

John 6:24-35

²⁴ Once the crowd realized that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they got into the boats and went to Capernaum in search of Jesus. ²⁵ When they found him on the other side of the lake, they asked him, "Rabbi, when did you get here?" ²⁶ Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, you are looking for me, not because you saw miraculous signs but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. ²⁷ Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. On him God the Father has placed his seal of approval." ²⁸ Then they asked him, "What must we do to do the works God requires?" ²⁹ Jesus answered, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent." ³⁰ So they asked him, "What miraculous sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do?" ³¹ Our forefathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written: 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'" ³² Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, it is not Moses who has given 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 he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." ³⁴ "Sir," they said, "from now on give us this bread." ³⁵ Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty. – NIV84

Prayer of the Day:

O God, You reveal Your mighty power chiefly in showing mercy and kindness. Grant us the full measure of Your grace that we may obtain Your promises and become partakers of Your heavenly glory; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Verse of the Day:

Alleluia. Jesus replied, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him." Alleluia. (John 14:23)

Sermon:

YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT! I recall a time in my childhood when we thought that phrase was extra funny. Sitting around the Lunch table at school someone would announce it, You are what you eat and then we would look down and see what in moments the friend next to you would be telling you were. "You're a ham sandwich. You're a yogurt. You're a nutter-butter!" If you don't know that last one, it's a stack of layers of peanut butter and wafers cover in chocolate. Delicious if you had it in your lunch and hilarious if you could catch someone eating it during this particular game. Now of course those words well they have a slightly different ring to them, the one that was actually intended. Healthy food, healthy body, junk food in and well you get the point ... I'm still struggling with this one.

Today, as Jesus talks to the crowds who have found him after He left the scene of His miraculous feeding of the 5000 in effect He reminds us that We are what we eat ... both physically and spiritually. If our diet consists of the spoiled food offered to us by the devil, the world and our own sinful flesh, well such food makes for spoiled Christians as well ... and not the good kind of spoiled at that. However, if our focus remains on the Bread of Life well, then we are well fed even into eternity.

I really wish eating healthy was a simple task. Don't you wish that we were geared to crave a nice salad? "I can't wait to get home and eat some broccoli." "Man, I've really got a hankering for some Brussel sprouts." Now maybe I'm just not listening well enough, but I can't recall a single time I have ever heard someone say that. Don't get me wrong, I actually don't mind any of

those foods but when I get hit by a craving, it's not health food I want. Hook me up with a nice piece of cheesecake or a greasy burger with all the fixin's and frankly the more calories the better.

Unfortunately, our sinful nature is no different. You can hear it as Jesus speaks to the crowds who have found Him on the other side of the lake, "*I tell you the truth, you are looking for me, not because you saw miraculous signs but because you ate the loaves and had your fill.*" When the God of all creation stood before them and made Himself known through miracles, how did they react? With a strong desire to worship Him, praise Him, beg Him for the forgiveness that they so needed and which had been promised since the first sin in the garden of Eden? Or instead, did they want a free lunch? They had completely overlooked their greatest need thinking the creature comforts of 70-80 years on this earth was somehow of greater value than the gift of endless days spent with God in heaven.

Oh, but then are we ultimately any different? Week after week, our gracious God deigns to be with us exactly as He has promised. "*Wherever, two or three come together in my name, there am I with them* (Matthew 18:20)," He promised. "*Let us not give up meeting together as some are in the habit of doing* (Hebrews 10:25)," He warned. As He spoke of wealth and the needs of life He advises us, "*But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.* (Matthew 6:33)" But what do we chase after at the expense of all other things, even time spent with God? Like junk food instead of rice cakes, we flock to the creature comforts, some of it simply pulled from its proper place in life's order, others sinful from their very beginning because our cravings are out of control. Truth be told, little by little, the Spiritual junk food offered by the Devil and the World appeal to the sinful nature within each of us until we are the darkened brutes of our second lesson who give *themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more* (Ephesians 4:19).

Jesus doesn't indulge the sinful nature. He doesn't offer cheat days and low sugar substitutes for the evil that swirls around us. Instead, He offers the truth, *Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you.* What we so often do not chase after, Christ supplies.

Jesus declared, "*I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty.*" There it is! Christ sustains us here in this life and for the life to come. Jesus forgives our woefully improper diet that we might live in the hope of eternal life. Yes, for us and for our salvation Jesus knew hunger, deprived of food for 40 days in the desert Satan hurled spiritual junk food and the unsatisfying seduction of false worship at Him the entire time, Jesus didn't budge. For us and for our salvation, cooking in the hot desert sun dying on the cross Jesus knew thirst, even as Pharisees and Sadducees hurled insults at him, Jesus didn't return a single volley. And why, because we would, because we have, and so He gave Himself. *On him God the Father has placed his seal of approval.* Through faith in Him, you and I are saved.

So Jesus encourages us to put away the spoiled food of spoiled false religions and the rotten junk of a world slowly decaying into darkness and chase after, crave that which leads to life. He urges us to partake of the Spiritual food that actually gives sustenance and health. He urges us to found our faith on Him, to listen, to believe in Him, the One the Father has sent.

It's true you know, what you eat is important to your wellbeing. There are countless phrases which try to hammer the point home: You get out what you put in, food is simply fuel for the body, You are what you eat. May we not be a nutter-butter as we stand before the table the Lord has set for us. Instead by His grace, through the gift of faith which focuses us on the Bread of Life and the eternity He provides, may we bear the name proudly, Christians. Amen!