



Introduction

Apparently not satisfied by Jesus' feeding of thousands, some who were there press him for a sign of his power; perhaps it is daily manna they want. As always in John's gospel when people want a sign, Jesus offers himself. He is the bread come from heaven to give life to the world. He calls us to come to him and believe in him, and through that relationship to know the one who sent him.

Confession and Forgiveness

In the name of the Father, and of the ✚ Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

God of all mercy and consolation, come to the help of your people, turning us from our sin to live for you alone.

Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that we may confess our sin, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

Let us confess our sins in the presence of God and one another.

Most merciful God,

we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves.

We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone.

We have not loved you with our whole heart;

we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.

For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us.

Forgive us, renew us, and lead us,

so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.

God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved.

In the name of ✚ Jesus Christ, our sins are forgiven.

Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith. **Amen**

Opening Hymn ELW # 487

What Feast of Love

Listen and sing along [here](#).

Prayer of the Day

O God, eternal goodness, immeasurable love, you place your gifts before us; we eat and are satisfied. Fill us and this world in all its need with the life that comes only from you, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

First Reading: Exodus 16:2-4, 9-15

A food crisis becomes a faith crisis for the Israelites in the wilderness. The hungry people forget God's saving work in the exodus, and they wish for the food they had in Egypt. Nevertheless, God miraculously meets their needs, with manna for bread and quail for meat.

Read the complete text [here](#).

Psalm: Psalm 78:23-29

²³So God commanded the clouds above and opened the doors of heaven,
²⁴**raining down manna upon them to eat and giving them grain from heaven.**
²⁵So mortals ate the bread of angels; God provided for them food enough.
²⁶**The LORD caused the east wind to blow in the heavens
and powerfully led out the south wind,**
²⁷raining down flesh upon them like dust and flying birds like the sand of the seas,
²⁸**letting them fall in the midst of the camp and round about the dwellings.**
²⁹So the people ate and were well filled, for God gave them what they craved.

Second Reading: Ephesians 4:1-16

Christians share fundamental unity and diversity. Our unity consists in the one body, one Spirit, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God. Our diversity is expressed in various forms of ministry whose goal is equipping the saints and building up Christ's one body.

Read the complete text [here](#).

Gospel: John 6:24-35

Many of the five thousand people Jesus fed in the wilderness continued to follow him throughout the countryside. Jesus challenges them to consider the real nature of their quest.

Read the complete text [here](#).

Reflection on the Text

I am the Bread of Life. We hear Jesus say these words after the crowd has chased him down again. “I am the Bread of Life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.”

These are the words Jesus gives them. But what was the question? The question was “When did you come here?” The crowd came looking for Jesus after he slipped away from them. They are filled with questions, such as how did he slip by us? Does he know a shortcut that we do not know? Why are we to believe in you? What signs do you have for us, other than feeding 5000 people from five loaves and 2 fish? Who are you, Jesus? We still are not sure about who you are or what you can do for us?

This begins to sound like a conversation Jesus might have with the disciples in Mark’s Gospel, where they never seemed to quite understand. Here in John’s Gospel, these questions mostly come from others, especially those in the crowds. Who are you? Why are you here? Why should we follow you? Why won’t you feed us again?

There are so many questions asked, but they are not the right questions. The crowd, like us, saw a miracle and want to see more. They were hungry and Jesus fed them. Why not do it again? It seems that they have missed the point. Jesus fed them because they were hungry, and so that he could do this sign so that his disciples would see it. The crowd simply saw that he could do great things and so wanted to make him king. Jesus wanted the disciples to see that with God, anything was possible.

The I AM sayings of Jesus what we hear in the Gospel of John are the authors way of letting us know who Jesus is. It is a subtle way of letting the crowd, if they are listening, know who Jesus is. Hearing Jesus say “I AM” should remind them of Moses talking to God in the burning bush. Jesus saying “I AM” should let them know that Jesus is not only from God, but that Jesus is God. I am the bread of Life. Like the bread that God gave to the Israelites in the desert, Jesus is the bread that gives life.

Of course, the Israelites did not understand either. They complained that they were going to die in the desert, and so God gave them bread, but not in the manner they were used to. God gave them something else and they looked at it and said, “What is this?” That is what manna means in Hebrew – what is this? It became the name for the bread of heaven that rained down each day so that they could have life. Bread, so that they could live. Bread, so that they could continue their journey to the promised land. Now, Jesus is the bread of heaven, come in human form, given so that the people of God might live.

Jesus fed them, but they did not understand. They may not even have realized that Jesus began with only five loaves and two fish. They may not realize the miracle that they were a part of, and so they ask for signs to prove who is. Jesus answer that he is the bread of life, that which will feed them forever. Of course, they do not understand this message either.

Most of us understand immediate needs and what it takes to have them met. We understand being hungry and then being fed. We understand being thirsty and getting a drink. We do not really understand bread that feeds us forever, or water that means we will never be thirsty again. Jesus shows us the love of God. Jesus shows us that God cares for us and for our well-being. Jesus shows us that we can depend on God and never be in need. But we do not understand these things. We know what we need now, and we want that need met. Tomorrow is another day.

It is not that we are to worry about tomorrow; it is that we are to understand that God has today covered, and tomorrow. What we need tomorrow is already taken care of by our loving God. Believe in Jesus, and all will be well. Come, eat, and be filled. Hear the words of God and be comforted. Ask, and be forgiven. "I am the Bread of Life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty." Thanks be to God. Amen.

Hymn of the Day ELW # 618 / LBW # 343 *Guide Me Ever, Great Redeemer*

Listen and sing along [here](#).

Apostles' Creed

We profess our faith with the whole church in all times and places:

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

Prayers of Intercession

Rooted in Christ and sustained by the Spirit, we offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all of creation.

A brief silence.

You call your church to be the body of Christ. Awaken all the baptized to the gifts you provide for carrying out the work of ministry. Where the church is divided, knit us together and restore the unity of the faith. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You command the clouds above and cause the wind to blow in the heavens. Watch over deserts and wilderness places. Regenerate rainforests, defend species at risk of extinction, and strengthen the work of conservation organizations.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You summon leaders to respond to the needs of your people. Instill those who govern with patience when confronted with grievances and perseverance in seeking what promotes the well-being of the community. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You draw near to those who cry out for help. Feed those who are hungry, reassure those who are despairing, and accompany those who are imprisoned. We pray especially for those we name now. Rain down the true bread from heaven that gives life to the world. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You receive all who come seeking a sign of grace. Make this congregation a place of hospitality for those accustomed to rejection. To those who have felt excluded here or elsewhere, prepare us to welcome them in the name of Christ.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

You provide food that endures for eternal life. Sustain us each day with the bread of life until we are gathered with all the saints and feast together at your heavenly banquet. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We lift these and all our prayers to you, O God, confident in the promise of your saving love; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Lord's Prayer

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come,
thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.**

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Closing Hymn ELW # 655 / LBW # 364

Son of God, Eternal Savior

Listen and sing along [here](#).

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Today's reflection was written by Pastor Ray Sipe.