

Seventh Sunday After Pentecost – 2022

Genesis 18:17-33

Colossians 2:6-19

Luke 11:1-13

Does your Father know how to give you good gifts? One of our common table prayers comes from Psalm 145. “The eyes of all look to you, O Lord, and you give them their food in due season. You open your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing” (Psalm 145:15-16). How many of y’all like to eat? The dog and I have a morning routine. He knows it as well as I do. Down the stairs we go, me shuffling to the coffee pot and he takes up his position on the family room rug, watching me. Get the coffee started, pour my juice, take my pills, and then I head to a small counter that has all the dog stuff on it – treats and a Kong dog toy (a hollow rubber sphere) and a jar of peanut butter. As soon as I get close to that counter, he starts licking his chops.

What do you like to eat? What holiday takes your culinary elevator to the top floor? We just celebrated the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. Is it Bar-B-Que that gets you salivating? Burgers and beans and watermelon and ribs and pasta salad and corn on the cob? Does Thanksgiving rate at the top for you? Turkey and sweet potatoes and corn muffins and stuffing and pumpkin pie? Are you a brunch aficionado? An omelet with hollandaise sauce and Canadian bacon and home fries with coffee cake and mimosa? What are we going to eat in heaven? How many of you are licking your chops for what we are going to eat in heaven?

Jesus taught His disciples to pray. The Lord Christ has taught His disciples of every age to pray. The Lord’s Prayer is one of the most Christian things that there is. The Our Father is prayed at the bedsides of those who are dying, on ships that are sinking, aboard planes that are falling out of the sky. In distress, our minds flee to Our Father. We know that He gives good things. Give us this day our daily bread. The woman looked at the fruit on the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Did Eve think that that was her daily bread? It was a demonic petition. Eat of it and you will be like God. Was her Creator in her mind when she reached out her hand?

Adam likely didn’t have anything close to Psalm 145 in his mind as he sank his teeth into the fruit. “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return” (Genesis 3:17-19). The bread of this world comes with a price. Jesus taught us to pray for daily bread. And He also taught us that man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

The demonic petition came to Christ: “If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread” (Luke 4:3). Jesus had fasted 40 days. He was in solidarity with man and man’s need. His body ached for bread. His stomach screamed for what it was made to receive. He is the second, greater Adam. He had come to undo Adam’s rebellion. Jesus is the Word made flesh (John 1:14). He does not return to the Father empty, but accomplishes the purpose for which He

was sent (Isaiah 55:11). Jesus came to feed us with a new bread, the bread of life, the bread of His life. “His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground” (Luke 22:44), as He prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane: “Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done” (Luke 22:42). The Word made flesh was radically faithful to His Father. He is the One who taught you to pray for bread.

The bread of this world doesn't come to your table without a lot of sweat. Farming is only the beginning. We are the beneficiaries of an extraordinary economy. America hums because of the astounding work ethic of people who labor to bring food to the table. Thank God for this fruitful land. This is not our home. Heaven is our home. We are pilgrims, making our way. A place at God's heavenly wedding banquet is set for you.

The early church spent a lot of time thinking about the bread we pray for in the Our Father. There's a particular word that wasn't easily translated. We translate it as “daily” but the early church thought of it somewhat differently. Here's a sample: Give us this day the bread of the future age, give us already now the bread of heaven, the bread which Thou wilt give us in Thy kingdom, give us today – a foretaste of the feast to come. That's quite a bit different, don't you think? Do you long for heaven, for the food which has been prepared for you and awaits your arrival? Jesus said: “This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh” (John 6:50-51).

The bread on our altar doesn't come to your mouth without a phenomenal sacrifice. From Adam to us, from Eve to the person next to you – sin calls for a harsh payment. Sodom and Gomorrah is just the beginning. In the book of Romans, St. Paul strings together one OT verse after another to paint a picture of man's depravity. “There is no one righteous; no, not even one. No one understands; no one seeks God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one. Their throat is an open grave; they use their tongues to deceive. The venom of asps is under their lips. Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood; in their paths are ruin and misery, and the way of peace they have not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes” (Romans 3:10-18). Humanity is not well. But your Father knows how to give you good gifts.

Christ is your gift. He taught you to pray. He taught you to call upon God as your Father for that is exactly what He is. Jesus hallowed the Father's name by dying on a lonesome cross. God's Son was the only vessel in whom resided the payment required. Pure love, absolute righteousness, in Him the fullness of the deity dwelled bodily (Colossians 2:9). He drained the cup of the Father's wrath against sin. He suffered – once for all – the righteous for the unrighteous (1 Peter 3:18). In that death, the Kingdom of Heaven came breaking into this world. God's will is to save sinners, to share with them His life. That happens here. The Father opens up His hand and satisfies the desire of every living thing. We eat the bread of Christ's body and we drink the blood of Christ's sacrifice and His Kingdom comes among us. “For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world” (John 6:33). “Whoever feeds on this bread will live forever” (John 6:58).

Come and eat. Receive all that the King has for you. Forgiveness and salvation and life and union with the crucified and risen Lord of creation. Heaven is in this meal. The banquet of life which awaits you in the land of eternal day – all of this is in your daily bread, the body of Christ the King.