

King of Glory Lutheran Church

July 31 & August 1, 2021

Year B: 10th Sunday after Pentecost: John 6:24-35

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Exodus 16:2-4, 9-15

² The whole congregation of the Israelites complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. ³ The Israelites said to them, "If only we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots and ate our fill of bread; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger." ⁴ Then the Lord said to Moses, "I am going to rain bread from heaven for you, and each day the people shall go out and gather enough for that day. In that way I will test them, whether they will follow my instruction or not.

⁹ Then Moses said to Aaron, "Say to the whole congregation of the Israelites, 'Draw near to the Lord, for he has heard your complaining.'" ¹⁰ And as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the Israelites, they looked toward the wilderness, and the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud. ¹¹ The Lord spoke to Moses and said, ¹² "I have heard the complaining of the Israelites; say to them, 'At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall have your fill of bread; then you shall know that I am the Lord your God.'"

¹³ In the evening quails came up and covered the camp; and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. ¹⁴ When the layer of dew lifted, there on the surface of the wilderness was a fine flaky substance, as fine as frost on the ground. ¹⁵ When the Israelites saw it, they said to one another, "What is it?" For they did not know what it was. Moses said to them, "It is the bread that the Lord has given you to eat.

John 6:24-35

²⁴ So when the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they themselves got into the boats and went to Capernaum looking for Jesus. ²⁵ When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, "Rabbi, when did you come here?" ²⁶ Jesus answered them, "Very truly, I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. ²⁷ Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For it is on him that God the Father has set his seal." ²⁸ Then they said to him, "What must we do to perform 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, "What sign are you going to give us then, so that we may see it and believe you? What work are you performing?" ³¹ Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'" ³² Then Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. ³³ For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." ³⁴ They said to him, "Sir, give us this bread always."

³⁵ Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.

When you think of fast food what do you think of? Taco Bell, Burger King, McDonalds...there are so many now to choose from. Fast food is popular because it is all about quick, convenient food that satisfies hunger.

Many of the fast food chains that we know today, like McDonald's for example, began in Southern California the 1950's. They began with one size for all. You might find it interesting to learn that the original size that McDonald's used for fries is now called small and they have added medium and large. Same thing goes for sodas. The 16 ounce was once the regular and now that's the small. Car manufacturers have made bigger cup holders so that we can fit our sodas in them.

Serving sizes and portions grow bigger all the time. And menus too have evolved from just a few choices to many, many different items. And this isn't just fast food. It's true of restaurants and grocery stores and all the places we get food from.

The point is that what used to satisfy us no longer does. We want our food to be continually updated, made newer, made bigger. We are always hungry for more.

When you get back to the original concept of fast food – food meant to be fast to save you time and eliminate the need to cook for yourself – it doesn't seem like such a bad idea. Food for when you are in a hurry or on the road or can't cook for yourself.

When we read our first lesson from Exodus today it actually seems like fast food is not a new concept at all. The Israelites were into fast food in the desert.

Our reading from Exodus reminds us of the enslavement of the Israelites in Egypt. God rescued them from Pharaoh and freed them from slavery.

We meet them today as they are journeying through the desert to their new home in the Promised Land. Having been freed from slavery you might think the Israelites would be happy. But they are not. They are hungry.

“If only we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots and ate our fill of bread; for you have brought us out in to this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.”

Apparently at this point, their memories of slavery in Egypt sound good to them compared to where they are now.

Well God heard the cries of the people and sent them manna, bread from heaven. Each morning they would wake up and find bread all around them. Enough for everyone to eat. The original form of fast food. Excellent, right?

But that's not the end of the story. If you continue reading in chapter 16 you will learn that some of the Israelites wanted more. Maybe they were afraid they wouldn't have enough. Maybe they knew that out in the desert food could be scarce. Maybe they invented the idea of super sizing a meal. I don't know.

However it came about, some of the people decided to take more than they needed and they saved the manna, hoarded it, super sized their meal.

The next morning when they woke up the manna was rotten and full of worms. The people had to be reminded by Moses again that God would provide enough manna for each day. God would give them what they needed each day, no more, no less. God was faithful everyday, not just once or twice.

God met the needs of the Israelites with manna from heaven given abundantly so that everyone would have enough for the day before them.

We meet Jesus in our gospel lesson facing questions from people who remembered that God sent manna to their ancestors in the wilderness. People who were hungry. People who wanted to know God. And they ask Jesus, what sign are you going to give to us, so that we may see it and believe you so that we too might be fed.

Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." They said to him, "Sir, give us this bread always."

"Give us this bread always." The cry of the Israelites echoed here in the cry of the crowd. The cry of hungry people.

Jesus said, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."

God sent manna to the Israelites in the desert that they might live.

And God heard the cries of God's people and sent Jesus to us that we might live. That we might never be hungry again. That we might know the Bread of Life.

The fact is, we are hungry. We prove that in our fascination and fixation on food. But our hunger goes beyond the calories we need to sustain our bodies.

We are hungry for the bread that truly satisfies. For the One that fills us and gives us strength in our hearts and minds and bodies.

Jesus says to us today, "I am the bread of life." I know what you need, what is enough and I will provide. Trust in me.

Just as we need food to meet our physical needs Jesus reminds us today that we need food for our spirit. The bread of life.

When we pray the Lord's prayer, we ask for the bread we need every day. "Give us today our daily bread," we pray.

Martin Luther says in his Small Catechism, "In fact, God gives daily bread without our prayer, even to all evil people, but we ask in this prayer that God cause us to recognize what our daily bread is and to receive it with thanksgiving."

So what is your daily bread? Where do you meet Jesus and find strength for your body and spirit?

I think we should ask today in the words of Martin Luther "that God cause us to recognize what our daily bread is and to receive it with thanksgiving."

Perhaps that bread is in prayer and devotions, perhaps that bread is in friendships or family, perhaps that bread is in caring for others, perhaps that bread is in sharing your faith with a child, perhaps that bread is a delicious meal that gives you strength in body and spirit.

Or perhaps on this day of sabbath and worship our daily bread is in this gathering as we hear the good news of God's love for us through Jesus Christ and meet our Lord at His table. At this table we receive the bread and the wine knowing that Jesus comes to us, feeding us and satisfying us with his presence, forgiveness and love.

Wherever you find your daily bread this week, among friends and family or strangers, in work or play, in prayer or devotion, or even in a meal at a table or fast food in the car, take some time to remember and give thanks for the One who is our Bread of Life. Bread that we need every day. Bread that comes to us and truly satisfies.

Jesus is the Bread of Life, the One who is faithful and gives us life and love that we might have strength each day and bread for the journey. Thanks be to God.

Amen.