

Gross

Sunday, Pentecost 11, Year B

1Kings 19:1-8; Ephesians 4:17-5:2; John 6:35-51

August 8, 2021

Grace, mercy and peace to you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Jesus is gross. To some, that may be blasphemy. But, I stand behind it. Jesus is gross.

One of my biggest problems with American Christianity, in particular, is that we have really tamed Jesus down. He is my friend, my buddy, my co-pilot.

We do not see Him as the final judge of all mankind. We do not see Him as the Creator of all things. We do not see Him as the One who cast Adam and Eve out of the garden, who destroyed the walls of Jericho, who brought plagues on Egypt, and wiped out Sodom and Gomorrah.

He is not tame. Not only is He not tame, He is gross.

He is gross because He left the glory of heaven and became a disgusting being like you and me. Blood, sweat and tears, He experienced it all. He touched lepers, had meals with prostitutes, conversed with corrupt government agents, spent time with fishermen, slept in a fishing boat, spat in the dirt and rubbed it in a man's eyes, washed His disciples' feet... I mean gross.

The Jew, the Muslim, and most people cannot imagine God Himself as being a gross human being. Why would the sovereign creator, ruler, and sustainer of all that exists lower Himself to become a creature? Why would a king slop pigs? Why would a President serve lepers?

Why would the King of Kings and Lord of Lords allow Himself to be born in a barn, to sleep in a manger, in a small town that was only known for stinky shepherds?

Then, why would that same God Man allow Himself to be humiliated, beaten, spat on, whipped, slapped, and crucified while His armies of angels waited for the command to swoop in and save the day.

Imagine their love and devotion being put to such a test; obeying His command to stand down, when His own life was being extinguished.

That was your God. Your Creator. Your Sustainer. Your Redeemer. Dead. Willingly. Selflessly. Dead.

And, then to top it all off, today Jesus tells the Pharisees and those around Him that He is the bread of life. Hehehe, but, that's not even the gross part. He says this, *"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"* (Jn. 6:51).

Jesus, the living bread, the bread of life, born in Bethlehem, literally, the "House of Bread" tries to explain to the Jews this morning that they had it all wrong.

Jesus, last week, told them they were only looking for Him so they could get another hand out to fill their bellies.

Even, their ancestors had received bread from God that sustained the body. But, all who ate of that bread eventually died. They would, too.

Yet, how often are we most concerned with the things of this life, just like they were? Eventually, no matter how much we have, no matter how much bread we have, no matter how much we have stored away, it will not be enough to keep this life going.

Eventually, none of it will help. Your time will be up. We will all gather to sing hymns of comfort, hear a sermon of God's love and provision, and make that long and weary trek to the cemetery.

Not a fun thought, but a true one.

So, we need something that will sustain us, not just in this life, but in the next.

So, out of heaven, comes the bread of life. Out of the "house of bread," Bethlehem, comes the only bread that will truly sustain us.

Those who know Him, come to Him. God the Father, feeds them, from the fount of faith, and they come to Him, and He gives them that bread that sustains.

Yes, we get a taste of that bread as we eat His flesh and drink His blood, as He bids us do in His own testament. Yeah, Jesus is gross.

Yet, even today, we Christians are blessed by His grossness. We are fed by God, fed by the true bread which has come from heaven, the Son of God who has come into this world to be its light and its life. Fed by His eternal true word. Fed by His Holy Spirit in the waters of baptism. Fed by His own flesh and blood for the forgiveness of sins in the Lord's Supper. Fed by His love, help, and encouragement by the people sitting around us in this place.

Our reading this week, our reading last week, and our reading next week are all about Jesus being gross.

Jesus, leaving the glory of heaven, the songs of the angels, the beauty of His eternal glory, and coming to live in the stench of our sinfulness, the haughtiness of our hate, the putridness of our pride...

Gross.

But, Jesus isn't bothered by the grossness when it comes to His people. He will lower Himself to the depths of filth, be humiliated in front of the whole world, be mocked and made fun of by the masses, and will even give His own flesh and blood to sustain you... because you are His and, to Him, you are worth it. He is gross, because you are gross, and He will be covered by that grossness, in order, to save your life. Not, just your life here on this earth, but life eternal.

Jesus, as the bread of life...It's all about God, all about Jesus, all about the Christ... for you.

Now may the peace that passes all understanding, guard your hearts and your minds in Christ

Jesus.

Amen.



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