

Greetings to you! The theme for this morning's meditation is 'Jesus is the bread of life'. Bread is one of the basic essentials for anybody whether it be the rich or the poor. We all eat it in one form or the other. In the Gospel reading last week, we saw that a young boy shared his five barley loaves and two small fish, which Jesus took and blessed and fed over five thousand people. The purpose of the miracle in feeding the people was to teach them that Jesus was indeed the one who could spiritually sustain them. The crowds however miss out on that truth but were keen to make Jesus king by force and he therefore withdrew from them and hid himself in a mountain nearby.

The disciples meanwhile took a boat and were on the way to Capernaum. Jesus later walks on the water and joins them though they were terrified that he was a ghost. He reassures them and goes along with them to the other side of the lake. There a crowd was waiting for Jesus, for they too had taken boats to the other side of the lake to find him. Jesus knew fully well that they were looking out for him to have their bellies filled again. The people had eaten the loaves, were filled, and were hoping that Jesus would do similar miracles again and keep them satisfied with food whenever they needed it. Their key motivating factor was food. Physical food takes priority rather than meeting with Jesus. All that they were looking for was a continuous supply of free food. All though they had eaten until their hunger was satisfied, they became hungry again. True contentment eluded them. They could not see the glory of the one who supplied them with food. Jesus wants them not to work for food that spoils but for food that endures to eternal life.

What is this food that endures to eternal life? The Jews understood 'work for food' as a reference to the keeping of the law which was given to them. However, what Jesus means by 'work' is a personal faith in Jesus as Lord and Saviour who alone can give eternal life. Why is this so? Because 'on him God the Father has placed his seal of approval' as the only way to God. This is God's criteria for being part of his kingdom. It is not something that we set up. So we are called to put our personal faith in him.

The people enquire about what they must do to do the works that God requires. Jesus says that what is required to please God is to believe in the one whom he has sent. The people who were gathered insist that they needed a sign in order that they may believe him as the one God had sent. They suggest that he do a sign greater than what Moses did by granting their ancestors bread from heaven to eat during their exodus from Egypt. Jesus corrects their erroneous understanding of the Scriptures by saying that it was not Moses who fed them in the wilderness

but his Father in heaven. Jesus then says that the bread of God is the one who comes from heaven and gives life to the world. They misunderstand this to be some physical bread and say 'from now on give us this bread'.

Jesus then makes a radical claim saying 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.' Jesus is the bread who gives and sustains 'life', the life of the Kingdom of God. This he gives to those who will 'come' to him and 'believe' in him. Jesus claims that he is the spiritual sustainer of the world. Every time we partake in the Lord's Supper we affirm that he sustains and nourishes us. God invites each one of us this morning to partake of this bread of life. In order to do that we need to 'come' to Jesus recognizing that we are impoverished souls, who need to be fed by the living bread Jesus. We are also called to put our personal faith in him by 'believing' in him that we may be filled with the Holy Spirit so that we will never thirst for anything more.

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