

Pentecost 11 8/5/24
John 6:22-35 13B

"DO NOT LABOR FOR THE FOOD THAT PERISHES, BUT FOR THE FOOD THAT ENDURES TO ETERNAL LIFE, WHICH THE SON OF MAN WILL GIVE YOU".

Well, the big news from Pastor's world this past week – ever remembering how small Pastor's world is – is that one Jordan Love, QB GB Packers, signed a 4 year, \$ 220 million contract. Enquiring minds want to know, so that does, indeed, break down to \$ 55 million dollars per year.

\$ 55 million dollars could buy a lot of bread. But, you know what you could not buy with that or any amount of money? The Bread of Life that endures to eternal life. Listen to what Jesus says,

"Do not labor for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you."

In our Gospel lesson for this morning, the crowd that followed Jesus were the very same people Christ fed with the five loaves and the two fish. They wanted to take Him – notice what the Evangelist says -- by force and make Him their king (v. 15). They really didn't want a king, as much as a magic genie, who would give them bread at their command. Even when Jesus sailed across the sea to Capernaum, they themselves *got into the boats and went to Capernaum, seeking Jesus (v. 24)*.

Then begins the conversation they have with Jesus in our lesson this morning. Jesus is teaching them, and us, that He is the Bread of Life, not simple bread which will fill the stomach, but spiritual bread which feeds their eternal souls.

But as we see, these people cared only about filling their own bellies. In verse 26, Jesus says to them, *"Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking Me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the*

loaves.” The miracle of the feeding was a sign for them which told them that the Promised Messiah had come and was among them. But, they saw the Messiah only as a golden goose. They cared only where their next meal was coming from. This is why Jesus said to them, *“Do not labor for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you”* (v. 27).

The people in the crowd were spiritually blind and dead in their sin. God Himself was among them in Jesus Christ. He did what only God could do -- He performed a miracle. What was their reaction to Jesus? They rejected Him. *“Then what sign do you do, that we may see and believe in you? What work do you perform”* (v. 30)? Even when they saw a miracle which only God could do, they did not understand. When Christ began to speak of eternity and heaven, they cared only about food for their stomachs.

They did not want bread which would make them live forever; they wanted bread to eat for their stomachs. So, they bring up the example from our Old Testament lesson, of Moses and the manna from heaven. *“Our fathers are the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat’”* (v. 31). What they were really saying to is that the manna Moses gave to them filled their bellies and that is all they cared about.

This is the curse of the sinful flesh. In Eden, God told Adam what it would mean for us to live in a world of sin: *“Cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life...By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread”* (Gen 3:17, 19a). The flesh has only one desire -- satisfaction of its yearnings. In our lesson this morning, it was bread for their stomachs.

Would \$ 55 million dollars be enough? How about for just this one year? I know times are tough and times are hard. Honestly, a \$ 50 bill doesn't go very far at the grocery store these days. But, I do think it's fair to say: You could buy pretty much buy every toy, every gadget, every crocheted doily your little heart wanted. You wouldn't have to work anymore. You would not go hungry, because you could buy all the food your appetite desired. Sounds good, right? But, but, remember well those words of God to Adam, "... *till you return to the ground for out of it you were taken; for you are dust and to dust you shall return*" (Gen 3:19). The REAL question for us this this: Would all the money in the world make you live forever? Would all the bread in the world save you from sin, death, and hell?

Do you remember the parable of the rich man whose ground yielded him a great crop?

"He thought to himself, 'What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?...I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, be merry.'"

Our Lord concludes this parable with these words: *"But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul is required of you.'"* All of his wealth -- his bread -- could not save him from death. (Luke 12:16-21)

We have a far greater need than earthly bread to satisfy our hunger. We are the spiritual enemies of God, under His wrath and condemnation. We need forgiveness for the sin which has separated us from God. We need to be rescued from eternal death and the punishment of hell.

God is the giver of all gifts. He gives us the gift of life and preserves our life by giving us our daily bread. But, God does not only want you to live today, He wants you to live for all eternity. He does not only want you

to have daily bread for today, He wants you to feast at the Marriage Feast of the Lamb for all eternity.

God, your Father in heaven, hungered and thirsted for your salvation, so He took it upon Himself to deliver us from the grave. He sent the true Bread from heaven, Jesus Christ, to be our Savior, *“For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world”* (v. 33).

The Son of God gives life to the world by carrying your sin to the cross and by dying its wages upon that wooden rod of torture. Christ is the Bread who gives life to the world, because He “abolished death and brought life and immortality to light,” when He rose from the grave that Easter morning (2 Tm 1:10).

“I am the bread of life; whoever comes to Me shall not hunger” (v. 35). We may eat earthly bread and be satisfied for a day, perhaps even a week. But then, we will hunger and need more bread. But, no matter how much of the bread of this world we have, it will not cure our souls from the sin which causes death. It is only when we eat the Bread of Life -- Jesus Christ -- that our souls will be satisfied and we will hunger no more.

So, let’s say you are driving down Highway 49 and you see a sign that declares in big, bold letters, “FREE FOOD.” Good deal, right? But what’s the problem? It doesn’t say where, where you will find and feast on this free food.

Be of Good Cheer, Dear Child of God. Jesus not only gives you the Bread of Life to eat and life, He tells you where, where you will find and feast on this Bread of Life.

You will find the Bread of Life free at the Font of your baptism, where God made you His own child. And every day, your eyes feast upon your baptism certificate to remind you, cheer you, comfort you that you are

God's own child. You never have to doubt; you never have to wonder if your life matters. You never have to wonder if there is meaning and purpose for your life. You don't have to allow the world to squeeze you into its mold or live by its rules to be popular. You are popular to your Father in heaven. He has set His seal of approval on you.

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied" (Mt 5:6). At His Altar, Jesus feeds you His true Body and Blood so that you will not hunger, but have forgiveness of all your sins. And where there is forgiveness, there is life and salvation.

And from the pulpit, you hear the words of eternal life breathed into your ears. Satan may roar with all his lies, but He cannot frighten you, nor harm you.

Jesus is the Bread of Life. Trust in Him. He will never leave you, nor forsake you. He is with you always. He will never leave you hungry. The deepest longings of your soul will find strength, and nourishment, and refreshment in Him.