

## SERMON FOR SUNDAY, 9 AUGUST, 2009

### INTRODUCTION

God Himself becomes our bread and our truth, together, unconfused and inseparable. The seed of eternal life lies within them, and once we receive them sincerely, that life not only enters into and grows within us.

Man's life depends on BREAD. It depends on the kind of bread each person needs. This differs from race, colour, tribe, nationality, religion and even likes and dislikes of each person. Even location, nature or movements of person can determine the kind of bread one needs. But as one family of Jesus Christ, we all need only the Living Bread.

#### *The theme: JESUS CHRIST; OUR LIVING BREAD.*

Saint John's gospel in Ch 6: 35 states, Jesus said: **I am the bread of life**, he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

The scripture on the feeding of the five thousand people taught us about sharing. We are reminded of the five loaves and two fishes Jesus blessed and commanded to be shared to all. Amazingly, there were left over's and this confirms that the grace of God extends to all mankind, immense and unconfined. Enough to feed everyday and every time for ever.

This gospel extract serves as a link between the miracle of the loaves and the doctrine about the Bread of Life.

The scene portrays a rather testy one. The crowd, like all crowds, seems to contain a mixture of sincere searchers for Jesus, opportunists and cynics. And Jesus strips away immediately the pretences with which some would come to Him as we have these different motives and views just like the crowd of old. So scripture is current and applies to us now in this age.

Jesus said; "You are looking for me not because you saw signs but because you ate the loaves of bread and had your stomachs filled". The words are realistic, and not without a hint of bitterness: These are words that remind us of our own desires and lusts as we befriend ourselves and also as we come to Jesus every day. First, it is always what we want and expect to have as we come to Jesus. As our expectations are met, we gain confidence and want to meet every time. As things turn the other way, we start the complaints like the Israelites against Moses in the desert when they were in dire need. They lamented: "Why did you take us away from the flesh-pots of Egypt, the cucumbers and the rest, to lead us here to die of starvation?"

Ah, yes, the human heart, without persevering trust and faith in the Lord's providence, becomes -- and understandably so -- absorbed with what is most tangible, with what we would call today "materialism". Our love and religion have become what we will get and not what we will give. So Jesus flags the warning: "Do not work for food that perishes but for food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you". Eternal life demands giving of one's self, and all friendships demand one's self including our time. ALL TO JESUS I SURRENDER!

So the crowd ask as we always do "Why then do we have to follow you every time. And then Jesus drops the bomb: "Believe in me!" Can that make our stomachs filled? THE GREAT QUESTION. Jesus Himself used to defeat the Devil in the hour of His own temptation: "Man does not live on bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God".

**We all like signs and miracles hence some theologians take undue advantage of most of us. But the greatest MIRACLE IS LIFE ITSELF. Think of how you sleep and wake up each day.**

This is faith which man did not see or can hold, but we demand more, apparently already forgetting the multiplication of the loaves. But, Jesus attempts to raise the hearts and minds to a higher level, away from manna and bread which are perishable fragments.

He states clearly that the true bread from heaven and the true Giver of that bread are not what they think: the true bread is not bread for the bodily appetite, but the incarnate Jesus Himself, the bread to satisfy the hungry heart; and the true Giver was the Father of Jesus.

At communion, we remind ourselves, the bread we break, is the body of Christ and the wine we drink is the blood of Christ.

We will say in our minds, after all we work for our daily bread. But let me ask, If all of us will be honest to ourselves. Let's take pen and paper and jot down our spending over our income. Then we will prove Jesus right. We certainly spend more than we earn. So we see, JESUS FEEDS US. – Definitely from God. "This Jesus of Nazareth is God's Bread of eternal life. Life unending. Not only physically but also spiritually "Whoever comes to me will never hunger, and whoever believes in me will never thirst". Eternal life will render the needs of the body irrelevant; indeed, eternity means to feast on God Himself thru the word. In John Ch:1 verse 1, it states, in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. JESUS is the WORD, for He is the light of this world. It is a free gift of life. But to obtain the gift of that life, one need to be open to receive the gift of coming to Jesus, that is believing in Him, of preferring absolutely nothing to His life, His love, His truth, His goodness, His grace and His beauty. You accept this gift by believing that He is with you, when He says "Lo, I am with you to the end of the age. (Matt 28: 20b).

Just imagine the trials and temptations we go thru each day and we can say passing thru these weigh and have greater effect than material bread which we work for. So the major part of our being is spiritual which we don't see and cannot touch or hold.

The author of Psalm 62 seems to understand this when he says: "O God, you are my God, for you I long, for you my soul is thirsting. My body pines for you, like a dry, weary land without water. So I gaze on you in the Sanctuary to see your strength and your glory. For your love is better than life. The Psalmist realises GOD IS ALL IN ALL, for material bread alone can and will never satisfy our need

## **The Bread and the Word**

It is God's demands of His sons and daughters based on the truth of whom and why they were created. The Word of God teaches us the order of nature (a: respect God; b) respect parents; c) respect life; d) respect marriage and sexuality; e) respect others' property; f) respect others' reputation; g): have purity of intention in relation to others' possessions and relationships; h) avoid greed.

The word is all about God's truth about Himself, us, our relationship to Him and our relationship to each other.

From the mouth of Jesus, and in the hearing of the word, this meaning is not lost. Jesus feeds the mind and heart with the bread of His Truth and Love. Having Jesus could feed you more than you could ever have imagined. God Himself becomes our bread and our truth; both are together, unconfused and inseparable. The seed of eternal life lays within God, the Father, Jesus the Son and the Holy Spirit and once we receive the Triune God sincerely, not by our lips, life not only enters into and grows within us: we also enter and grow into life itself - Christ Jesus. Trials, challenges, (I SAY CHALLENGES NOT PROBLEMS). Sicknesses, bitterness, poverty, disappointments, setbacks, accidents etc. will come but Jesus takes us thru safely as confirmed by the hymnist, We have an anchor that keeps the soul, grounded firm and deep in the Saviour's love. The Love that will not let us go even when we are at the verge of breaking. He feeds our souls. He polishes us and puts shape in us even well.

We are on a life's journey, and we need bread for this journey. The joy of being God's sons and daughters is that, Jesus Christ who is our Living Bread has always made provision for us no matter who we are. The only thing for you, is to believe in Him and allow Him to open your eyes to see this bread which we need in Him.

Even before the day breaks today, Jesus has made provision for whatever will happen to us and we need total reliance and trust in Him. A cheque can always remain an ordinary paper if we do not take it to the bank for encashment. So it is that, if we do not allow GRACE to work in us and enjoy all the gifts, we will remain poor, sad, bitter, powerless, feeble, and neglected, although our Father thru His Son Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit has all the bread we need for this journey. .

By receiving the Word, each of us, with our heart truly open, is drawn magnet-like into oneness of faith and understanding about the mysteries of Christ and His Church. By receiving the Eucharist, and our heart truly open, each of us is drawn magnet-like into oneness of love and freedom, the love and freedom of Christ Himself, the glorious liberty of the children of God.

The Word feeds our minds so that the strength our hearts draw from the love given, can enable us to choose, to act and to persevere in living the truth of Christ -- not only the truth about Himself and the Trinity, but also His truth about the human person and the human family (which is definitely more difficult to live).

The Truth and Bread of Life He offers are not one alternative among others; they are *the* Truth and *the* Bread of *the* Life. Nothing can tamper even minimally with what belongs by right to God alone: and what belongs to God includes marriage, the family, human life, human death, and the human being made in the image of God who made male and female. And at the end of the day, all our lives belong to God and will answer to God for how we have respected God in respecting His rights, His laws, and His people. Therefore, if you love God and hate your neighbour, you are a liar so says the word of God.

That is why we must come to Christ, not looking for ideas that fit or satisfy our earthly agendas, perceptions or preconceptions or those of the "group or crowd to which we belong", whatever its name or nature, but to heed and believe, with open and sincere heart, in the signs of His Eucharist and of His Gospel, the signs of His Divine "I AM", His Presence, His Truth, His Love. Fortified with these, we will, and must, reach out in dialogue and discussion, with respect, understanding and compassion, to all men and women of good will. Indeed, we are called and sent out into this world to display God's love. As we are fed, we also must feed others by sharing the joy, love, peace, endurance, understanding and all the gifts we have been endowed with.

These are difficult times; the questions are difficult and complex; they require of us great love, courage and compunction; but they demand all the more of us an unapologetic clarity and conviction about the doctrine and principles of our faith.

**Ephesians 4:1-10 shows the way to help us enjoy fully the bread Jesus offers: Humility, Patience, Gentleness**

These apply to our words, actions and lifestyle –totally focused and harnessed. Being focused will allow our lives to have that ease, gentleness and effortless nature about all we do – unforced rhythms of grace – to be fed on the Living Bread. (Matt 11:28)

**Love**

One of the main themes brings Unity. God sees his church as one, as a united people – that's the church that comes down from heaven, and that's the blueprint from which we should build. Paul uses a covenantal term 'bond' to describe peace as a means of keeping the unity of the spirit. We are in covenant together and because of that we should dwell in unity. This is where God commands his blessing through His Son to all who believe.

The verse states though that we have to put some work and effort into this – ‘Make every effort’ is an active encouragement and call to us as God’s people to see the reality of heaven being outworked on earth. The unity of the Godhead displayed and showcased in the life and actions of the church and His people.

‘Make every effort’ – This could include being an active part of a cell group, building and living out unity through a small group of friends in the church. It could mean making the effort to cook someone a meal, making sure that there isn’t anyone in the church who you have any bitterness or resentment to – Make every effort to be focused.

We are saved by grace, live by grace and receive all that God has for us in the future by his wonderful grace at work in our lives. We receive his gifts and anointing by his grace in His Son who is the Living Bread.

As we partake of the fellowship in faith, it becomes for us a means of communion with the risen Christ and his risen life. It is a means of abiding in Christ and fed with the Bread of Life.

Jesus said: in John 6 vs. 35: I am the bread of life, he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. It is not a private affair, but a public matter.

DO YOU BELIEVE IN JESUS? DO YOU OBEY HIS WORD? DO YOU LOVE HIM?  
THEN ACCEPT HIS INVITATION & GIVE YOUR LIFE TO HIM: THEN SHOW IT TO  
ALL IN YOUR LIVING.

MAY YOU BE BLESSED TODAY; MAY YOU BE FED TODAY; MAY YOU BE  
HEALED TODAY AND MAY YOU BE FILLED TODAY WITH CHRIST’S  
ANNOINTING NOW AND FOEVER MORE – FOR HE IS THE ETERNAL, LIVING  
BREAD OF LIFE. GOD BLESS YOU; AMEN!