

John 6:22-35

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church

“You’ll know where to find me – Life Eternal”

Rev. Brent Hartwig

10th Sunday af. Pentecost

August 1, 2021

Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you from God, our Heavenly Father, and Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Dear brothers and sisters in Christ.

[Introduction]

[1] There was an elderly man, and he was on his deathbed.

He had lived his full life, and the last days and hours had come.

[2] His family has come to be with him.

To not leave him alone...

[3] Now, one of his sons...

He is a pastor.

It’s Saturday, and you know what that means. The next day is Sunday.

So the dying man tells his son to go.

He tells him to go home and preach the gospel, to preach to his people.

[4] Reassuringly, the elderly man tells his son that

if he dies while his son is gone,

his son will know where to find him.

[5] ***“You’ll know where to find me.”***

What an inspiration to have that kind of faith

To be living and dying with that kind of faith!

Imagine sharing such confidence

and such assurance with your loved ones!

Eternal life is real.

It is life that really matters.

It is life that makes a difference.

You see, life in this world will finally fail us.

But not the life that God gives.

Not the life Jesus gives.

[Jesus]

Jesus says in today’s Gospel: ***“Do not work 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”*** (v 27).

[6] Earlier, Jesus had miraculously fed some five thousand people with five barley loaves and two fish.

This was meant to be a sign pointing beyond itself to something more.

To Jesus as Son of God.

To Jesus as the source of eternal life.

To Jesus as “the true bread from heaven.”

To Jesus as “the bread of life.”

For Jesus, the bread of life, is the source of eternal life.

[7] Unfortunately, the people around Jesus stayed stuck at the sign, at the bread, at the free meal.

[8] Jesus attempts to move them along, to lift their sights to a higher level:

“Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. Do not work 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” (vv 26–27).

[9] They respond with good intentions:

“Then they said to him, ‘What must we do, to be doing the works of God?’” (v 28).

[10] And Jesus answers:

“This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent” (v 29).

The work of God,
the work God desires of us,
the work God works in us, is not work but faith.
It’s not what we do but what God gives us in Jesus.

[11] The people had trouble catching on:

“So they said to him, ‘Then what sign do you do, that we may see and believe you? What work do you perform? Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat’”” (vv 30–31).

[12] They were remembering how God fed his people in the wilderness with manna. Today’s Old Testament Reading is the backstory to our Gospel.

[13] Jesus says 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. For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world” (vv 32–33).

[14] Then, they begin to get it:

“They said to him, ‘Sir, give us this bread always.’ 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’” (vv 34–35).

And then we remember.

[15] We remember Jesus talking to the Samaritan woman at the well in John 4:

*“Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again,” he told her,
“but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again.
The water that I will give him will become in him
a spring of water welling up to eternal life” (Jn 4:13–14).*

Eternal life is God’s gift in Jesus.

The bread of life is God’s gift.

Jesus is the true bread from heaven.

Jesus is the bread of life.

[*Jesus for Us*]

[16] Jesus’ discourse or sermon on the bread of life goes on to the end of John 6.

We’ll hear more of it next Sunday and the following Sunday.

At this point, bread,
hunger and eating,
thirsting and drinking
are all metaphors.

Put together,

all together,

they’re all about Jesus and believing in him.

Jesus is the source of eternal life.

Believing in Jesus is God’s work in us.

It’s the work of the Holy Spirit.

As with the crowd that Jesus fed, engaged, and taught,

we, you and I,

sometimes tend to stay stuck at the sign,

we stay stuck at the lowest level of things, on material, physical things.

We focus on food,
We focus on material things,
We focus on the things of our earthly existence,
 on physical and emotional blessings,
 and on the comforts of this life.

It is for higher things that Jesus came.
It is for the purpose of giving and sustaining eternal life that God gave us Jesus.

Bread,
 despite the bad rap on carbs these days,
 is a staple of physical life.
It give life.
It sustains life.
 It's the "stuff" of life.
 It's with this in mind that Jesus says, "I am the bread of life."

[17] Life with God,
 our life with God,

[18] has been disrupted and interrupted by sin.
 Our deepest hunger, even though we don't always realize it, is for God.
 Jesus, in his suffering and death on the cross,
 and in his resurrection from the dead,
 satisfies this hunger!

He reconnects us with God.
For eternity.

[19] As the Apostle Paul writes in Romans 8,
 "**Nothing can separate us from God's love in Christ**"
 (see Rom 8:39). Nothing!

[20]
When Jesus was in the wilderness
When Jesus was tempted by the devil—
when he was hungry, tempted to turn stones into loaves of bread—
Jesus quoted words from Deuteronomy 8:
 "**Is it not written,
 'Man shall not live by bread alone,
 but by every word that comes from the mouth of God'**" (Mt 4:4).

[21]

We live on the Bread of Life, the Word of God.

So, Jesus told the crowd,

“You are seeking me . . . because you ate your fill of the loaves” (Jn 6:26).

What do we seek from Jesus?

We often seek what we can get from Jesus rather than seeking Jesus himself.

We seek feel-good things.

We seek things on every other level than spiritual.

We often feel threatened by so many things:

aging, health concerns, hostility,

weakness, brokenness, failure, and regret.

More than anything else in this world,

we need to feed on Jesus in faith.

When we feed on Jesus in faith, we live eternally – eternal life!

And that . . . is when we can say,

[22] ***“You’ll know where to find me.”***

We live and die in the same confidence and assurance

[23] as the dying man and his family in the story with which we began.

[24] Reassuringly, he tells his son that

if he dies while his son is gone,

his son will know where to find him.

“You’ll know where to find me.”

Through the Bread of Life, through Jesus,

we know where we’ll be found. Amen.

So we . . . Declare his glory among the nations,

his marvelous deeds among the people. AMEN! (Psalm 96:3)
