

Holy Trinity Sunningdale
Sunday August 1, 2021
Reading – John 6:25-35; I Am The Bread of Life

Today, I want us to consider what Jesus means when he says "I am the bread of life."

Every culture on earth loves its bread, from Mexican tortillas to Jewish Matza bread, not to mention rolls, bagels, croissants, pitas, doughnuts and many other kinds of bread that are consumed globally.

Do you know that in 13th century England, bread was a vital source of food and bakeries had total control of the bread supply? In those days, loaves were often sold in baskets of 12. But some bakers would cheat their customers by selling smaller loaves. Eventually, King Henry III instituted a law to punish bakers who cheated people with beatings and jail time. Obviously, this made cheating dangerous, but even honest bakers were concerned they might accidentally make a smaller loaf. Therefore, to avoid punishment, bakers began selling their customary 12 loaves adding one extra loaf (13 instead of 12). And that's where we get the term "bakers' dozen."

Today, if you and I need some bread, we go to the store and buy any kind of bread we want. Back in the days of Jesus, bread was a very labour-intensive product and took a lot of effort to make. It could take the better part of a day to grind the wheat, put enough wood in the fireplace and then prepare and cook the bread needed for the week.

But then along came Jesus.

Prior to our reading this morning, Jesus performs the miracle where he fed the 5000 with 5 small loaves of bread and 2 fish. And the people were very impressed. But then, Jesus disappears and the people began to look for him because they wanted more bread. When they found him, they said to Jesus, "What sign are you going to give us, that we may see and believe you?" Look, they said, Moses supplied manna for the people every day, and you've only done it once. Do another miracle!

Jesus replied, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty." V.35. What caught my attention was that Jesus didn't say "I am the giver of bread." Instead he said "I am the bread." Why did Jesus say it that way?

The crowd had come looking for Jesus because he had given them bread, they didn't necessarily want Jesus. That's like when we sing the hymn Count Your Blessings Name Them One By One, I tend to think in terms of God blessing me with a car, a home, a job or my children and grandchildren. Now, there's nothing wrong with being thankful for physical blessings but if those kind of blessings is why we follow Jesus, those blessings can become a trap.

Many Christians have stumbled in their faith because they lost those blessings - cars, houses, jobs, family, children etc. They can end up losing their faith because of

wanting those blessings more than they want Jesus. The way out of this trap is to recognize these are all gifts from God, but also recognize that I can lose them in a heartbeat. Jesus is the bread of life. With him we receive life and other gifts.

Another interesting part of this “Bread of Life” statement is that Jesus isn’t talking about real bread here. When he said “I am the bread of life,” he means every time you look at a loaf of bread, remember that just like you need bread to live, you need me to live too. At the Last Supper, he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.” The bread at that meal wasn’t Jesus’ body because he hadn’t died yet! What I hear Jesus saying to his disciples and to us is; every time that you take communion, and take the bread, you need to remember what I did on the cross. When you eat the bread you must remember my sacrifice.

Jesus says “I am the bread of life.”

The amazing thing is that the more we eat the Bread of Life, the hungrier for him we become! Our appetite for Christ won’t decrease. The more we get to know him, the more we read his Word, the more our appetite for Christ will increase, because we’ve tasted and seen that the Lord is good! Such hunger isn’t oppressive, instead, there’s a great joy in it. We are hungry, but we’ve found the Bread of Life! Now we know where to go with our needs and weaknesses, our guilt and emptiness. No other food will satisfy, but Christ alone gives the food that endures to everlasting life!

C.S. Lewis wrote in *Mere Christianity*, “You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.”

Jesus says “I am the bread of life.”

This morning, may I invite you to fall at his feet and call him Lord and God. Amen.

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