

“THE BREAD OF LIFE FOR THE WOLRD TO EAT!”

(Text: John 6:22-35)

St. John Lutheran Church, Massillon, Ohio, August 1, 2021 – Pentecost 10

I want to name a few books for you. These are actual titles. One is titled “Jesus, CEO: Using Ancient Wisdom for Visionary Leadership.” Another, “Jesus, Life Coach: Learn from the Best.” And lastly, “Jesus the Master Coach.” A lot of people look at Jesus as a life coach. He’s a life coach with a lot of self-help tools to get you through life or to better yourself and business.

A person once suggested on Fox, to give Jesus a 60-day free trial. He asked to dare God to change your life. And if you’re not satisfied, you can get your money back. Now in all fairness, he was being a little tongue and cheek, but it seems to give the notion that if you make a decision for Jesus, then your life will be better off. It won’t be perfect, but it sure will be better then what it was before. It comes across as Jesus being primarily an example for the Christian, and that if you just do what he did, you will be a better person and live a better life.

Jesus says in our gospel lesson for today that the people were looking for him for all the wrong reasons. When they finally found him, they basically were asking, “What else you got for us Jesus?” Still, Jesus didn’t give into their wants. He wanted them to partake of food that doesn’t perish. He wants to give them what they need. Which would be himself - THE BREAD OF LIFE FOR THE WORLD TO EAT!

John lets us know, that after the day of the feeding of the five thousand, the crowd realized Jesus was nowhere to be found, and that they thought he may have gone to Capernaum. But in the end, the crowd ends up finding him and asked him, “**Rabbi, when did you come here?**” They basically asked him, “*when did you arrive here Jesus?*” But Jesus, ignoring their question, replied,

“Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves.” Jesus says that they’re only seeking him with the attitude of “what’s in it for me.” They’re basically using Jesus as a means to an end. That end is their own desires and wants. He says that they should be seeking him; for he is God in flesh and that his miracle feeding points to his identity. He is the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, and his feeding of the five thousand points to the feeding that he gives for eternal life.

As mentioned earlier, a lot of people seek Jesus for all the wrong reasons. He is sought after because he can coach someone to success and guidance. He is sought after for the “what’s in it for me” mentality. And if Jesus seems like a good choice for a person, they will accept him. They will make a decision for Jesus.

What are you here seeking? Are you seeking Jesus the “CEO?” Are you seeking Jesus the “Life Coach,” “Jesus the Master Coach?” Maybe you’re seeking him as a means to better your life, and if it doesn’t work out, you go somewhere else. Are you seeking him as a means to a particular goal? Are you seeking him to find out how to model ways to get more people in the pews? Are you here seeking him for his sake, or because it’s something that you just do on Sundays and it makes you feel good for the coming week?

We all can admit, including myself, that we can fall into temptation and seek Jesus for all the wrong reasons. But Jesus says next in our gospel lesson, **“Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal.”** Jesus lets them know that they’re to receive food that endures to eternal life. Jesus explains to them that the food they received in the feeding of the five thousand, does not endure to eternal life. It can only prolong the inevitable decaying and death

of their bodies. Only the sealed and approved Son of Man can give them the food that preserves their lives for all eternity.

Jesus isn't saying for them to work for the food that he gives, with the understanding that they're the ones doing the work and have earned it. Rather, he's telling them to openly receive what he gives. That's all they can do. They can't do any work to earn this food from the Son of Man. They can only receive it. This receiving of the free gift of God is the "work" Jesus is talking about when he says to the crowd after they asked him about what the works of God are. He said to them, **"This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent."**

For John, believing receives. John writes in his prologue, **"But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God."** He calls the crowd to believe by receiving the food that he gives. And this is why the crowd tells Jesus to give them a sign so that they would believe, receive, him as the one who gives bread that endures to eternal life. Up to this point, the crowd believes that God, not this Jesus, is the one to believe in, to receive life eternal; for they mentioned to Jesus that God, through his servant Moses, fed them manna in the wilderness. This sign from God, through Moses, caused them to believe in him.

But Jesus corrects their misunderstanding about the feeding from God in the wilderness by saying, **"Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but 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."** Jesus instructs the crowd that God the Father is the one that gives his Son, the "true bread from heaven," to them and the whole world.

Now, you would think that they would believe, receive Jesus for eternal life. Nope. They say, **"Sir, give us this bread always."** They should have responded by saying, *"Lord, I believe."*

Lord, I receive you, the bread of God from heaven that has come and is in front of me.” The crowd’s response to Jesus is a stark reminder on how the sinful nature is truly dead in trespasses and sins.

But even though they are still without understanding, Jesus speaks to them more plainly, just to make sure they do not miss it. He says, “**I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.**” All of us, come and seek Jesus, the bread of life! Seek Jesus not as a life coach to better your life. He’s not your life coach, he is life itself! For didn’t he say, “**I am the way, the truth, and the life.**” Seek him and believe, receive, him as the one who died for you, in order that you may have life in his name.

Seek him not as an end to a means, but as the end itself! He didn’t die on a gruesome cross in order to give you your own desires and wants. He died as the means to forgive you all your sinful desires and wants. And in doing so, he then gives you his desires and wants for this life. Your desires are now from him. The desire to hear his Word and gladly receive it.

Seek him more than just someone to model in order to further your own ideas. Come to him and receive the perfect life that he lived in your place. Receive his righteousness and not your own. One can only walk the life of Christ after they have been fed and given food and drink from the Son of Man.

Seek him, and receive him as you hear his Word, the Word that became flesh and walked among us. Not the word given by Moses in the wilderness, but the Word that became flesh, Jesus Christ. This Word bore in his body the sins of the world. And on the cross, he was put to death and also all sin. This act by the Son of Man is what gives us life. We hear of this in the words of scripture, and we believe, receive, it, and have life.

Receive the Son of Man whose fleshly body was broken upon the cross for you. Seek him and receive in your mouth his flesh under the bread. This is the true bread from heaven, given to you by your heavenly Father. You will never hunger again. It's enough for body and soul in this life and the one to come.

And receive the Son of Man whose blood was shed for you to drink, for the forgiveness of your sins. You will never thirst for righteousness again; for you've received his righteousness that pleases your heavenly Father for ever and ever.

And when you've received and partaken of him, the bread of life for the world, you're strengthened and preserved in him to life everlasting. You're abled now to serve the Lord with joy and gladness, giving Christ to your neighbor for them to eat as well.

Pastor Jon Carpenter