

ESF Lord's day service message
8/1/2018

Food for Complete Satisfaction

John 6:25-35

²⁵When they found him on the other side of the lake, they asked him, "Rabbi, when did you get here?" ²⁶Jesus 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. ²⁷Do 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."

²⁸Then they asked him, "What must we do to do the works God requires?"

²⁹Jesus answered, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent."

³⁰So they asked him, "What miraculous sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do?" ³¹Our forefathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written: 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'"

³²Jesus 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. ³³For 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."

³⁵Then 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."

The story is told of two old friends who bumped into one another on the street one day. One of them looked very sad, almost on the verge of tears. His friend asked, "What has the world done to you, my old friend?"

The sad fellow said, "Let me tell you. Three weeks ago, an uncle died and left me forty thousand dollars."

"That's a lot of money."

"But, two weeks ago, a cousin I never even knew died, and left me eighty-five thousand free and clear."

"Sounds like you've been blessed...."

"You don't understand!" he interrupted. "Last week my great-aunt passed away. I inherited almost a quarter of a million."

Now he was really confused. "Then, why do you look so

glum?"

"This week... nothing!"

Like this man, many people today are unsatisfied with their lives while they keep looking for something more which can't satisfy them. In today's text, Jesus shows us how we can live our lives with complete satisfaction.

Seek spiritual food first

Just before the event of this text, Jesus performed a miracle of turning five loaves of bread and two fish into abundant food enough to feed five thousand people. After that incident, many of them started following Jesus. When Jesus quietly left the place of the miracle and went to another place, they looked for Jesus but couldn't find him at first. But, they kept looking for him and finally they did find him. When they found him, they asked him, "Rabbi, when did you get here?"

Apparently, they seemed to have looked for Jesus to follow Him. But, the real reason they were looking for Jesus was to gain more bread. They thought that if they followed Jesus they would get material blessings. But Jesus said to them, "*you are looking for me, not because you saw miraculous signs but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life.*"

Here Jesus says that there are two kinds of food- food that spoils and food that lasts. The food that spoils means material and physical things. Food that lasts means spiritual food given by Jesus. Jesus gives spiritual food that satisfies man's soul. Spiritual food includes worshiping God, having fellowship with God, and God's forgiveness, comfort, encouragement, love, joy, strength, provision, hope and peace.

With this word, Jesus does not mean that they should not have a desire for material things at all, or they should not seek material things at all. If He meant this, He would not have performed the miracle of giving them bread just before he said this. Jesus encouraged them to follow Him and seek spiritual food first so that they could satisfy their souls. Why?

Because, man needs not only physical satisfaction but satisfaction for the soul. Material things satisfy only their physical needs. Also, material things that

satisfies physical needs do not last long. Desires for material or physical things will never be fulfilling. There will be no end to satisfying man's desire for material things. Seldom would we hear a wealthy person say, "I have enough possessions, so I don't need anything more." When you get something you desire, you want to keep getting more of it. Or when you get what you want, the satisfaction you get by it will disappear sooner or later. And you will want to get something else. This cycle will go endlessly. Therefore, if you seek only something material and physical to satisfy your desires, you will constantly struggle with hunger and thirst.

On the contrary when you seek spiritual food that satisfies your soul, you will find it and your soul will be satisfied. When your soul is satisfied, you do not need to satisfy yourself by material or physical things. Satisfaction by getting material or physical things will become secondary. When your soul is satisfied, you can be content in all circumstances, even if you don't have much material things, and cannot get what you want or need physically.

Paul testifies to this truth: *I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength.* (Philippians 4:11-13).

There was a woman who was seeking happiness and satisfaction by finding the right husband. To find the right man, she divorced 5 different men and married six times. But she was unable to find a man who satisfied her heart. Her heart was still thirsty. Then Jesus came to her and led her to the right source of satisfaction. Jesus helped her find spiritual food that could satisfy her soul. Her spiritual food was God's unconditional forgiveness and acceptance, and she worshipped God. When she found God through Jesus her endless thirst was gone. Her heart was filled with complete satisfaction and joy.

You will never find satisfaction if you look for Jesus to gain something material or physical. To find satisfaction, seek spiritual food first. And your soul will be satisfied. You will be set free from the endless cycle of hunger and thirst for something you can never get.

Believe the one God has sent

When Jesus told the people to work for food that endures to eternal life, they asked "What must we do to do the works God requires?" They are asking, "What shall I do to find God? How can I be right with God? What works should I do to please God? What shall I do to be blessed by God?" These are very important questions.

Throughout human history people have been asking the same questions. If you examine all religions, you will find that these questions are at the core of all religions. People are trying to know what they must do to please, to be approved, to be blessed by their gods. They keep working hard to find gods, be approved and blessed by their gods but they never can be sure whether their work is right enough or hard enough.

But Jesus gave them an unexpected answer, "*The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.*" Jesus says that the way to be right with God is to believe. It is the one truth repeated again and again in the scriptures, that the work of God is not in man's effort nor in doing something good but in believing.

Ephesians 2:8-9 says, "*For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.*"

Hebrews 11:6 says, "*And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.*"

Then the next question is "What is faith? What is it to believe?" Jesus said that faith is to believe in the one God has sent. To whom was He referring to by "the one God has sent?"

He was referring to Himself. Galatians 2:16 says, "*a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified.*"

Why? Why is Jesus the one God has sent and the object of faith? There have been many prophets and servants of God who have helped men to believe in God. But Jesus is different from all prophets and servants.

In the history of God's people, Israel, Moses was the greatest prophet. Through him God delivered the nation of Israel from slavery by the most powerful nation Egypt. Through him, God divided the Red Sea so that the people could cross. Through him God sent Manna, the daily bread for the entire nation of Israel for 40 years. So, the crowd was trying to compare Jesus with Moses and saying, "Are you greater than Moses?"

Jesus' answer was "Yes."

Of course, Moses was a great servant of God, but Jesus is the son over God's house (Hebrews 3:1-6). The bread which fell in the days of Moses could only feed and satisfy men's physical hunger and thirst. The Son had come to feed the soul. The manna fell every day except the Sabbath for forty years. Then it stopped. The true bread from heaven, which is Christ, lasts forever. The bread which fell in the days of Moses was only for the one nation Israel. The Son has come to offer eternal life to all men of all nations.

Moses was a great man of God. But he was only a channel of God's blessings. It's great to be an instrument for God's blessings. It's great to be a tool in God's hands. But man can't be the source of blessings. Any man, including Moses, can't be the same as God. Even the greatest man on earth can only be the servant of God and can only be used by God.

But Jesus is different from all great servants of God. He is the one who participated in creation with God. John chapter 1, verses 1-3...*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.* Everything that exists today can be traced back to either the earth or to mankind, both of which God created.

Jesus is the only person who died, was buried in a tomb for three days and rose again from the dead. By His death, He paid all penalties for our sins and removed our condemnation. By His resurrection, He has destroyed death and given us hope of eternal life. He has made us alive--born again!--not in a fleshly sense, but by the Spirit of God. He has washed us in our baptism, giving us life

anew, and removing every spot of death. As Paul says in Romans: “*As many of us as were baptized into Christ were baptized into His death; therefore, we were buried with Him through Baptism into death, so that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also might walk about in newness of life*” (Romans 6:3-4).

He has raised us--even now!--from spiritual death, and has freed us from eternal condemnation. He has made us alive...alive to bring glory to His name through our words and actions.

He is the author and perfecter of our faith (Hebrews 12:2).

Because of all of these facts, Jesus claims, “*I am the bread of life.*” Because He is the bread of life, we must eat Him. Of course, it does not mean that we have to eat His physical body. First of all, it means that we must accept Him as the Son of God. It means that we must accept Him as the Redeemer. It means that we must depend upon Him as the provider, protector, and sustainer of our lives. It means that we must listen to His words and follow His words. It means that we live for Him in whatever we do.

Some years ago, a ship which was returning from an overseas voyage was entering the St. Lawrence River (It is part of the international boundary between Ontario, Canada, and the U.S. state of New York.) A heavy fog enveloped the ship on all sides, completely concealing the shore and all objects from the view of the passengers. Much to their amazement, the ship continued at full speed. They became frightened considering such speed extremely reckless on the part of the captain.

Finally, one of the passengers expressed concerns to the mate, demanding that the ship slow down. The mate listened, then replied with a smile: “O don’t be afraid, the passengers need not be uneasy in the least. The fog extends up only a short way above the water, and the captain is at the masthead, and it is above the fog and it is he who is directing the vessel.”

In the same way, we may be facing foggy situations. We may be confused without knowing what to do. What is happening in our lives seems to be out of

control. But Jesus encourages us to believe and trust in Him as the captain of our lives. He directs us above all the foggy situations of life. He will meet all our needs and satisfy us completely.

Instead of trying to work harder to receive God's blessing, believe that Jesus is the one who God sent. Believe that you can be blessed by God through what Jesus has done for you.