

Eternal Life John 6:35 12th Sunday after Pentecost Aug 12, 2018

I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. John 6:50 living forever, eternal life

Dear friends in Christ,

Today Jesus continues to speak of being the bread of life, and we continue to listen. You might be wondering, isn't it time for something new, and I surely thought that when I prepared the sermon, but Jesus has more to say. He has more to say, especially to those who do not believe who are caught up in the bread of this world and life now, but not in the bread of heaven and eternal life.

The people do not want to see the living bread come from heaven. They do not want to see the Christ from God. They want the Christ who gives them bread and takes care of what they want now, and have no use for him if he isn't the Christ of the right now. So they bring up his family, Joseph and Mary. They say what is he talking about. They bring up his here and now so he takes care of their here and now.

Jesus had a response to those who wanted bread now. Your fathers ate Manna in the wilderness and died. They had seen the glory of God, but turned from it to look for earthly things. And though God blessed them with Manna, they grumbled, they ignored eternal life with God, and died in the desert. Their fathers ate manna in the wilderness and died.

Pretty harsh? Maybe. But consider our world. Joel Olsteen leads a Church in Houston Texas. Its in an old NBA Stadium and filled with over 10,000 people a week. Its huge, and people want in. He doesn't talk about sin. He talks about how God will bless you financially and materially and in your marriage and in your parenthood. His bestselling book is called your best life now. He doesn't talk about a cross, or eternal life, but how living the way he preaches will give you your best life now. And Jesus said, your Fathers ate manna in the wilderness and died.

How often we too are focused on earthly families. Now God does put us in families, and he has work for us to do there. But how often we decide being Christian means not living for ourselves but for our families, and we plan our meals and our vacations but don't see the presence of God in our lives. How often we feel exhausted in what we set of for ourselves to do, and fail to see God's rest and eternal life. And Jesus said, your father's ate manna in the wilderness and died.

And how often, even at church, the focus can be on money and carpet and maintenance. How much better a committee to pick new carpet is attended than the evangelism committee on how to share the bread of life in the community. How much we care about our church life now. And God said, your fathers ate manna in the wilderness and died.

This is the text I read to my mom as she passed away. I could have talked about the good memories of eating together, at supper but especially at thanksgiving, and how much it meant to me. But that was not what she needed to hear. I could have talked to her about how she was good mom, that she always took care of us as I was growing up. But that is not what she needed to hear. I could have told her I'd follow her example and take care of my family. I could

have told her I'd hold on to those things. But that is not what she needed to hear. All of those things were lost to her, and they were manna that could be eaten but still die in the desert.

Instead I read this chapter. I read that Christ is the bread of life. Jesus who does not lose any his father gives him, now and in eternal, even as she loses all the things she held on to in this life. I told here that he who believes has eternal life. That he had given her himself in his word and in his baptism and in his meal. That she would never hunger and thirst, for the flesh he gave on the cross was for her. That she could go to her savior who was holding onto her, secure that he would not let go.

We meet today to feed on the bread of heaven. Not in communion, though we do there as well and far more literally. But we feast on the bread come down from heaven in his word. We hold it in our ears and in our mouths as we hear and speak his word. The bread of heaven feeds us today, that we may believe. He feeds us today, that we may live today and eternally. He rose that we may rise with him. Receive him today and live in him today and always. Amen.