



Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. AMEN!

As pastors, we find it very common to talk about July and August of Year B of our lectionary, as Bread, Bread, Bread. And it is true that today we have another bread story. Unlike the bread that multiplies from a little boy's lunch of 5 barley loaves to feed over 5000 people or the bread that rained from heaven daily to the Israelites after Moses led them out of captivity in Egypt, our bread today is Jesus himself.

We have talked about bread quite a bit. It is a staple in most households and in most countries. Everyone has a form of bread that fits their needs. Here in the US, we have loaves of bread. In the Middle East it is called pita bread. In Mexico what is that flat bread called? Right a tortilla. People in England and Canada enjoy crumpets. Not sure I have had one of those. In Ireland it is Irish Soda Bread. And of course, in Norway, they make, you guessed it lefse. Our Olympic athletes are eating lots of baguettes. We all have bread, and it is a staple in diets all over the world. It was certainly a staple in the days of Jesus. And so, He uses bread once again as an example. Bread in all shapes and forms is vital to our health and well-being.

And today people are hungry, not just so that they come to the Lord's Cupboard on Saturday mornings, but they have a hunger that no food or bread seems to satisfy. And even the wealthy that build their McMansions now that dry wall is available after the pandemic and 2 by 4's are in supply, do not satisfy. The Lexus and Divians and Teslas are in the garage and mega money is in the bank, but people are still looking for something. These things are temporary until the next best car comes along and the neighbor builds a bigger, fancier house. And so, they book trips on the Musk space shuttle or put in for a deep-sea submersible to visit the Titanic. Or they get lessons on how to drive a sports car fast or go to the Olympics to hob nob with the celebrities. But yet they are really searching for a way to satisfy something deep inside of them, spiritual hunger. What they find over and over again is that even true luxury also, is not the key to happiness. True happiness comes only from Jesus Christ.

I think that today with the unsettled country and world we live in that even the common people, those that have nothing luxurious, are also looking to find what will make them happy and unafraid.

They are coming to believe in the old adage that money does not buy you happiness. Yet, they too are hungry.

Some of those hungry persons are in churches across the world right now. They come for a variety of reasons. For some it's habit, a better habit than doing drugs. Some people think that Christians come to show off their fancy clothes. Not necessarily true here at CTS or in this community. But no matter what the reason is you come to worship here this morning; I am thankful.

I hope that you have come to be fed, not bread or the sweet treats that are waiting for us in the Fellowship Hall, although they do help, but because you have a need to be fed. You need your bread, your sustenance. And I pray that you find it here, as we dwell in the Lord's presence while seeking the Lord's blessings and as we come to the Lord's communion table. We come because we are all hungry, spiritually hungry.

And Jesus knew that He could fill the stomachs of the 5000 plus with a little boys lunch. He also knew that 5 or 6 hours those folks would be hungry again. We can eat in the finest restaurants and not be satisfied. Ever eat Chinese food? I love it but every time after eating it, I feel hungry again in about 2 hours. Deuteronomy 8:3 says, "that one does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord." Bread, no matter what form it comes in satisfies for a bit, but not eternally. And so, Jesus introduces the metaphor where he says, "I am the bread of life." Unlike the manna in the wilderness that kept the Israelites from dying of hunger, He does satisfy us and if we eat of Him, we will not die. Jesus continues, "I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh".

True, it should be a lot easier for us to understand that claim than the folks following Jesus at the time. We know the whole story. We know that Jesus died on the cross for us, to forgive our sins and then was buried only to rise again on the third day to overcome death and give us eternal life. We come to worship the Lord and be fed by his body and blood. That is the mystery of Holy Communion. The bread, wafers and the juice or wine do not symbolize the body and blood, nor do they change into His body and blood, but rather they are His body and blood. He gives this to us free of charge, by His grace alone.

We take Him in and forever He is with us, and we need Him to survive. From this message of Jesus, we realize that He is promising to be with us, in us and around us each and every moment of each and every day. He knows that we need him. What a true gift. But yet, people do not understand this mystery. Understandable why people don't get it. They do not know God and the wonders of His love. Gee, I think there is a song like that! The wonders of His love are available to everyone today.

His flesh is the life of the world. We must eat of it, or we will die. It is a figure of speech, if you will, so that the Israelites would understand that they need to have Jesus in their lives in order to satisfy their hunger, in order to be satisfied spiritually. And folks, this is not an archaic message. This is a message for all of eternity. No matter where or how we receive this message it is a message of truth. It is not a message to be tolerated, but rather a message to be embraced. And certainly, a message to be shared. It is the Word of God. The bread of heaven and the cup of salvation are spiritual foods. What better place to feed on that spiritual food, the body and blood of Jesus than at our communion table as we listen to His Holy Scriptures. And remember, unlike the bread you get at the grocery store, it is free. The price of the spiritual food of God was paid for by Jesus Himself at

Calvary. He paid the price for you and for me, so we will never hunger and thirst. The Holy Spirit will be with us always.

A quick story. In a school around Father's day, the fathers of the children were all invited to class but the teachers knew that very few could show up, in fact only one came that day. And yet each child in the class got up to say something about their fathers. My father is a gynecologist one boy said, and he is a very important man. My father is a salesman, another child said, and he makes a lot of money. Finally, it came the turn for one young boy whose father was unemployed. "My dad," he said very proudly, "is here!" AMEN

Let us pray,

Dear Heavenly Father, Jesus tells us that he is the bread of life, come down from heaven to our fallen world. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, open our hearts and minds to his teachings, that we might be filled with his eternal presence, freed from our sins by his grace and nourished with the food that forever satisfies. This we ask in the name of Jesus. AMEN