

John 6:25-35 11th Sunday after Pentecost August 7, 1994

*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."*

What do Thanksgiving, and church potlucks and great pizza have in common?

I eat my fill, sampling and tasting and devouring until I feel just right. And then I eat a whole bunch more. An extra helping of turkey, and dressing, and mashed potatoes with salty rich gravy ladled over it all.

At the potluck one more time through the line for some more casseroles, especially that one that was so rich and creamy, and then two trips through the line for desert.

Or with the pizza only a few pieces left in the box, with all that sausage and onion and hot peppers and peperoni and mushrooms, and it will never be as good again as it is right at this moment, so I reach out one more time.

And then I say, "I'll never have to eat again. I'm so full, I'll never be hungry."

Five hours later I'm heading for the fridge.

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."

Jesus was not talking about food and drink. He speaks of a different hunger and thirst altogether.

The rich know this hunger every bit as intensely as the poor, maybe even more intensely. In our younger years we think this hunger may be satisfied by success or by alcohol and parties. Some find this hunger satisfied for a time by a life full of excitement, or winning,

or family. But boredom or losing, or death of a most important one follow and the hunger is greater than ever.

In the sixties some thought the hunger in them would go away if the world could be changed into a better place, but the hunger in the heart can never be satisfied by creating a better society.

Since the sixties some have believed that the hunger is just sexual energy. But somehow the freer we have been with sex, the greater the hunger has grown.

In a way we are all like me as I stuff myself. Food that should satisfy me forever only stretches my stomach so that I am hungrier still. So our whole society stuffs itself more and more in every way, stretching our appetites, until there is no peace, no rest, only a gnawing hunger in our souls.

To us Jesus says, I am the bread of life, whoever comes to me will not hunger, and whoever believes in me will never thirst.

Jesus is the bread of life. Our hunger is not bad. Our hunger is a gift from God. Like physical hunger soul hunger has been planted in us to cause us to take the nourishment we need. Jesus is the bread that God has prepared for our feasting. His living among us was the mixing and the kneading and the rising and the patting down. His dying on the cross for us was the baking and his rising from the dead the cooling that God might give to us the bread for our life. Bread made from wheat is for our earthy hunger, bread which is Jesus is for our hunger for heaven.

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

But like our feasting on bread for the body today's eating and drinking of Jesus does not mean that we will not be hungry tomorrow. Jesus words sound as if once you believe in Jesus no more hunger, no more thirst. Like a thanksgiving meal or a potluck that means I'll never be hungry again. But we find that faith and believing and being forgiven cannot be stored up but must be received day by day. Like love.

Jesus is the bread of life. He does satisfy our hunger, our thirst day by day.

Like the manna that came down to the children of Israel, Jesus cannot be stored for tomorrow, every new day is a new call to faith and trust and loving him.

Jesus is the bread of your life. Feast on him this day. God gives him to you that you will be hungry no more.