

<Hymn "Tell Me the Stories of Jesus" UMH #277>

## Gospel lesson

We hop over to the Gospel of John today for another look at Jesus's countryside ministry.



picture from <https://www.freebibleimages.org/photos/Lumo-walk-water/>

**John 6:1-21**

(NRSV)

<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 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.

*The word of God for the people of God*

## Interactive lesson

## Ubuntu



picture from <https://www.tusharvakil.com/2018/04/27/ubantu-african-tribe-story-do-you-have-ubuntu/>

<If kids present, line them up on one side and put pile of candy on other, have them race to get it.>

A scientist (anthropologist) in Africa set up a race with the children of an African tribe. He set a bowl of fruit near a tree and told them that whoever got there first would win the sweet fruits. When he gave

them the signal to run, what do you think happened?  
<Let them respond>

When given the signal, those kids all joined hands and ran together, then sat in a circle enjoying the fruits. Why do you think they did that, instead of racing against each other like most of us would?  
<Let them respond>

The scientist asked them that, and the response was, “Ubuntu, how can one of us be happy if all the other ones are sad?” Do you know what “ubuntu” means?  
<Let them respond>

In the Xhosa culture, “ubuntu” means “I am because we are.” What does that mean to you? <Let them respond>

God, with love and mercy, put many blessings for us in this world. How do you think God intends for us to go after them? <Let them respond>

May we all remember the love God has given us and share it with all whom we encounter.

## Message: Rooted & Grounded in Love



picture from <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/geared-up-for-life/ninth-sunday-after-pentecost-year-b-lectionary-planning-notes/ninth-sunday-after-pentecost-year-b-graphics>

Please pray with me?

Awesome provider who gives us so much,  
as we take time now to further consider today's  
scriptures, please

- speak Your words through my mouth,
- open our ears to hear Your message, and
- abide in our hearts,

That being rooted and grounded in Your love, we may  
share Your blessings everywhere we go. Amen.



Geared Up for Life today in our worship series, we  
seek to be “Rooted & Grounded in Love”. The summary  
reads:

“The only way we can know something as deep and as  
profound as {the love of God that we experience  
through the grace of Christ} is through the witness  
of the church. How do you understand any one's love?  
By living it, by sharing it, by talking about it.”



*picture from personal photo*

For a time when my son was little, he used to assume  
he could help himself to whatever I had before me – a  
plate of food, an interesting gadget, even my glass

of water. It was a little disconcerting to be sitting reading and have him reach over and take a drink without asking, but as a Mom you have accept random things like that will happen - and then use the opportunity to teach them about good manners.

It got me to thinking, that in that old glass-half-full/glass-half-empty question, regardless of how much I actually have, there would be others who look at my glass and think, "There's enough to share."

God certainly gives the world enough for everyone, but not everyone receives what God gives as intended. Listen to what people do with God's giving in the scriptures from today:

- † In the psalm, people go astray instead of seeking God - let alone God's giving - and evil results.
- † David took what was not shared - his dalliance with Bathsheba was not of God's giving - and it drove him to further sin.
- † Uriah was given Bathsheba, but put loyalty to his men's situation first - he did not partake of God's giving - and was killed for it.
- † In the Gospel, the people seeking God were given both physical and spiritual food, but wanted to make Jesus king - they did not understand God's giving - so Jesus withdrew to prevent them from sinning.

- † On land, the Disciples did not know how to feed the people; in the boat they saw Jesus walking on water but did not recognize Him - they doubted and feared God's giving until Jesus put it in their faces - and so they had been needlessly stressed.
- † Even with 20/20 hindsight, as the Church in Ephesus had, Paul had to remind them to get rooted and grounded in Christ's love - to seek out God's giving - so that the church could grow in a healthy way.



*picture from personal photo*

I took this picture in Letchworth State Park. I was fascinated how the tree on the left was able to cling to the cliff even though the onslaught of wind had blown the dirt away from where it first started growing. You cannot see the top of the tree in this slide, but it was leafy and flourishing.

It survives because its roots went deep into the ground, seeking nourishment. They anchored it in place, even when parts of those roots were exposed.

Our souls need to grow deep into Christ's love if we are going to survive the onslaught of the winds of sin. But we see that just as in biblical times, not

everyone is rooted and grounded in Christ's love; not everyone receives as intended what God gives today:

- † People still go astray instead of seeking God – let alone God's giving – and evil results in the "ME" attitudes prevalent throughout society.
- † The ultra-rich take far more than they can ever use, yet push to be exempt from paying taxes or helping others – gain withheld from God's giving – and others suffer as a result.
- † People prioritize other things over relationships – they do not partake of God's giving – and society breaks down in failed marriages and family rifts.
- † People seeking God may receive both physical and spiritual food, but want to make God in their own image – they do not understand God's giving – and in sinning, they do not feel the presence of the Spirit.
- † People do not think God is active in the world today and ascribe miracles to other things – they doubt and fear God's giving until the love of Jesus is put in their faces – and so they are needlessly stressed.
- † Even with 20/20 hindsight, as our Christian Church has, we must be reminded to get rooted and grounded in Christ's love – to seek out God's giving – so that the Church can grow in a healthy way.



Yet even with all of the people's foibles and sin rampant in this world, we can see that God restores those who seek God's giving and become grounded in the gift of God's love. In our readings:

- † The psalmist said as much.
- † When David repented and honored Uriah's memory by taking care of his wife, God blessed David with his heir Solomon.
- † When there was hungry crowd, Jesus fed all of them with twelve baskets of food to spare; and the Disciples saw God's glory in the sharing of that food and in His calming presence.
- † The Church in Ephesus, rooted and grounded in Christ's love, thrived in the giving of God's grace, growing into the Church of today.

And today:

- † When people focus on God – and become agents of God's abundant giving – God restores relationships; strengthens individuals, families, and communities; and enables us to flourish through what the many can do, that the one cannot.
- † When we are rooted and grounded in Christ's love, others see that in our actions, and they crave it too. They see that however much is in our glass, we have enough to share because it comes from God.

We have been given more than enough to get by. In turning to God, we need to put aside our fear and to live in the assurance of Jesus's infinite love. We need to use the courage of faith and be the hands and feet of the Spirit in action in our world.

David Wentworth has a rose bush that was left in a pot in his back room, untended. It wilted and all the leaves fell off. It seemed hopeless.



*picture from personal photo*

After bringing it out and planting it in his yard with some tender loving care, it came back to life. It grew deep roots and even flowered beautifully.

I think people respond similarly to demonstrations of Christ's love after suffering in this world of sin. We just need to show them the Holy Spirit's TLC.

This week, seek out one of your neighbors - preferably one that you do not know so well - and spend some time with them. Listen to them, learn what they need, and help them out of your abundance.

† Are they lonely? Your time with them might just lift them out of a depressing funk.

- † Do they need help with errands? Perhaps you can combine your trip with theirs, and each of you have company and help running those errands.
- † Do they have too much, and need a place to put it? In South Otselic, we just had a rummage sale that many were happy to donate to, and the Sunshine Shop has no lack of donations. Your efforts to help people find useful places to offload provides meaning for them as well as supplies other needs.
- † Do they need a sitter so that they can get some work done? Most of us have raised children and know how crazy it can get; a few hours off can be a huge relief for parents.



picture from <https://www.tusharvakil.com/2018/04/27/ubuntu-african-tribe-story-do-you-have-ubuntu/>

I am sure that when the Holy Spirit moves, you will be much more creative in finding ways to show God's love than I can suggest. Stay rooted and grounded in Christ's love, remember in faith that God gives to us abundantly, and like in ubuntu, share the gifts of the Spirit with your neighbor and the world.

Let us now respond with **A Modern Affirmation** UMH #885

*Pastor:*

Where the Spirit of the Lord is,

there is the one true church, apostolic and universal,  
whose holy faith let us now declare:

*Pastor and People:*

We believe in God the Father,  
infinite in wisdom, power, and love,  
whose mercy is over all his works,  
and whose will is ever directed to his children's  
good.

We believe in Jesus Christ,  
Son of God and Son of man,  
the gift of the Father's unfailing grace,  
the ground of our hope,  
and the promise of our deliverance from sin and  
death.

We believe in the Holy Spirit  
as the divine presence in our lives,  
whereby we are kept in perpetual remembrance  
of the truth of Christ,  
and find strength and help in time of need.

We believe that this faith should manifest itself  
in the service of love  
as set forth in the example of our blessed Lord,  
to the end  
that the kingdom of God may come upon the earth.

Amen.

<Doxology>

<Prayer of Dedication and Pastoral Prayer>

Let us pray:

Mighty and all-knowing God who sees us as we are and as we might be: What offering can we give that will bring you joy?

We have brought gifts this morning that you might dedicate them to the work of caring and compassion in our neighborhoods, in our nations, and throughout the world.

Yet all the money we have can't accomplish what you can make happen if we simply let Christ dwell in our hearts – not for an hour on Sundays but every hour of every day.

This is the offering we dedicate this day.

Use our gifts and guide us with Your wisdom in our daily lives.

- Help us, Lord, with healing touch and comfort for:

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- **Covid** – delta outbreaks, vaccine issues worldwide

- **Places devastated by severe weather** – storms, flooding (Europe), heat (NW US), drought (Mideast)

- Thanks for

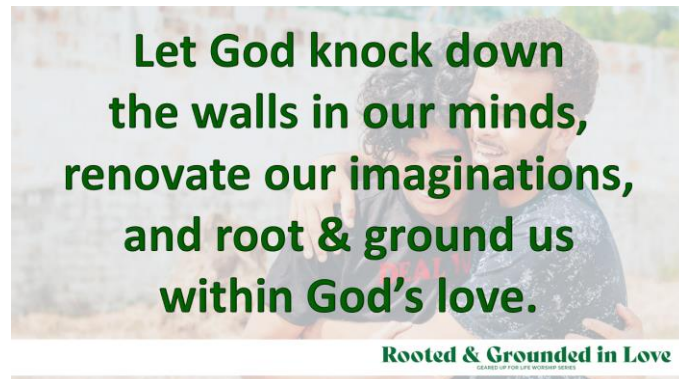
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- Hold those who cannot be with us in Your loving embrace until we see them again.
  - Family far off
  - Travelers
- Send Your Spirit to address world/social problems
  - end bigotry, dismantle racism, reform systems persist
  - bring world peace
- Guide our Leaders – local, state, federal, international, and especially of Your church.

All these things we pray as You taught us to pray,  
<Lord's Prayer>

<Hymn "How Can We Name a Love" UMH #111>

<Benediction>



background from <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/geared-up-for-life/ninth-sunday-after-pentecost-year-b-lectionary-planning-notes/ninth-sunday-after-pentecost-year-b-graphics>

Gearing up for **life** in the Spirit,  
Let God knock down the walls in our minds,  
renovate our imaginations,  
and **root & ground us within God's love.**  
Blessed with the fullness of God, let the love of  
Jesus overflow to all whom you encounter. Amen.