

John 6:22-35 – Bread from the King

We seek after the Lord the most when we want something, and that something is usually tied to our earthly life. The things of this life, all our necessities, all of our wants, they're always before our eyes. We're driven by them. We'll do just about anything for health, wealth, and happiness; and whenever any of these are missing, that's when we come to Christ. We want, no, we expect Him to give us these things. We want Jesus to be our very own Bread King.

That's what the people in the Gospel reading wanted. The day after Jesus miraculously fed the 5,000 with just five loaves of bread and two fish, the crowd searched for Him. They desperately wanted to find Him, so much so, that they got into boats and crossed the Sea of Galilee.

Now, I'm sure you and I would've done the same. If we saw someone perform a miracle like that, you bet we'd follow after them. We'd drive thousands of miles, we'd sail across the oceans, we'd get on an airplane and fly halfway around the world and then hike to the remotest place on earth if that's where a miracle man was. We love to see the extraordinary. If we witnessed that miraculous meal, you bet every one of us would be on one of those boats. But not because we saw a miracle.

When the people found Jesus the first thing He said to them was, **“Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves.”** The people didn't come to see Jesus because they saw the miracle. They didn't seek Him out because they believed He was God's Son, the promised Redeemer. They crossed the Sea of Galilee because they wanted breakfast. They were hungry. They wanted Jesus to feed them, to fill their bellies, to satisfy their desire.

Too often this is why we seek out Christ. We want Him to give us a full belly. We want Him to satisfy our desires, and boy do we have a lot of desires. We want a comfortable life. We want to enjoy life on earth. Much of what we do is for this very purpose. We labor for health, wealth, and happiness. All the work we put in at the office, all the time we spend exercising and eating right, all of the money we spend pursuing hobbies and leisure and vacations is because we want an easy life. We want to enjoy our time on earth. We don't want to struggle or suffer in any way.

When we have our desires, when we're healthy, when we have enough in the account for our needs and a little bit more, when we feel a sense of happiness and contentment, then everything is okay. It's at these times when we lean less on our Lord. But how long does it last? Not very! Inevitably something happens, and that feeling of happiness and contentment is lost. It's at these times when we turn to Christ, and yet we turn to Him only wanting Him to fix the current situation. Our desire is for happiness in the here and now. But this isn't why Christ came. This wasn't why He fed the 5,000. Jesus isn't a Bread King, supplying us with all our wants and an easy life. Jesus is the Bread of the King, the Bread that gives everlasting life.

Earthly bread doesn't lead to everlasting life. Having the things we desire: health, wealth, and happiness, they don't lead to everlasting life. They're nice, but they only go so far; they always fail in the end. Jesus told the crowd, **“Do not labor for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you.”** Jesus came to give the things that lead to everlasting life. Hearing this the people stubbornly asked for a sign to prove Jesus' words, even though they already witnessed the miraculous feeding of the 5,000 the day before. They stubbornly asked for a sign similar to the one their fathers received in the wilderness: manna, bread from heaven. The people were still thinking with their bellies! They wanted bread from heaven, but the bread they wanted still didn't give life. Their fathers who ate it still died. But the True Bread of heaven, those who eat that, they'll never die.

Jesus is that True Bread from heaven. He said, **“my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world ... I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.”** Christ Himself is the Bread. He's what's necessary for everlasting life. He's the one who overcame death with His death on the cross. He defeated it when He rose on Easter morning, and this resurrected everlasting life He gives to those who believe in Him. This is what Jesus meant when He said they'll never hunger or thirst. Christ isn't promising you that your bellies will always be filled. He isn't promising you that you'll have all your desires, that you'll have a comfortable and enjoyable life. What He's promising you is that you'll have everything you need for everlasting life. You'll have His everlasting life.

This life He gives in the waters of Baptism. In those waters, God joins you to Christ so that you will have His everlasting life. Christ gives you His life in His Supper. The bread of Holy Communion is Christ Himself, His very flesh, His flesh sacrificed on the cross, given for the forgiveness of your sins. Receiving Christ's Body literally into your mouth, you

commune with your Savior, and you receive all that is His. It's these things we should labor for. It's Christ that we should seek at all times, not to be a Bread King, but as the Bread that gives everlasting life.

The people who ate their fill of Jesus' miraculous meal sought after Him the next day because they were still hungry. They sought the food that perishes. But Christ calls us to seek after the food that doesn't perish, He calls us to seek the things that lead to everlasting life, He calls us to seek after Him. Health, wealth, and happiness come and go, but Christ is forever. He alone is the True Bread that leads to everlasting life. So come and eat. Come to this altar and receive that Bread. Partake of this meal of your Savior's flesh and blood so that you might have His everlasting life.