feeding of the 5,000
   1. It is the only miracle of Jesus mentioned in all 4 gospels
   2. Clearly something about this story was essential
5. Recap of the story
   1. Jesus withdraws to a deserted place, literally the desert (which in the Bible is typically linked with chaos, death, the devil)
   2. Quickly confronted by the crowds
   3. He has compassion, ministers to them
   4. Evening comes = no food (it’s the desert/wilderness after all!)
   5. Jesus takes the meagre five loaves and two fish – takes them, offers thanksgiving, breaks them and then gives them to be distributed
   6. There is an abundance of food leftover
6. This story reveals to us two important qualities of God in Jesus:
   1. Jesus is revealed as the answer to both spiritual and physical hunger, for the church and for the world
   2. Jesus brings life into the midst of death, abundance into the midst of scarcity (miracle performed in the wilderness of the desert)

*“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.” Matthew 14:19*

1. Holy Communion – each week we embody these realities as we take bread and wine, offer thanks, break and share it together
   1. In the seemingly meagre fare of communion bread and a sip of wine – we declare that this God is exactly what the world needs
      1. Our offerings of worship, prayer, money, gifts, bread and wine – might seem meagre but they are taken up by God and multiplied for our spiritual and physical needs
         1. Each week we come with our cares and concerns, our joys and sorrows and for many this is place of refreshment and spiritual nourishment for the week ahead
         2. Halo project – McMaster University research shows the massive benefit churches provide to society ($4.77 of value for every $1 of annual budget)
   2. As we celebrate Holy Communion week-in and week-out in the midst of our own broken world, our own experiences of scarcity, of a world seeming lost to the wilderness – we declare and embody God’s promise to bring life into the desolate places of this world.
      1. Each of us has good news stories to share of the work of God in our lives – transformations, answers to prayer etc.

“*And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full.” 14:20*

1. Embodying and living out our identity as a Eucharistic Community
   1. Our commitment to feeding the community – might seem small and insignificant at times but we have faith God will use it for his glory
   2. Our commitment to pray, read the word of God, break bread together every week – might seem like it has no impact on our own lives let alone our community – but in faith we are encouraged to see the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit
   3. Let us be a community shaped by abundant and radical generosity
      1. Let us not be worried that we don’t have enough – enough time, enough money, enough people
      2. Remember that God takes our seeming scarcity and multiplies it for the good of the world.
      3. Let us ensure that we are not shaped by scarcity, by not enough – but rather by a God who is utterly generous, who is marked by superabundance.