

Preaching Copy: John 6:26-33 The Bread That Satisfies

Proper 13-11th Sunday @ Pentecost

Sunday, August 4th, 2024

Text: John 6:26-33

²⁶ Jesus answered 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."²⁷ 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. For on him God the Father has set his seal."²⁸ Then they said to him, "What must we do, to be doing the works of God?"²⁹ Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent."³⁰ So they said to him, "Then what sign do you do, that we may see and believe you? What work do you perform?"³¹ Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'³² Jesus then said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven."³³ For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

The text's intent

When some of the crowd that was miraculously fed comes searching for Him to do another feeding miracle, Jesus corrects them. Instead of working and desiring for blessings that are here today and gone tomorrow they should focus on the greater blessing that the Father sent Him to provide. It is the gift of body, soul, and spirit that will satisfy them now and all their days and unto eternal life. It comes not from them doing any work of keeping the laws. It comes as the free gift of faith from the Father, delivered by the Son, held and appropriated by faith. It comes by believing in Him as the Savior of the World from whose hand fills their temporal needs and their spiritual need of life with Him now and eternal life to come. A king that miraculously serves bread every day satisfies for now only, but they will always desire more the next day, and when they are gone it will mean nothing. But He is the gift from the Father who provides the gift that satisfies now and unto eternity. And that gift is the faith relationship with God through Him.

Focus Statement:

Jesus is the gift from the Father who comes to provide all that we need in this life and the next. He is the God who supplies daily bread, all that we hold in our hands. He comes to supply our daily need of a faith relationship with God where all our sinful focus on ourselves and our temporal needs that replace Him in our lives are forgiven, and we are declared right with God now. In His suffering death and resurrection, He paid the price for an eternal relationship with God and gives it to us by faith through the Gospel Message. When we have Jesus by faith, we have all that we truly need or want now and for eternity.

Function Statement:

Why it's important to know:

We can seek satisfaction and pleasure in our attaining the daily needs and wants of life in exclusion of who the giver is, as well as the greater gift that He has for us, the faith relationship with God Himself. We can mistakenly see ourselves as the source of what we have and hold. When we don't receive what we think we need we can doubt the Lord's presence and provision and ignore the greater gift He has for us.

What the hearer should do as a result:

Allow the Holy Spirit to renew and strengthen that gift of faith in us through the means of grace and share that gift with others through the Gospel Message.

Subject Sentence: Your faith relationship w/ Jesus is all you need forever

Opening Illustration

In April 1988, 7 years after his retirement from boxing, Sport's Illustrated did an interview with three-time world boxing champion Mohammed Ali. He took them to the farmhouse barn that had served as his training gym. On the wall still hung pictures and mementos of him when he was in his prime: his muscular body dancing and jabbing in the ring, knocking out opponents, him holding his championship belt high in the air in victory, a poster advertising his infamous bout with Joe Frazier "The Thrilla in Manila". As Ali walked around the barn looking at all this, he looked up at the rafters and the pigeons who had made their home there, and then at the droppings and streaks they had left on all these mementos. One by one, he turned them to face the wall. Then as he walked out to the door and stared at the countryside, he mumbled something so low that the interviewer couldn't catch it the first time. When he asked Ali to repeat it, he said, "I had the world, and it wasn't nothin'. Look at it now."

We all have things and goals we strive for in this life. Perhaps many of them you have achieved. But have you ever achieved all of them? And those things you did achieve, are they really enough to bring you happiness and contentment? Can we ever have enough, accomplish enough, be enough to satisfy the desires we have in our heart? And when you satisfy one, isn't there always another that pops up to take its place?

The Desire of the Crowd For the Bread King

Consider the crowd that followed Jesus across the Sea of Galilee to the Synagogue in Capernaum. When they find Him there the question out of their mouth is "Hey Rabbi! When and how did you get here? Last we saw You, You were on the other side of the lake and headed up the mountain to pray. We've been looking all over for you."

Jesus could've answered and told them of the miracle of Him walking on water, but that was for the disciples' eyes only, for now. The crowd wasn't ready to hear about another miracle, because the one they had just witnessed and participated in, the Feeding of the 5,000 wasn't enough for them. Jesus knows the reason they followed Him over to Capernaum. They are still looking for Him to be their Bread King.

John 6:26 Jesus answered 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. You are looking for me because I fill your belly with bread, so much that you couldn't eat anymore and there were basketfuls of leftovers. Yet here you are now, hungry again. You can see this is what is on their minds when they bring up Moses and the Manna in the wilderness. The point seems to be "Moses made bread appear every single day, 6 days out of 7, enough to last for the week, and did that every week for the entirety of 40 years in the wilderness. Can you pull off something like that?"

And what is the answer to that question? Yes, He can, and He does. Jesus is the God who supplies daily bread to all the creatures of the earth. Granted, not all walk around with stuffed bellies, after all that would be very detrimental to life. Instead, He provides what is needed. He is the God that provides the sun and the rain, the growth of the crops, that feeding of the cows, pigs, and chickens from where our meat comes from. From Him came the knowledge and skill and opportunity to have the jobs by which our daily needs are filled. From His hand comes all that we have and hold in our hands. And yet, are all these things ever enough? Or do we, like this crowd, desire more?

John 6:27 Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal.” Jesus isn’t saying don’t work, don’t budget, don’t save. What He is saying is don’t make the things you hold in your hand now the focus of your life. Don’t make the acquisition of them your goal. Because they will never be enough. The sinful human heart always wants more and will never be satisfied. And all of those things that we can acquire and hold in our hand won’t last. They wear out, they get used up, they break down, they disappear. The satisfaction and pride we had in them can eventually make them like Mohammed Ali’s mementos covered in bird droppings, only fit to be turned to the wall.

The Gift that Jesus Comes to Provide

Jesus came to give to each of us something much better, something more lasting. He came to give us the gift that we can have and hold now, each day, all the way to eternal life to come. It was the reason the Heavenly Father set His seal upon His Son at His baptism. He came to give us Himself.

What do you have to do to receive this gift? That is what the crowd was asking Jesus. **John 6:29 Jesus answered them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.”** The work is done by God Himself. **John 3:16 “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.** The Father loved us first, even before we ever loved or believed in Him. He acted to send His only Son to become one of us, be born a human being. The Son willingly came, and joined Himself with humanity so that He could give to you what you need most. He came to forgive you of all the times you make His gifts more important than Him, all the times you look for happiness and satisfaction in what you hold in your hands instead of the One who placed it there. He came to die on the cross to forgive you all your sins and thereby earn for you salvation from a life lived apart from Him now and forever. Instead, He brings to you true life, life with Him now that stretches past death into eternal life to come.

You have and hold all this by faith, His gift that comes to you by the Spirit. It came in your baptism and is renewed every time you hear His word preached, read, and sung, and every time you partake of the Sacrament.

John 6:33 For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” Bread in the time of Jesus was the main staple of everyone’s diet. Every meal included bread. If you had bread, you had what was needed for each meal of the day. Jesus is the true bread from God, all that you truly need. When you have and hold Him by faith you have a love relationship with the very God who provides for each and every one of your temporal needs. And through that ongoing faith relationship all of your many sins, those you and I commit daily are washed away, forgiven. Through our relationship with Jesus the Father sees us in right standing with Him, the same right standing that Jesus always had. Your faith in Him makes Jesus’ right standing your right standing. When you have Jesus, you have all that you need for both your body and your soul.

Conclusion

When World War II was drawing to a close the Allied Armies went from town to town and gathered up all the orphans produced by war. They placed them in camps where they were well fed for a change. They were given food, clothing, a warm comfortable place to sleep with the promise that there would be more of the same tomorrow, and loving care and compassion. Yet many remained nervous and afraid, and struggled to sleep through the night. Then a psychologist offered this solution. After they are full, give them each a piece of bread, not to eat, but to hold on to throughout the night. It was a symbol they could hold onto that helped them hold the promise of daily bread for the next day. And it worked. Most began to sleep through the night comfortably.

Jesus is the Bread from heaven that we have and hold on to by faith. By that faith we know that we will have all that we truly need for this day and the next. We can know and trust that all of our bodily needs will be fulfilled, and that He holds our life in His loving hands. We may not have all of our wants and desires, but those are things that don’t last. They are the things that get covered with the bird droppings of life in a fallen world. What we do have is love relationship with the gracious and forgiving God, who continues to love us and forgive all our sins despite the brokenness of our hearts. He calls you here and renews that faith today. And continues to every day you turn to Him in His Word, every Sunday you come for Worship. He does so to keep you connected to Him to enjoy the true treasures and riches to come in eternal life. Amen.