

Sunday 2nd August 2026: Trinity 9. Benefice BCP Holy Communion, Stonegrave.

Many of you will know the saying, “There’s no such thing as a free lunch.” In other words, you cannot get something for nothing. The saying is often traced back to saloons in the American West. They offered a free lunch to anyone who bought a drink. But there was a catch: the food was very salty, so customers became thirsty and bought more beer. By the end, that free lunch had cost them more than an ordinary meal. So there really was no such thing as a free lunch.

But with God, there is an exception. In today’s Gospel, we hear the famous story of the feeding of the five thousand. With only five loaves and two fish, Jesus feeds a vast crowd. This miracle appears in all four Gospels, and it teaches us something vital: the hunger of our souls is fed in God, and nowhere else. What God offers us is completely free. So perhaps there is such a thing as a free lunch after all. It comes from God. Why would we look anywhere else?

The disciples saw only a hungry crowd. They urged Jesus to send the people away so that they could find something to eat. But Jesus said, “*They need not go away; you give them something to eat.*” How could they possibly do that? They did not have enough food, and they did not have enough money. All they had were five loaves and two fish. Or so they thought. In fact, they had five loaves, two fish, and the Son of God, whose grace, mercy and love are infinite.

Jesus took what they had, blessed it, and fed them all. When everyone had eaten, twelve baskets of food were left over. It was the ultimate free lunch. But it was more than that. It was a sign that God’s grace is infinite. The meal

was free to the crowd, but it was not free to Jesus. Every miracle drew him closer to the cross, and the cost would be his own life.

There is an acronym that describes grace well: God's Riches at Christ's Expense. Grace is free to us. It is the free gift of salvation. But it was not free to God; it cost him his Son. That is why we are here today: to give thanks for this gift and to experience how remarkable it is. This is a meal far richer than anything we could earn, a meal we cannot afford and do not deserve. It costs us nothing because it cost him everything. And we receive it every Sunday: the body of Christ, given for us; the blood of Christ, shed for us.

This is what God offers us freely: his Son's life, the forgiveness of our sins, and salvation. And there is enough for everyone. God does not run out of grace. God does not run out of mercy. God does not run out of peace. God does not run out of love. Everything he longs to give us is inexhaustible. It is free. It is grace. It is gift and it will never run out.

And so, come to the altar. Come to be fed. Come to receive a meal unlike any other. Come to receive God's riches at Christ's expense: bread and wine, grace and salvation. A feast has been prepared for you. And yes, it is free. It is the gift of Jesus, given for all.

Thanks be to God. Amen.