

## **Bread of Life**

Scripture: John 6:51 – 58

World Communion Sunday 2022

When Jesus was asked for instruction in prayer, he responded - ‘when you pray, say - Our Father in heaven .... give us this day our daily bread.’

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus likens God’s nature to a parent - ‘What father would give his daughter a stone if she asks for bread? .... In the same way your heavenly Father never withholds good gifts from his children.’

When Jesus wanted to make visible the great gift of salvation offered to all people, he multiplied bread from a boy’s basket and fed a multitude of people.

When Jesus decided to leave behind a living reminder of the depths of God’s love for a sinful world, he broke bread with the disciples, even with his betrayer. Jesus said - ‘take, eat, this is my body which is broken for you.’

Bread is the gift of God made visible! The bread that God gives us is different from bread bought in a store. The bread God gives is like manna falling from heaven. We do not earn the daily bread of God. It comes to us like a miracle.

In the same way Jesus comes to us for he came down from heaven like manna.

The Israelites were making their way through the wilderness and they were concerned about survival. Their basic human need was food. They ask the question that we would ask - ‘What are we going to eat today?’ In the wilderness they discovered that God would supply manna each day to sustain them.

Jesus comes to hungry people and feeds them. Their question is the same as the Israelites - 'What are we going to eat today?'

Jesus comes to us and feeds us. But we ask the same question - 'What are we going to eat today?'

The 6<sup>th</sup> chapter of John's Gospel begins with the feeding of the five thousand and many of us would think it ends with the feeding. The miracle is done with the feeding, but you are so wrong - the miracle continues.

Jesus says - 'I am the living bread that comes down from heaven. Eat of this bread and you will live forever.' The people gathered on the mountain did not understand. They understood bread and they understood hunger, they did not understand this bread and they did not understand eternal life. Their concerns was about what was going to happen today. But Jesus speaks about eternity.

We are often preoccupied with the immediate. Our world is often concerned with the immediate. Our society is based on the immediate.

Jesus always wants us to see a greater horizon. Jesus does not want us to just see the immediate, but Jesus wants us to see the ultimate - eternity!

Life has a lot of 'immediates'. Life has a lot of 'need it right nows'. If we are not careful, communion can be a time of - give me the bread now and I will listen to the explanation later. Maybe I will listen to the explanation of the bread at the end of the day, or when I am grown up, or when a crisis comes. We just want the bread now! If this occurs, we have lost its meaning and we do not see the big picture!

The eating of this bread is the receiving of a gift. We eat the bread not because we are physically hungry. We eat the bread because we are spiritually starving!

God does provide. Jesus does give us daily bread. God's grace is sufficient. This bread is bread from heaven. This bread gives life to the world.

There is the BIG picture - Jesus is the bread of life that calls us to move from our own immediate need to the greater horizon. Jesus' bread is not just bread for another day, it is bread for eternal life.

There truly is more going on here than we realize.

In John's Gospel there are layers of meaning.

\*Layers of meaning in water and in living water.

\*Layers of meaning in birth and in new birth.

Our story today is of the layers of meaning in bread and in the bread of life.

In John's Gospel there are layers of signs.

\*Layers of signs in water changing into wine.

\*Layers of signs in the loaves and the fishes.

\*Layers of signs in a towel and a basin.

Also in John's Gospel there are layers of questions.

\*Layers of questions after Jesus washes the disciples' feet he asks - 'Do you know what I have done?'

\*Layers of questions after Jesus' resurrection he asks - 'Peter, do you love me?'

In John's Gospel there are layers of meaning, layers of signs, and layers of questions. There is always more going on here than we realize.

The bread on this table has layers of meaning, layers of signs, and layers of questions. The bread on this table satisfies a hunger that the world cannot.

Jesus says when you eat this bread and drink this cup, he will live in you and you will live in him. Jesus gets inside of us and we begin to see the world through his eyes. Suddenly we discover that there is more going on than we realize. So we begin to live with an expectation of the miraculous. And life is not only what is happening around us now, life extends into a horizon that is greater than we can see.

Oh, to be sure, there is more going on here at this table.

To conclude this message I would like us to do a litany of thanksgiving for the bread of life. Your response is 'We give you thanks O God.' It is printed in your bulletin and it will be on our screen. You will respond when I pause after reading a short statement. Let us come together at this table because there is more going on here.

### **Litany of Thanksgiving**

For the gift of creation, for all that lives and grows.	<b>Response</b>
For those who till the earth and keep it.	<b>Response</b>
For those who harvest our food.	<b>Response</b>
For the abundance of food and drink.	<b>Response</b>
For the things of life that are wonderful.	<b>Response</b>
For those who share out of their bounty with others	<b>Response</b>
For this table of the Lord, a sign of your grace	<b>Response</b>
For this table of the Lord, a reminder of your provision	<b>Response</b>
For the Bread of Life that comes down from heaven	<b>Response</b>
For the giver of eternal life, your Son, our Lord and Savior	<b>Response</b>

On this World Communion Sunday, let us now come together at this table that has more going on than we realize. This table is open to all who believe that Jesus Christ is their Lord and Savior.