

## Sermon Draft

Text: John 6:35–51

Sermon: “Daily Bread”

It wasn't often, but on occasion my mom would make homemade bread. The smell would fill the house. My brother and I couldn't wait for it to come out of the oven. My mom would always say it had to cool first but then would give us each a slice, I always got the end or heel. It was and still is my favorite. It taste best fresh from the oven. Looking back, the reason it was so good was that it was baked and shared in love. I Still like it when Cindy makes homemade bread because it is still made with love.

So, it is with Jesus. When Jesus gives us the Bread of Life, he gives us himself.

***“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’”*** (v 35). Jesus, and Jesus alone, is the source of true and genuine life: ***“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”*** (v 51). This is “cross” talk. Jesus gave his life, on the cross, for the life of the world. And this is “faith” talk. To “eat the bread of life” is an act of faith.

It is believing in Jesus. ***“This is the will of my Father,” says Jesus, “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”*** (v 40). When Jesus was about to raise Lazarus from the dead, he told his sisters, Martha and Mary: ***“I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die”*** (John 11:25–26).

Homemade bread is so much better than store-bought bread. Life with “the bread of life” is so much better than life without Jesus. It’s not just a matter of quantity. It’s not just that it’s eternal. It’s also a matter of quality. It’s not just more of the “same old, same old” that we may be experiencing or going through now. It’s not just more of what’s corrupted by sin. It’s not just more of what’s broken and heartbreaking. It’s not just more death and what’s threatened by death. It’s new; it’s different. Jesus has put himself into it. He loves us! God loves us! God forgives us! God has got us!

Life with Jesus is far more than life that is here today and gone tomorrow. Life with Jesus is far more than what we can touch and taste. Far more than what we have. Far more than what makes us feel good or bad. Far more than the working out of our hopes and dreams or not.

The people in our text to whom Jesus was speaking still had the taste of the barley loaves and fish in their mouths, the barley loaves and fish with which Jesus had miraculously fed them. They were remembering the manna with which God fed their ancestors in the wilderness. What they weren't remembering was that their ancestors ate the manna and died. Life is far more than bread and butter. Life is more than our experiences in this world.

God does provide for our physical and material needs. Jesus taught us to pray, ***"Give us this day our daily bread."*** Martin Luther reminds us in his explanation of the Lord's Prayer that ***"daily bread includes everything that has to do with the support and needs of the body, such as food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, home, land, animals, money, goods, a devout husband or wife, devout children, devout workers, devout and faithful rulers, food government, good weather, peace, health, self-control, good reputation,***

***good friends, faithful neighbors, and the like.”***

That is quite a list, but Jesus is so much more. He came as the source of eternal life, life with God that is forgiven and forever. Jesus fed the crowd with bread as God fed his people Israel in the wilderness with manna. Jesus did this as a sign, to make a point; the same point God made for his Old Testament people in the wilderness: ***“He humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord”*** (Deuteronomy 8:3).

Jesus is that Word. He is ***“the living bread that came down from heaven”*** (John 6:51). Today’s Psalm invites us to ***“taste and see that the Lord is good!”*** (Psalm 34:8). In Jesus, we are able to know and experience God. Fullness of life. Closeness to and intimacy with God that is otherwise impossible. Our brokenness, sin, guilt, and shame corrupt our relationship with God. Death breaks it forever. Jesus went to a cross for us. He suffered and died for us. He rose from the dead. He lives. He forgives. He restores our relationship with God. Now and forever.

***“This is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day” (v 39). “That I should lose nothing!” In speaking of himself as the Good Shepherd, Jesus said, “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand” (John 10:27–28). We can’t be any more secure than that. And yet, “the Jews grumbled about” Jesus (John 6:41). Their “grumbling” recalls the constant, stiff-necked, faithless “grumbling” of the people of Israel against God in the wilderness. And it recalls the attitude of Jesus’ hometown people in the synagogue at Nazareth when they rejected him. Do we grumble? Yes we continue to grumble still today. Grumbling is essentially refusing to believe in Jesus wanting something different than he gives or, worse, someone different than he is and, thereby losing out on the life he does give.***

Taste and see that the Lord is good. Jesus is the bread of life. He feeds us in the Word. He is our “daily bread.” When we are affirmed, forgiven in the Words of Absolution, Jesus takes away all that stands against us, all that stands between us and God, all that separates us from God.

Jesus feeds us in the Sacrament. When we gather around his Table, we receive nothing less than himself. In the bread of his Supper, we receive nothing less than his body broken for us. In the wine, we receive nothing less than his blood shed for us, for the forgiveness of sins.

Paul reminds us of this life in his Letter to the Ephesians. He says, ***“But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ . . . and raised us up with him.”*** (Ephesians 2:4–6)

Recalling our Baptism, he says, ***“Put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and . . . be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and . . . put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness. . . . Be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.”*** (Ephesians 4:22–24; 5:1–2)

There are many today who seek spiritual sustenance in other forms precisely because they don't believe in the one that Jesus presents to us as he tells us he's "the bread of life." The Sacrament of Christ's body and blood is available to us today even as it was to the disciples and those who heard Jesus speak these words. But these words are rejected by many now as they were then. They are still very much "a hard saying" (John 6:60). Instead of believing that Jesus is the bread of life and that he nourishes the Church and individual Christians through the Sacrament of his body and blood, many look for more exciting and dynamic ways of being spiritual. There are numerous sects and cults that do not believe the Lord's Supper brings the true presence of Jesus.

John's Gospel calls unbelievers to a confession of faith. In Jn 20:31, Jesus says, ***"But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."***

Jesus our daily bread feeds us, nourishes, and sustains us now and for all eternity. In Jesus' name. Amen