



Free Evangelical  
Lutheran Synod  
in South Africa

## Sermon- 11<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 13B)

*Jesus is the Bread from Heaven!*



St. John's Lutheran Parish  
Shelly Beach

### • The Word of God for this Sermon is written in John 6, 22-35:

- <sup>ESV</sup> 4 Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand. ...
- <sup>22</sup> On the next day the crowd that remained on the other side of the sea saw that there had been only one boat there, and that Jesus had not entered the boat with his disciples, but that his disciples had gone away alone.
- <sup>23</sup> Other boats from Tiberias came near the place where they had eaten the bread after the Lord had given thanks.
- <sup>24</sup> So when the crowd saw that Jesus was not there, nor his disciples, they themselves got into the boats and went to Capernaum, seeking Jesus.
- <sup>25</sup> When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, "Rabbi, when did you come here?"
- <sup>26</sup> 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.
- <sup>27</sup> 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."
- <sup>28</sup> Then they said to him, "What must we do, to be doing the works of God?"
- <sup>29</sup> Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent."
- <sup>30</sup> So they said to him, "Then what sign do you do, that we may see and believe you? What work do you perform?"
- <sup>31</sup> Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'"
- <sup>32</sup> 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.
- <sup>33</sup> For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."
- <sup>34</sup> They said to him, "Sir, give us this bread always."
- <sup>35</sup> Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst."

- Let us pray: *Come Holy Spirit, open our ears and hearts so that we will eat the Bread from Heaven, the eternal food which sustains the Spirit we have received from God, through Christ! Amen.*
- **Dear blessed of the Father!**
  - What were the people seeking? What Jesus were they running after? A provider of food for the body? Certainly, and what is wrong with that? Nothing is wrong with it, unless that is all there is they want from Jesus!
  - The Israelites, after their Exodus from the fangs of the Pharaoh, where they had to work as slaves for the pagan god of the Egyptians, received manna and drank from the rock in the dessert. This was God's special way of keeping them alive in the dessert, as they were on their way to the promised land.
  - What they didn't get, however, and this is what Jesus reveals in His Word for today, was that it was Jesus' Father who gave them true bread from heaven. That is to say, Jesus is the true Son of the Father in Heaven who already fed their fathers with the manna. So, there is a continuity between what God did in the OT and what Jesus does in the NT.
  - Now, the same heavenly Father gives them THE Bread from Heaven, present tense. The feeding of the five thousand was a sign that the end-time Exodus has come in Jesus. It was not about filling their stomachs, only. It was a sign of the eternal food which the Father of Jesus would give to them, this time as the fulfilment of all foreshadows and signs.
  - For certain, God provides for our bodily needs. We experience this daily. That is why we pray and give thanks to God before and after we eat and drink. However, no matter how well we feed and look after our bodies of this earth, they perish. An undeniable fact. We get older and older. More and more our bodies seem to switch off certain departments and faculties and functions. That is why Jesus says, do not work for the food that perishes. You are not getting anywhere. You are working for death. You are not increasing your life-span significantly. And we are not even speaking about increasing the quality of life.
  - Dear congregation, please don't understand me wrong now, but sometimes it is a blessing in disguise, if God allows suffering to come our way. Materialistically speaking, we are facing dark economic times in our country. But, let us not run away too early, let us not go into resignation mode, because in such times, when God leads us through the dessert, we may recognise best what is important for us. We may

come to realise how we have been drifting off into a comfortable lifestyle, where we might have begun to cling to this earth as being the place to be.

• If our whole life turns around our survival on this earth, then we basically miss the whole point of our short life here in this place filled with perishables. So, yes, Jesus, as our Creator looks after our earthly bodies, provides for their health and sustenance, but not as an end to itself. There is a deeper reason for keeping us alive. He provides for our bodies, so that we can receive the true Bread from Heaven.

• Here, yes on this earth, is the place to receive the true Bread from Heaven, which will endure for eternal Life. This is the real Good News, that such food exists which both the Father in Heaven and the Son of Man gives to you.

• Before we ask what this food is, we need to get what I have been saying until now. If our earthly life is not an end to itself, but rather the means to receive the food the Father in Heaven gives, we need to realise the consequences of this. This means a major shift in emphasis. More, it means a complete re-arrangement of priorities for my life.

• What am I working for? What is my main purpose for working? To fill my stomach and make a comfortable life for my body? We can test ourselves by looking at our priorities. What ranks on top? If all else fails, what do I keep doing? If I have a clash of appointments, which one do I drop? What is on the top of my list, which I cannot and will not miss out on, come hell or high water? Let us be honest with ourselves and just look at ourselves in this question.

• If it is not, to receive the Bread from Heaven, as of first importance, Jesus says, (it doesn't come from me) you work for food that perishes. Then your whole life is upside down. Then all you do will perish with you, in the end.

• But, now, immediately see the very opposite of this very dark scenario: If to receive the Bread from Heaven is genuinely in position number one, all the other things will find their rightful place and meaning. In fact all we do and experience will be of benefit for our eternal Life and for the eternal Life of others.

• That is why, the answer does not lie in moving into a monastery, trying to seclude ourselves from the evil world, and refrain from doing earthly tasks, as if they in themselves are bad, whilst our heart is still craving after the earthly existence.

• So, what is going to get me to live this newly prioritised Life? It is the same question

as, what is the Bread from Heaven?

- First of all, we see, the Father in Heaven gives the true bread from heaven. And the Son of Man, Jesus the Christ, gives this Bread of Life. So, this tells us, it is not something we can work for. We can only receive it. It is a gift from the Father in Heaven and a gift from Jesus. Its not two gifts, but one gift.
- Jesus tells us the answer. He says, I AM the Bread of Life! So, we see, the Bread of Life is a person, is Jesus. But, what does that mean? Is Jesus just a teacher who came to reinforce the Law of God? More than that, much more, because Jesus says, the Bread of Life is He who comes down from heaven and gives Life to the world.
- We remember, John 3, 16, “In this way God loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son” ... The Father gave His only-begotten Son to be the Lamb of God, that takes away the sins of the world. The Father has sent His Son on a mission, a mission culminating, being fulfilled in His Death! This Jesus, sealed by the Holy Spirit at His Baptism, to be crucified and die is the Bread of Heaven.
- His Death is God’s gift to the world, to you and me. His Death is our Life. This is the Bread we need to eat! This is the Bread we need to be united with. Jesus is the very content and substance of eternal Life. Whenever we are united with Him and remain united with Him, we are participating in true Life. Sin with its own agenda is driven out.
- In Baptism we have been united with Him, in His Death and by hearing Him speak the Word of the Cross onto us, we are receiving the Bread from Heaven. We are receiving eternal Life as a pure gift. This creates faith in us, which gives us the right spirit to want to get our priorities right. The obsessive hunger for material goods is broken. It will not rule our Life any-more. It will be a fight to the end, which we will win, because we abide in Christ, and He in us. Therefore, receiving the Bread from Heaven is crucial for our LIFE. That is what we receive here, in the Body Jesus has created and called and assembled and nourishes!
- Therefore, let us pray together with all disciples of Jesus, *“Lord, give us this Bread always.”*
- Glory be to God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.
- *“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen. [NKJ 2 Cor3:14.]*