

Tenth Sunday After Pentecost

John 6: 22-35

August 2, 2015

My Fellow Redeemed In Christ,

"Food, Glorious Food" This Is The Opening Song From The 1968 Film, **"Oliver"**. It Is Sung When The Workhouse Boys Are Dreaming And Fantasize About Food While Going To Collect Their Gruel From The Staff Of The Workhouse. **"Food, Glorious Food"**. We Tend To Take Food For Granted.....Until We Don't Have It. We Eat Food For Two Main Reasons.....One, It Tastes Good! We Usually Like The Taste Of What We Eat. But Of Course There Is Another Reason, A More Basic Reason To Eat.....We Eat To Keep Strong And To Stay Alive. If We Don't Eat...We Will Eventually We Die.....So We Eat! But Regardless Of How Many Meals We Will Eat The Day Will Come When.....We Will Die. This Is What Our Gospel Lesson Is All About This Morning As Jesus Tells Us The Good News That There Is A Food That Gives Eternal Life. Can You Imagine Someone Marketing Such A Food? No Doubt He Would Become A Billionaire. But This Food Is Already Available! And What Is So Shocking Is That Most People Aren't Interested! And Perhaps Sometimes We Aren't As Interested As We Should Be. Jesus Is **"The Food That Gives Eternal Life"**.

I. He Gives Eternal Life Because He Has Been Sent From The Eternal God Who Alone Can Give Eternal Life.

A. Just One Day Before Our Text Jesus Had Fed Over Five Thousand People With A Few Fish And A Few Loaves Of Bread....Truly A Miracle. But, Despite That Miraculous Meal..... All Of Those People Died. This Is Why Jesus Told Them That He Was More Important Than The Miraculous Meal That He Had Provided For Them. Now, When He People Heard This They Seemed To Become Not Only Confused But A Bit Offended. Who Did This Jesus Think He Was? That's Why They Brought Up Their Famous Forefather, Moses, Who Had Provided The Miraculous **"Manna"** That Fed The People Of Israel In The Wilderness After Leaving Egypt. But Just Like The Fish And Bread.....That **"Manna"** Had One Major Short Coming: It Couldn't Prevent People From Dying....All Those People Died Too. But Jesus Claimed To Be Far Superior To Any Other Food Because He Gives Eternal Life As He Says, **"For The Bread Of God Is He Who Comes Down From Heaven And Gives Life To The World....I Am The Bread Of Life"** (Vv. 33 35, **EsV**). Can You Imagine Anyone But Jesus Saying That? On That First Christmas, He Was Sent By God To Overcome The Cause Of Death: Sin... Living For Self,,,,, Rebellion Against God. It's Very Simple: God Is The Only Source Of Life. To Be Cut Off From God Is To Be Doomed To Death. Jesus Entered Our World To Restore Our Relationship With God, The Only Source Of Life, By Taking Care Of The Cause Of Death: Sin....On That Cross He Took Our Place And Was Punished By God For Every

Single One Of Our Sins. ..And When We Believe This.... Our Relationship With God Is Restored: And We Have Life. This Is Why Jesus Calls Himself **"The Bread Of Life"**.

B. Now...To Have Food For Our Bodies We Have To Work. We Work. We Get Paid. We Buy Food. We Eat And Enjoy. And So It Is With Eternal Life. To Have Eternal Life... It Took A Lot Of Work....But Not By Us. We Can't Do Anything About Death. But Jesus Can And Did. This Is The Good News Of The Gospel. He Did All The Hard Work: The Suffering, The Bleeding, The Being Forsaken By God And The Dying.... We Do Nothing. He Gives Life...We Receive Life. It's Like Giving A Dinner For Someone. You Invite Them And They Ask **"Would You Like Us Bring Anything Over Or Do Anything?"** And You Say **"No....Just Come And Enjoy"**. So You Spend All Afternoon Preparing The House And Preparing A Beautiful And Delicious Meal For Your Guests. All Is Prepared Right Down To The Smallest Detail. It Was Hard Work But It Was Also A Joy Because You Did It Out Of Love For Your Guests. Finally, They Arrive And Enjoy What You Have Prepared....And So It Is With Jesus.....We Stay Out Of His Kitchen....He Has Done It All. He Has Prepared Everything For Us In His Suffering And Death...It Was Hard Work...But He Did It In Love For Us. So He Has Prepared The Feast Of Eternal Life: Forgiveness, Peace With God And Victory Over Death. And This Meal Of Eternal Life Is Served To Us On Three Plates: His Word, Our Baptism, And His Supper Of His Own Body And Blood To Eat And To Drink. You Came Here This Morning....And All Was Prepared. This Morning You Enjoy This Meal By Eating The Bread Of Life, Trusting In What Jesus Had Done For You.... ..And Even Your Faith Is Given By God As Jesus Says, **"This Is The Work Of God, That You Believe Him Whom He [God] Has Sent" (V. 29, Esv)** As Jesus Says Just A Few Verses Later, **"...No One Can Come To Me Unless It Is Granted Him By The Father" (V. 65, Esv).**

ii. And Yet The Finest Food Is Often Rejected. Caviar, A Certain Kind Of Fish Eggs, Is Considered To Be A Delicacy.....But I Think I Will Pass. I'm Not Interested... On The Other Hand, I Like Raw Oysters On The Half Shell.....But I Know That Many Do Not! And So It Is With Jesus. He Doesn't Suit Everyone's Taste...

A. Sometimes People Want More Proof Before They Will Believe In Jesus. The Jews In Our Text Wouldn't Believe In Him Unless He Did Some Kind Of Miracle. Good Grief....The Day Before They Saw Him Feed Over Five Thousand People With Just A Few Loaves Of Bread And Some Fish. But Jesus Knew Their Hearts... And That They Were Interested In Him For The Wrong Reason As He Told Them: **"...You Were Seeking Me, Not Because You Saw Signs, But Because You Ate Your Fill Of The Loaves" (V. 26, Esv).** They Didn't Really Care About Jesus.....They Only Cared About The Earthly, Materials Things He Could Give Them. They Were More Concerned About The Gifts Than The Giver Of The

Gifts. And This Is Still True Today As Some Believe In Jesus In What Has Been Called **"The Health, Wealth, And Prosperity Gospel."** They Believe In Jesus Only Because Of What They Can Get In This World.... Other People Won't Believe In Jesus Unless They Have Certain Feelings Or A Dramatic Emotional Experience. And Some Won't Believe Unless They Can Understand Everything With Their Human Reason.....It Has To Make Sense To Them. And So Today Many People Simply Won't Believe That Jesus Gives God's Forgiveness And Eternal Life Through Words, Water, Bread And Wine...These Are Too Common And Simple...Nothing Special Or Miraculous About Them. People Are Always Looking For Something Beyond And Better Than Jesus.

B. The Basic Problem Is That People Prefer To Work For Perishable Food Rather Than Receive The Gift Of Bread That Gives Eternal Life. Capitalism And Free Enterprise Is A Wonderful System For Making A Good Life And Fulfilling The American Dream. It's Called **"Materialism"...** You Know: **"You Only Go Around Once In Life...So You Have To Grab All The Gusto That You Can"** As A T-Shirt Says: **"He Who Dies With The Most Toys Wins!"** Ah, But There's Another T-Shirt That Says, **"He Who Dies With The Most Toys.....Still Dies."** Death. People Don't Like To Think About Their Death. But Only By Thinking About Our Death Can We Live Our Lives With Proper Priorities And Trust In Jesus. We Americans Put So Much Time And Energy Into Trying To Have A Good Life In This World That We Can Easily Neglect The Eternal Life That Jesus Christ Gives. This Is True Because We Can See With Our Eyes All Of The Things Of This World That Make Life More Comfortable And Enjoyable....And Worthy Of Working For. But We Can't See With Our Eyes Jesus And The Spiritual Gifts Of Forgiveness, Peace With God And Eternal Life....We Have Those Things By Faith. So Jesus Reminds Us, **"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" (V. 27, Esv).** We Constantly Need This Reminder.

Conclusion: **"Food, Glorious Food"**. Perhaps Most Of You Had Breakfast Before Coming Here Today. No Doubt Most Of You Will Have Lunch And Dinner As Well. You Do This Because You Enjoy The Taste Of The Food...And Because That Food Keeps You Strong And Alive.....For A While...But Regardless Of How Many Meals You Have In Your Life Time.....You're Still Going To Die. Do You Know What This Means? It Means Exactly What Jesus Says In Our Gospel Lesson.... That The Most Important Meal That You Will Have This Day Or Any Day....Is The Meal That You Receive Here At Messiah Lutheran Church. This Morning By Faith You Are Feeding On **"The Food That Gives Eternal Life: Jesus Christ.** He Feeds You With His Word And His Sacraments.... Giving You The Forgiveness Of All Of Your Sins, Peace With God, And Eternal Life. And So To Stay Alive As Long As You Can.....Every Day...You Feed Your Body....Ah Abut To Have Eternal Life....You Keep Coming Here To This Place To Feed On **"The Bread Of God Who Comes Down From Heaven And Gives Life To The World."** Amen.