**Slide 1: “Took, Blessed, Broke and Gave” 2017 08 06**

**Matthew 14:13-21 Pr. H. Adachi**

May the Grace and Peace of Jesus Christ be poured into the people’s hearts in this sanctuary.

**Slide 2:** In Japanese, people always say “Itadakimasu” before eating something. And sometimes Japanese speaking people say “Itadakimasu” when something was gifted to them. This word has meanings of gratitude and thankfulness.

**Slide 3:** I understand that this one word, “Itadakimasu” may be very foreign to you, but those of you who went on the Youth Kumamoto Japan Mission from Resurrection Lutheran Church heard this word many times while they were traveling and eating with Japanese people. And I think it is related to what Jesus taught us.

**Slide 4:** With regard to this word, I experienced an “Ah Ha!” moment in the past and will never forget what a Japanese pastor told me. According to him, “In this word, there is a hidden meaning that whatever we eat, we shared eat life.”

(Pause)

**Slide 5:** Let me talk about the Gospel lesson today. This is the famous story called “Feeding the Five Thousand.” Some Christian leaders say this is the greatest miracle that Jesus performed.

**Slide 6:** However, one of the pastors I knew well, in Japan, did not think that this was a miracle, because he thought that many people among the five thousand were together with his wife and children and must have brought something to eat with them.

**Slide 7:** Therefore, when the time came Jesus distributed the 5 loaves and 2 fish, people started to share what they had. In other words, something like a pot-luck was started.

**Slide 8:** Since Biblical translations and perceptions of the stories of Bible may be very different depending on people’s context, I tended to think that whether or not it was a miracle is not the point of this story.

**Slide 9:** In other words, I thought there would be a more important thing described or taught in this passage.   What is the most important matter?  Most probably some of you noticed (or knew) that the words spoken by Jesus Christ here were very similar to what Jesus said at the last supper.

**Slide 10:** Therefore, I started thinking that there must have been hidden teaching that Jesus wanted to discuss rather than the issue of if the incident was a miracle or not.  The teaching is most probably the relationship between God and humans and also the relationship among humans, since Jesus told us that the most important law is to love God as well as love one another.

**Slide 11:** Here, I would like to focus on the words of actions Jesus took when he started distributing the five loaves of bread and two fish.  He took and raised them, at first, and blessed them. The purpose of taking and raising them was to bless the food and be thankful to God.

**Slide 12:** Even though the disciples thought five loaves and two fish would not be enough for five thousand people, Jesus knew that they were still blessings from God regardless where they came from. Whatever the situation is God is involved in it. There is a relationship between God and five thousand.

**Slide 13:** Then Jesus broke the bread, but why did he break the bread? Because it should be shared. The purpose of breaking the bread was to share it. In Jesus’ actions, we realize the importance of sharing, the importance of the relationship among five thousand and the importance of loving one another.

**Slide 14:** Here, let us think about what kind of era we are living in now and what Jesus is teaching us through the feeding of the 5,000. Do we think that the world is becoming more secular? I was living in Japan and of course it is not very easy to talk about God, the creator of all things. I feel even in the United States that secularization is advancing.

**Slide 15:** How about the relationship among humanity? Human relationships are becoming strained in the world…not only because they’re placing God somewhere else in their lives but also because people are tending to think more about themselves. As such, social disparity is unfortunately becoming more commonplace.

**Slide 16:** Today, we can say that Jesus is teaching us to work on rediscovering/recovering human relationships through the story of the feeding of the five thousand. Each one of us eats a broken piece of the bread. Other pieces are shared with others throughout the world.

**Slide 17:** From Jesus’ actions – he took, blessed, broke, and gave abundant gifts to the five thousand – we learn about the two most important relationships of God and humanity and humanity’s relationship to itself.

**Slide 18:**  At the beginning of this message, I talked about the Japanese word “Itadakimasu.” but to be honest it was difficult for me to articulate the meanings of this word.  But because of the words: took, blessed, break, and gave; I think I can articulate the meanings of the word “itadakimas,” they are receive, thank, share, and consume life by the creator. Amen.