**Written Copy: He Will Raise You Up-John 6:38-40**

Pentecost 12-Proper 14

Sunday August 12th, 2018

**The Text: John 6:38-40**

38 For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. 39 And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. 40 For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day."

38 Because I have come down out of heaven and am here, not in order that I should do my will, but the will of the One who sent Me. 39 Indeed this is the will of the One who sent me in order that I should lose none of those whom He has given and continues to give, but that I should raise them up at the final day. 40 For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who is discerning (beholding in contemplation) the Son and who continues to believe in Him should have eternal life, and that I Myself will raise him up on the final day.

**Exegetical Statement (the text’s context)**

Jesus continues the Bread of Life discourse explaining by analogy that He has come from heaven as the bread: the meal that is needed every day coming from the Father for our dying bodies so that we might have life eternal. He uses the bread analogy in connection with the earthly way they had seen Him after the Feeding of the 5,000, wanting them to see beyond their earthly desires to their eternal heavenly needs. But they refuse His message and cannot see Him this way or believe in Him. He states the truth that those who hear and believe the Father are drawn to believe in Him. All that believe in Him He will most assuredly raise up on the Last Day. Unless they recognize Him as from the Father come to give eternal life to the world they will not understand or believe when He gives His flesh for the world on the cross

**Focus Statement:**

God came to Elijah and provided miraculous food that enlivened his body and spirit when he felt defeated. Christ has come to enliven the spirits of all who are headed toward eternal death by being the Bread of Life. That same Bread, given to us that we consume by faith, restores our souls when we feel defeated. He promises that it is the Father through the Spirit that draws unbelievers to faith and that all who are thus drawn will most surly never be lost but raised to eternal life on the Last Day. This is God’s desire for all men.

**Function Statement:**

**Why it’s important to know**:

Elijah was despondent after what he considered to be a great victory on Mount Carmel only to see Jezebel still in power and threatening to kill him. It can be disheartening when those we share Jesus with grumble and refuse to believe in Him and make light of our faith in Him

**What the hearer should do as a result**:

Realize the natural reaction of dying men is to grumble in disbelief. We continue on as humble servants like Elijah realizing that eternal life is granted by Him coming through means, not by us. We entrust the eternal faith of loved ones into His hands who was sent from heaven to be all that is needed in their life. We are just the means through which that bread can come.

**Subject Sentence: Those drawn to Christ will have Eternal Life**

 When I was working as a Manager for Hillers Market at their store in Berkley I befriended a customer I will call Jim. Jim was in a wheel chair due to an accident he had right out of high school. It seems he was drag racing and rolled his car. The result was He survived but lost his left leg. He lived alone, his wife having divorced him. He made his way to and from the store riding in his motorized wheel chair down the side streets of the bedroom community where the store was located. He was an intelligent man who knew the Scriptures, having been brought up in the local Methodist Church. The problem was he didn’t believe in what they said. He was a sarcastic man whose humor could be very biting and aimed at any and all around him. He was a bit like the character “Hawkeye” in the TV show M.A.S.H., always having a negative sarcastic comment to give, only without the compassion that Hawkeye could show. In other words it wasn’t by accident that he lived along. He has nurses as caregivers he was able to hire to help him out around the house, but none of them stayed very long because he wasn’t the easiest person to work for.

Nevertheless I somehow bonded with him and we often talked. When he learned of my faith he loved to raise all the issues and question he had about the Bible. He loved to read books and watch TV shows on the History and Discovery Channel that looked at the Biblical account through the knowledge and wisdom of man to try to provide the “true story” that lay behind the fables that he thought Scripture was. He loved the DaVinci Code and we had many discussions about the issues that raised. He was firmly convinced as the DaVinci Code had it right: that the Catholic Church had evidence hidden away that Jesus had married Mary Magdalene, had a child with her which was referred to in code as The Holy Grail, and that He had died and was buried somewhere-perhaps in France. He gave me a run for my money as I had to look into and study all the things he had heard and put forth and try to counter with my own facts and Scripture. But no matter what I told him it made no lasting impression. No matter how I presented the truth about Jesus from the Old Testament and New Testament made a difference to him. It was all made up. Not even when I poured out from my heart who Jesus was to me and how He had taken me as the miserable and selfish person I was and made me His beloved child. Jim said that was all fine if it “worked” for me. But it wasn’t going to work for him.

Perhaps you can relate. Perhaps there is someone in your life that you’ve gotten to know and been able to share your faith with only to have them stonewall you. Someone you’ve poured your heart out to only to have them say: “That’s fine if it works for you but it doesn’t work for me.” The prophet Elijah could relate to our situations

In our Old Testament Lesson we see Elijah as a broken man and ready to give up. He’s laying under a broom tree and whatever shade it has to offer one in the desert. He is used up physically and spiritually. He tells God to come and take his life because he’s nothing but a failure. How did man who’s considered to be one of the greatest Old Testament prophets get this way? We look back to the previous chapter of 1 Kings where it describes a three-year drought that has been inflicted on Israel. It was inflicted by the LORD because His people had turned away from him to worship the Canaanite God Baal whom they believed caused the rain to come. The people had been led to worship Baal by King Ahab who had been led to do so by his wife, Queen Jezebel. Baal was Jezebel’s god and she quickly upon marrying Ahab made Baal the god of the land. As you might imagine she wore the pants in that family. So the LORD God brought a drought upon the land to show the people that there is no god named Baal who controls the rain. This all culminated with a showdown the LORD had Elijah announce to King Ahab, the priests of Baal, and all the people. On Mount Carmel Baal’s prophets would build an altar and lay out a sacrifice. Elijah would do the same building and altar and laying out a sacrifice to the LORD God. The sacrifice that was consumed by fire from heaven would show whose god was real. Well as you can imagine, since there is no god named Baal, try as hard as they might no fire came from heaven. But when Elijah prayed to the LORD God fire did come down from heaven consuming the sacrifice, the water that had been poured upon it to inhibit incineration, along with the very stones that had been used to build the altar. It was a great victory for the LORD. Elijah ordered that all the priests of Baal be brought to him and he beheaded them right there before the eyes of the people and King Ahab. Then as Elijah prayed to God the rains came and the drought was over. Elijah must have been thinking surely now the people will return to worship the LORD and the worship of Baal would come to an end.

But he didn’t count on the power and persuasion of Jezebel. She was still in control. Despite the proof that the LORD alone was God and that no Baal was no match for Him Jezebel refused to believe. In fact she ordered her soldiers to hunt down Elijah vowing; “May the gods do to me and more also if I do not take Elijah’s life just as he took the life of my prophets.” In Elijah’s mind what was supposed to be a great victory in evangelism for the LORD God had turned instead to defeat. He had tried his best and it still wasn’t good enough. So now he’s ready to cash it all in. Yeah, I think Elijah knows our frustration and even more so over the hard heartedness of those around us.

He knows it. We know it. And Jesus knows it. In our Gospel Lesson Jesus stands in front of a group of Jews who are also hard hearted and refusing to believe. He has demonstrated He has the power and authority of God in the way He heals the sick, casts out demons, can delegate the authority to do such miracles to His disciples, feed 5,000 men from 5 loaves and 2 fish, and teach with the authority and wisdom of God as no prophet or Rabbi before Him had. As Jesus states in verse 36: “**But I said that you have seen me and yet do not believe**.” The proof is all right there but instead (**verse 41-42)** “**the Jews grumbled about Him, because He said “I am the bread that came down from heaven” 42 They said, “IS this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does he now say, ‘I have come down from heaven**?” Why is it that their hearts remain hard? Jesus explains in verse in **verse 44** “**No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him**” And how does the Father draw those hard-hearted men to Jesus? He explains in **verse 45:** “**It is written in the prophets (the Scriptures) ‘And they will all be taught by God. Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me**” And why is it that they should listen to Him and not to their own logic and reasoning, what they think they know about who the LORD God is? Jesus tells them in **verse 46** “**not that anyone has seen the Father except He who is from God; He has seen the Father**.” And who is it that is from God? The same one who stands before them who testifies to the truth in **verse 38** “**For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of Him who sent me.”** And what is the will of the Father who sent Him? That He give His life for the life of the world.

There it is. The Gospel laid before them and before us today. Laid out before all those hard-hearted people like the “Jim’s” in my life and your life who grumble and refuse to believe. Christ is the one sent down from heaven by the Father to be the bread from heaven. To be that which the hearts of all those who are lost are searching for. The bread that is the only thing that can satisfy the hunger they have for a relationship with God they in their sin cannot come to be can only run from. We could never come to Him, but He must come to us. He comes to us through the Words of the Father that are filled with the power of the Holy Spirit. The Words that describe how on the cross Christ gave His flesh to bring life to the world. Real life to those whose lives are filled with that emptiness that they try to fill with all kinds of sinful pursuits. Things that do nothing, only hasten death: death now in this world and the eternal dying that is to come. On the cross Christ died to remove all those things from our life. To replace them with Himself, the bread from heaven, which when we eat of this bread, when we believe in Him through the work of faith that the Spirit does through the Words of the Father, we receive exactly that which we need the most. Life now, true life that is lived in love and peace with the Father. A life that is lived according to this sure and certain promise from our Savior (**verse 47**) “**Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life**” A life that begins now and stretches out into eternity.

So that you and I and all the “Jim’s “ in our life may know that when the Spirit calls you through the Word, your last breath in this world will be followed by the next one drawn standing with Christ in the resurrection. The place where our bodies are made whole again as well as our spirits. Free from sin and pain and death to live with Him and each other forever. Christ’s sure and certain promise for you and for me. As He declares in **verse 39**: “**And this is the will of Him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that He has given me, but raise it up on the last day**.” It doesn’t matter how hard their hearts are. The Spirit of God is the One who does the calling to faith. He did it for me and has done it for you. And as Jesus declares in **verse 37** “**All that the Father gives to me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will surely never cast out**.” We know and hold on to these promises not by human logic or reason, but by faith. Faith in the gracious and loving God who has declared that His desire is that all people be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.

It’s into His loving hands that I had to commend Jim. One day when I was at work and employee told me a customer wanted to talk with me outside the store. This was normally never a good thing. When I went out there I found Jim waiting for me. He wanted to talk with me alone. He had been to the doctor and had received the diagnosis of cancer. There would be an operation soon which may or may not be successful in removing the cancer. He was worried. I could see the fear in his face and the tears he was holding back. He asked if I would pray for him and I did. I prayed that he might know by faith the Savior who had come down to be exactly what he needed to get him through this operation, and through his life afterwards. That he might be called by the Father to faith in the Son who came to give him life now and eternal life to come. As I prayed I shared the Gospel-the Words of the Father that the Holy Spirit uses to call people to faith in the Son. When I finished he thanked me and headed off down the street in his wheel chair. I watched him go, wishing I could’ve said more and done more.

I saw him several weeks later. The surgery had been a success and the doctors believed they had got it all. I said ‘Thanks be to God and to our Savior Jesus Christ”. To which he replied: “No thanks to God, thanks to the modern miracle of medicine.” And he returned to his grumbling and sarcasm as if nothing had happened. And for him evidentially nothing had. Not yet anyway. Shortly thereafter I was moved to another Hillers location and never did see Jim again. I’ve had to commend him over to the grace and mercy of the LORD. Who after lifting up Elijah from despair and sending him on his way to Mount Horeb taught him the God works best not through mighty miracles like wind, and earthquakes and fire. Sometimes not even through things like successful cancer surgeries. But instead through the still small voice of the Spirit working through the Word. I had shared that Word with him. Now it is up to The Father to draw Him to His Son. The loving Father who sent His Son to be the bread that gives life to the world through His sacrifice on the cross. I don’t think I could leave him in better hands. Amen.