

August 4, 2024, 11th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
Pastor Tom Olson, Minnesota Valley Free Lutheran Church

PRELUDE: Ruth Antal (Fuglebergs)

CALL TO WORSHIP: Psalm 145

PASTOR: All you have made will praise you, O LORD;

ALL: Your saints will extol you.

PASTOR: They will tell of the glory of your kingdom

ALL: And speak of your might,

PASTOR: So that all men may know of your mighty acts

ALL: And the glorious splendor of your kingdom.

PASTOR: Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,

ALL: And your dominion endures through all generations.

HYMN #139 “Glory Be to God the Father”

CONFESSION OF SIN: Psalm 51:1-7 Have mercy on me. O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge. Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me. Surely you desire truth in the inner parts; you teach me wisdom in the inmost place. Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.

CHILDREN’S SERMON:

Reader: Dave Fischer

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON: *Exodus 16:2-16 In the desert the whole community grumbled against Moses and Aaron. 3 The*

Israelites said to them, "If only we had died by the LORD's hand in Egypt! There we sat around pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted, but you have brought us out into this desert to starve this entire assembly to death." 4 Then the LORD said to Moses, "I will rain down bread from heaven for you. The people are to go out each day and gather enough for that day. In this way I will test them and see whether they will follow my instructions. 5 On the sixth day they are to prepare what they bring in, and that is to be twice as much as they gather on the other days." 6 So Moses and Aaron said to all the Israelites, "In the evening you will know that it was the LORD who brought you out of Egypt, 7 and in the morning you will see the glory of the LORD, because he has heard your grumbling against him. Who are we, that you should grumble against us?" 8 Moses also said, "You will know that it was the LORD when he gives you meat to eat in the evening and all the bread you want in the morning, because he has heard your grumbling against him. Who are we? You are not grumbling against us, but against the LORD." 9 Then Moses told Aaron, "Say to the entire Israelite community, 'Come before the LORD, for he has heard your grumbling.'" 10 While Aaron was speaking to the whole Israelite community, they looked toward the desert, and there was the glory of the LORD appearing in the cloud. 11 The LORD said to Moses, 12 "I have heard the grumbling of the Israelites. Tell them, 'At twilight you will eat meat, and in the morning you will be filled with bread. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God.'" 13 That evening quail came and covered the camp, and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. 14 When the dew was gone, thin flakes like frost on the ground appeared on the desert floor. 15 When the Israelites saw it, they said to each other, "What is it?" For they did not know what it was. Moses said to them, "It is the bread the LORD has given you to eat.

EPISTLE LESSON: *Ephesians 4:1-6 As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. 2 Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. 3 Make every effort to keep the unity of*

the Spirit through the bond of peace. 4 There is one body and one Spirit- just as you were called to one hope when you were called- 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

READER: Here ends the reading of God's Word.

CONGREGATION SINGS: God be praised, for His glad Tidings!

CONFESSION OF FAITH: *I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, And of all things visible and invisible.*

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, Begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of very God, Begotten, not made, Being of one substance with the Father, By whom all things were made; Who for us, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, And was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, And was made man; And was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate, He suffered and was buried; And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures, And ascended into heaven, And is seated on the right hand of the Father, And He shall come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead; Whose kingdom shall have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit, The Lord and Giver of Life, Who proceeds from the Father and the Son, Who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, Who spoke by the Prophets. And I believe one holy Christian and apostolic Church, I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins. And I look for the Resurrection of the dead, And the Life of the world to come. Amen

GLORIA PATRI: Ambassador Hymnal p. 4 (please put on screen) *Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen, Amen.*

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRAYER

PRAISE SONGS PICKED BY RUTH

SERMON TITLE: "THE BEST BREAD" John 6:22-35;
Pastor Tom Olson; August 4, 2024 *Grace be to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen*

HOUSE: Having nothing can be OK. My sister learned that when she lost her home and possessions in Hurricane Andrew 35 years ago and she and her boys were just glad to be alive. She just sold her little northern Wisconsin house, and is renting a furnished house in our home town. Hiring movers and renting storage is expensive, selling possessions on line is scary and dangerous so she gave away most of her beautiful furniture, dishes, her food and most everything else besides some clothes and a few pictures and paintings for the wall that she enjoys.

HAPPY: She is temporarily staying at our place in Wisconsin. We saw her yesterday on the deck, sitting in a lawn chair she gave us on one of her previous moves, reading a book and as happy as you can imagine. She is as satisfied with so little.

MEMORY: Arvid Erickson had to give up everything too and told me that if you have coffee and a cookie and someone to visit with, life is good. One of my favorite childhood memories is my mother's fresh bread. I can see her kneading it. I can smell it baking. I can taste it in my mind with melting butter and maybe some honey on it. I crave that bread. We all crave food and possessions. Some people crave money. Others crave power. But none of these things ultimately satisfy. Let's look at "THE BEST BREAD" from John 6.

I. THE BREAD OUR FLESH CRAVES

John 6:22-36 *The next day the crowd that had stayed on the opposite shore of the lake realized that only one boat had been there, and that Jesus had not entered it with his disciples, but that they had gone away alone. 23 Then some boats from Tiberias landed near the place where the people had eaten the bread after the Lord had given thanks. 24 Once the crowd realized that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they got into the boats and went to Capernaum in search of Jesus. 25 When they found him on the other side of the lake, they asked him, "Rabbi, when did you get here?" 26 Jesus 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.*

MOTIVES: The disciples rowed across the Sea of Galilee in a storm. Jesus met them at three AM, walking on the water. The people who had experienced the miracle of the loaves and fishes searched for Jesus and found him on ***"the other side of the lake."*** But Jesus knew that they followed him for the wrong motives. They were not looking for a relationship with God but he said that they came to him, ***"because you ate the loaves and had your fill."***

BLESSINGS: We acknowledge that all the blessings we have, food and clothing, home and family, all ultimately come from God. **James 1:17** ***"Every good and perfect gift is from above..."*** We sing about it, ***"Praise God from whom all blessing flow..."*** But the whole purpose of these gifts is to draw us into a relationship. Guys buy girls they date a lot of gifts for the purpose of getting them interested in a relationship. You will see a lot of that this week at the County Fair!

WANTS: But these people didn't want a relationship with the Lord, they merely wanted the gifts, the free food. It is true today, many people want God for supernatural healing of disease, they want supernatural financial blessings, they want supernatural powers.

ALASKA: Some new converts to Christ in Alaska started watching a TV preacher and soon they wanted the money, fame and power that he promised them. It led to the shipwreck of their faith. They had been happy with forgiveness of sins, a home in heaven and a relationship with God. But then when the TV preacher offered them the chance to have health, wealth and prosperity, the relationship with Jesus got substituted with the craving for the BREAD OF THIS WORLD. And it didn't happen, and they ended up very dissatisfied.

1 John 2:15-17 ***"Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For everything in the world-the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does-comes not from the Father but from the world. 17 The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever."***

DIVORCE: I just read in the news this week that this same TV preacher's wife is divorcing him. She was not satisfied either. The pursuit of God for the sake of worldly wealth and power does not lead to happiness. Wealthy people are some of the most unhappy people in the world. The BREAD OUR FLESH CRAVES does not satisfy.

II. THE BREAD JESUS OFFERS

John 6:27-34 ***Do 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." 28 Then they asked him, "What must we do to do the works God requires?" 29 Jesus answered, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent." 30 So they asked him, "What miraculous sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? 31 Our forefathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written: 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'" 32 Jesus 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. 33 For 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."

MANNA: The people wanted a Messiah to give them manna from heaven like Moses did in the wilderness. Jesus shows them that the manna in the wilderness was a prophetic picture of him. Jesus is the *“bread of God who comes down from heaven.”*

FUNERAL: We went to Cumberland on Thursday to mow the grass in preparation for our trip to Ohio next week. It was so hot that Rebekah and I went up to Shell Lake for a swim after we mowed the grass. On the way back we passed by the “Full Gospel Church” and I was reminded of the time we had to use that church for a giant funeral of a 32-year-old farmer who was killed in a farming accident. He was a member of our church. As I prepared for that funeral, I looked through his Bible to find a verse he liked. I found one underlined and highlighted.

Psalm 34:8 “Taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in him.”

SATISFIED: That young farmer had tasted the Lord and was satisfied. I loved to hear him pray because he prayed like no one I have ever heard pray before. He talked to God so personally, like a friend walking by his side. He loved his family and he enjoyed farming, but most of all, He had tasted the bread of heaven. He had faith in Jesus and knew Him personally. That is THE BREAD JESUS OFFERS.

III. THE WAY TO EAT GOD’S BREAD

John 6:35 Then 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.

OLYMPICS: This week Christians were saddened to watch the opening of the Olympics where the artistic director, by his own admission, reenacted Leonardo DaVinci’s famous painting, “The Last Supper” with live characters. But he replaced Christ with a gluttonous female Greek god and the disciples with other mythical gods and the food was a platter with a naked man on it. They turned the Lord’s Supper into a drunken, gluttonous, orgiastic feast of Bacchus.

SEARCH: This is not only symbolic of the ancient pagan Greece, which ended up in ruin. It is symbolic of the empty search the world today is seeking for meaning in food, sexual pleasure and athletic prowess and fame.

RESPOND: How should Christians respond to this desecration of the Last Supper? That is not an easy question to answer. Should we be outraged? Should we be silent? I think there is a good response that we can have today. We can come to Christ at His table. We can eat his body and drink His blood and remember all that He has done for us to redeem us from sin and adopt us into His forever family.

BELIEVE: Jesus declared, *“I am the bread of life.”* He will provide all our needs but much more important than that, He will satisfy our souls like He said, *“he who believes in me will never go hungry...or be thirsty.”*

DOWNSIZE: We all eventually get to the age where we have to give up our personal possessions and downsize to a smaller house and eventually to a pine box. The things we labored so hard to have will lose their meaning.

ALFRED: A year or so before my father-in-law died he looked out the window at the beautiful dairy farm he worked so hard to build up and he said to me, “This doesn’t mean anything to me anymore.” He met Jesus as His Lord and Savior in his 40’s and the older he got the less the things of this world meant to him and

the more he longed to go to heaven and be with the one who died for him on the cross of Calvary. He was eating THE BEST BREAD, something this world can't offer. He died satisfied.

COME: Come to the Lord's Table today and eat THE BEST BREAD. Let Jesus renew your faith and a satisfying relationship with Him that no one can take away from you, not even death.

MOM: As much as I loved my mother's bread, she helped me get even better bread. She made sure I went to church and Sunday school and confirmation where I met Jesus, found forgiveness and eternal life.

WELCOME: Welcome to the table of the Lord where there is food for your souls. Jesus is the host. He gives you THE BEST BREAD. He gives you himself. He will satisfy your soul. *Psalm 34:10 The lions may grow weak and hungry, but those who seek the LORD lack no good thing. May the peace of God that passes all understanding guard your hearts and minds through faith in Messiah Jesus. Amen*

HYMN #257 "Break Thou the Bread of Life"

HOLY COMMUNION (Dave Fischer prep and help)

CHORAL BENEDICTION: *May the Lord, Mighty Lord, Bless and keep you forever-- Grant you peace, Perfect peace, Strength in every endeavor. Lift up your eyes and see His face, Feel His grace forever. May the Lord, Mighty Lord, Bless and keep you forever.*

POSTLUDE: Ruth Antal