

"Being Bread"

Sermon by Dan Harrison, pastor, Church of the Covenant, Lynchburg, VA 7/25/2021

John 6:32-35

To think that somehow by coming to Christ we will no longer experience hunger and we will no longer experience thirst is pretty unbelievable for most of us. And to the crowd that Jesus said those very words, a crowd that had just been literally fed with the two fish and three loaves of bread, I can only imagine what they were thinking: If I follow Jesus, I will never have to worry about food again.

That idea actually fits into Jesus' philosophy as demonstrated in story after story. In his first encounter with the struggling fishermen who would soon become his followers, he had them cast their nets one more time into the water, and suddenly, after fishing all night and coming up empty, they had more fish than they could possibly have imagined. Jesus was teaching them that if they simply keep moving forward, never give up, their needs would be met.

Such miracles would happen over and over, and Jesus would remind them that if God takes care of the animals and the plants, then of course God will take care of us too.

Jesus referred to Moses because it was when the children of Israel had been freed from Egypt and were in the desert, starving, that God gave them a miracle food called manna. Jesus said he is the "manna" from God now, and people will no longer starve to death because he is here. He said, "I am the Bread of Life." Remember he had already told the Samaritan woman earlier that he had, "living water." Jesus declared that he is the Source of Life by saying that he is the Source of "food." Many of us have always interpreted that as Jesus is the source of "spiritual food." And we say that as we eat our meals from the comfort of our own tables. The singer Keith Green wrote in his 1978 song "Asleep in the Light": "'Cause He brings people to your door And you turn them away As you smile and say 'God bless you, be at peace' And all heaven just weeps 'Cause Jesus came to your door But you've left him out on the streets."

Just as Jesus didn't just say he alone is "The Light of the World," though there are times when I secretly wish he had only relegated that to himself. But no, instead, he said "YOU are the light of the world." In the same way, by us learning that together we are all "the body of Christ" we are in turn, collectively, "The Bread of Life." Continuing from last week's teaching, I believe that when Jesus fed the thousands of people that day, it was really Jesus moving the hearts of the people to feed each other. And when Jesus says he is the "the Bread of Life," I feel logically he is also saying that "together we are the bread of life, here to feed one another."

My encouragement today is for us to not close our doors on one another, but instead open them. Let us carry each other's burdens. Let us help take care of each other's needs, material and spiritual. We are all in this together... in this way through God we become the bread of life for one another in this life and the next. Shalom.