

# Written Copy: John 6:44-51 “The Bread that Gives Life Everlasting”

Proper 14: 12<sup>th</sup> Sunday @ Pentecost

Sunday, August 11<sup>th</sup>, 2024

## Text: John 6:44-51

<sup>44</sup> No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day. <sup>45</sup> It is written in the Prophets, 'And they will all be taught by God.' Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me---<sup>46</sup> not that anyone has seen the Father except he who is from God; he has seen the Father. <sup>47</sup> Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life. <sup>48</sup> I am the bread of life. <sup>49</sup> Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. <sup>50</sup> This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. <sup>51</sup> I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh."

## The text's intent

To present Jesus as the bread from heaven that is far superior to the Manna, or the bread that the crowd seeks Him to provide. He is the Bread of Life: what is truly necessary for life now and eternal life to come. The Manna and all other things temporal we might trust in cannot help us beyond this life, and all who are alive now are dying: destined to die in this world and without the Bread of Life destined for eternal suffering and dying forever apart from God. Jesus is the gift of God to give life now and eternal life to come. No one can choose Him, only those who are drawn/dragged into His reign and rule by the miracle of conversion done through the means of grace, where my will is conformed to God's will. Faith in Him is the Bread I need for a life lived with Him now that never ends. Jesus has come to reveal God to mankind and provide the power and means for this never-ending life with Him. He will never cast out those called to faith in Him but is at work to keep this life of faith alive. He does all this through the gift that is His flesh, offered as the atoning sacrifice for the whole world. None are excluded, only those who refuse to believe and thereby eat of Him as the Bread of Life, while all who do will be raised up on the Last Day.

## Focus Statement:

Jesus is the Bread of Life sent by the Father to rescue me from a meaningless life lived apart from Him that ends in eternal separation and death. His flesh given as my atoning sacrifice on the cross redeems me from death to be worthy of a life lived in faith with Him now and for eternity. The Father chose me and dragged me into His Son's reign and rule through the Spirit's work of conversion that makes Him all that I need for life now and eternal life to come. I trust in His promise that He will keep feeding me now, take my soul to rest in His presence at death, and will raise me up to eternal life on the Last Day where I will live forever in the restored Garden of Eden.

## Function Statement:

### Why it's important to know:

My life lived outside of Jesus being my Bread of Life is meaningless in the face of eternal separation and suffering to come. No matter what I might try, I cannot escape the inevitable death I owe in this world. I can't choose to have a relationship with Him because my will is bound to serve my sinful selfish heart. I cannot save myself, someone outside of me must rescue me.

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

Continue to eat of the bread of life through my participation in the means of grace, keeping my hope alive in the eternal life to come so that I do not fall away.

## Subject Sentence: Faith and trust in Jesus gives life now unto eternity

## Introduction

How many of you recognize the name “Jack Lalane”? How many of you could tell me why he is a name that people should remember? How many could, without using Google, share any details from his life?

For those who have never heard of him, or have forgotten, Jack Lalane was a pioneer in personal fitness training. He described himself up until his teenage years as being a “sugarholic” and a “junk food junkie”. Then he heard a lecture on the benefits of good nutrition that turned his life around. This eventually led him to change not only what he ate but how he cared for his body. He went on to host the first and longest-running nationally syndicated fitness television program, [\*The Jack LaLanne Show\*](#), which ran from 1951 to 1985. He published numerous books on fitness and was widely recognized for publicly preaching the health benefits of regular exercise and a good diet. He demonstrated the wisdom of this by the very fact he was in good enough physical condition to host the show to the age of 71 years old. It would be nice to end this story with the line “and he lived happily ever after” but that wouldn’t exactly be true.

LaLanne often said, "I can never die; that would ruin my image!" But in January of 2011 he came down with pneumonia. He was ill with it for a week but refused to see a doctor. He even continued on doing his daily workout routine up until January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2011, when, at the age of 96, he died from respiratory failure. Certainly, his focus on diet and exercise kept him going all those years, but none of that could keep the inevitable at bay forever.

I have to wonder how well his image is surviving these days. I wonder how many would remember him with enough interest to even Google his name to read about his life and accomplishments. How many generations will it take before no one remembers who he was outside of an internet search. How much more so for you and I?

It’s not a very happy subject to dwell on. In fact, many spend their lives filling them with all kinds of activities and busyness just so they don’t have to focus on that inevitability in their life. Exercise and diet are good things. Our bodies are a gift from God, and we should care for them as a precious gift. But neither diet nor exercise will give you a “happily ever after” ending to your life. People often talk about how the departed live on in our memories, and there is some truth to that. But how many generations before that memory is gone, even for those who lived a remarkable life and made a difference such as Jack Lalane?

To quote Jim Morrison in one of the songs he wrote for the rock band The Doors: “No one gets out of here alive.” And there is some truth to that. It’s what keeps people away from funeral homes and funerals even when the deceased is a family member or close friend, let alone an acquaintance. But Jesus came to prove Jim Morrison wrong in your life and mine.

**John 6:40 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.**” In the light of the inevitability of temporal death, this promise of Jesus surely is Good News-the best news. As we consider what this promise means to us, to you, there are at least four questions that come to mind. Let’s spend some time focusing on each of them.

## What Will He Raise You From?

What will He raise you from? The quick answer is death. But there is more to it than that. He did not come to cancel your date with temporal death, the death of your body. Barring His return beforehand all of us must face that. What He came to promise and to make reality is that your temporal death is not the end.

Now I don’t know what Jack Lalane’s spiritual health was at the time of his death. He once compared himself to Billy Graham, saying that while Mr. Graham was promoting “*the hereafter*,” he was promoting “*the here and now*.” Without faith in Christ, what happened to Jack upon his death? His body, which was still in magnificent shape at 96 years old, was placed in a coffin and buried at Forest Lawn Memorial Park in Hollywood California where it is decomposing as we speak.

And what of his soul? Apart from faith in Christ in this life, the soul of unbelievers begins the torment that they will experience both body and soul for eternity. On the Last Day their bodies will be raised from the grave, but not made perfect to live forever. Their souls will be placed back in their bodies in which they will suffer emotionally, physically, and spiritually for the sins they committed in their life.

One of the sayings you hear from unbelievers when they do address what happens when they die and the possibility of eternal suffering is that at least it will be in the company of their friends ‘partying in hell’. Jesus describes what one can expect in **Matthew 22:13** as being cast “**into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.**’ That doesn’t sound like they will be partying with friends or even aware that their former friends are even there. What they will be doing is weeping and wailing as they experience not just the physical torment their sins earned for them, but the spiritual torment of seeing those sins from the eyes of the just God, seeing how awful they really are and how they hurt those around them. And the gnashing of teeth carries with it a quality of anger. Apart from God there is no joy, no love, only hate. And that is what they will live with.

That is what Christ came to raise you from, that future that your sins earned for you. So then where is He going to raise you to?

## What Will He Raise You To?

**John 6:40 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.** Jesus is the Bread from Heaven that provides you with all you need to be raised up from death to eternal life to come.

What should that mean for you now-today? How will your future differ from the unbeliever? Well, you and I will face the day when our spirit departs from our bodies. Those bodies will be placed in a coffin and buried in the ground. For some their bodies will be cremated with the remains being buried or perhaps set aside in a special place by a loved one. Either way our bodies, no matter how healthy we were in life will decompose and become dust, as the Ash Wednesday Scripture passage says, ***“You are dust, and to dust you shall return.”***

But what about your soul, that part which is really you? It doesn't die. It goes to be with Jesus. At the time of death Jesus sends His angels to take your soul to be with Him in heaven. Now that doesn't mean an ethereal existence as a disembodied spirit up on the clouds somewhere, floating around, playing a harp, doing cloud bowling, playing cards with loved ones who have passed on, playing golf, doing any of the things that you used to love to do on earth. You don't have a body to do those things. The Bible doesn't have a lot to say about this intermediary time other than you are at peace. You are content in the arms of Jesus. And you are waiting for something much better to come.

What is to come is what He will raise to you: eternal life. He will raise your body that has been decomposing in the grave or has been cremated. Your very body that you live in now will be put back together by the God who originally formed you in your mother's womb. It doesn't matter if your ashes have been spread on the sea, or if there is nothing left in your coffin but dust. That is a small matter for the Creator God. He will raise up your body complete with all its members, but with one big difference, it will be perfect. You will be perfectly healthy, so much so that it will make Jack Lalane jealous. And you will have all the parts of your body, and they will be in perfect working order. All the problems that plague you now will be forever gone. Any birth defects you have now will be forever healed and corrected. You will be raised healthier than you have ever been in this life.

And in that perfect body you will be welcomed into the perfect eternal existence in the New Heaven and New Earth. The best way to describe it is the restoration of the Garden of Eden. There will be trees, grass, fruits and vegetables, animals. There will be all of your loved ones who died in faith, plus believers that you have never met, with whom you will have an eternity to get to know. And governing over all of that is the most perfect peace, the Peace of Christ that surpasses all understanding. And we will share with one another His unconditional love. There will be no more hate, no more war, no more crime, no more sickness, no more death. It is an eternal future that is beyond our imagining this side of eternity.

## Whom Will He Raise?

**John 6:40 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.** That leads us to consider the next question: who will be there? Whom will He raise? **“Everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him.”** Everyone who looks on Him with the eyes of faith.

He will raise all those who eat of the bread of life, meaning all who place their faith and trust in Him as Lord and Savior. And how does that happen? Is it something you can choose to do? Is it something that you have to work for and earn? Absolutely not! **John 6:44 No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.** It is all the work of God Himself. The Father chose you to be a part of His family before you were born and arranged everything in your life to make it happen. He sent His Holy Spirit to you through the Gospel Message who drew you, and in some cases may have dragged you into His reign and rule through baptism, or the proclamation of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

His Spirit presented Jesus to you as your atoning sacrifice, His flesh sacrificed, and His blood poured out on the cross, taking your place, your punishment, to forgive all of your sins. He presented this to you as the miraculous work of conversion. He took your sinful will, that didn't want a Lord and master beside anyone other than yourself, or one of your own choosing, and changed it to match His perfect will. He aligned your will with His so that you place your trust and your faith in His Jesus as not just your Savior from eternal hell, but the loving and gracious Lord who wants you to live with Him now and forever. He chose you and gave you the power of faith to cling to Jesus now and to keep clinging to Him by faith all the way through this life until He calls your soul to be by His side.

This wonderful gift of faith is available to all human beings. No one is excluded by God. The only reason many won't be there is they exclude themselves. They refuse to believe. They refuse to eat the bread of life throughout their time on earth until it is too late. But that is not your fate. Jesus Christ has done everything to make sure you will be raised to eternal life to come.

## When Will He Raise You?

**John 6:40 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.** That brings to mind the question of when; when will all this happen? On the Last Day.

It is one particular day in the future, known only to God. It is called the “Last Day” because after that day there will be no more days lived out in this world. It is the day when life as we know it on this earth will cease. It is the day when Jesus will return bodily in all His glory. He will come as the King of the Universe that He really and truly is. This universe and all that we know as reality will disappear. All those who refuse to partake of the Bread of Life, all those who refused the Gospel Message and the free gift of faith that the Spirit has to give will be sent away into eternal suffering. But not you.

Our Lord and Savior will create all around you the New Heaven and New Earth filled with complete perfection. And He will place you there along with all who have lived and died in faith to live with Him forever.

### Conclusion

Jim Morrison was wrong when he said, “No one gets out of here alive.” It was true for him because he refused the One who said in **John 6:51 I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.**

Our life in this world is a special gift from God and we should treasure it as such. Our bodies are special gift that we should take care of. He calls us to use our bodies and our souls as a part of His Church with the job of sharing our faith in Him with each other and the word.

But on that Last Day, it won't matter if you lived a life like Jack Lalane or the total opposite. It won't matter if you lived and served as a good Christian all the days of your life, or if you were called into faith right before you took your last breath. It's not something you earn or deserve no matter who you are. It's not something you can ignore and put off until a more convenient time and then decide it's for you. Eternal life is the free gift that comes from Jesus Christ who came to be the Bread of Life for you, all you need for a life lived with Him now that doesn't stop at your temporal death, but continues on to eternal life to come. Continue to eat of that Bread of Life through the means of grace: the Gospel preached, read, and sung, and the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, so that He can keep you prepared and ready for life everlasting. Amen.