

John 6:25-35

Come Lord Jesus be our guest, and let thy gifts to us be blessed. Amen. Pass the turkey, please. Can I have some more gravy for my potatoes? Why do I have to sit at the Kiddie table? What time does the game start? What's for dessert? Pumpkin pie? Perfect!

Ah. The sounds of Thanksgiving...at least that's what it sounds like at my house. And, yes, that's usually me who's still asking why I have to sit at the kiddy table. 26 years old, and still in the little chairs. Maybe if I was only a little bit taller...

But honestly...Can you smell the turkey already? Have you been looking forward to this day since the end of the summer? Maybe since last November? Have you already laid out your elastic waisted pants so that you can eat more than your fill? And why not! It's Thanksgiving, right? We're meant to eat out fill, have leftovers for a month, and then be ready for Christmas dinner once the last of the turkey has finally been eaten.

We eat our fill on this day every year...we eat to the point that we fall asleep from all the triptophan (*that's the stuff in turkey that makes us sleepy*)...we eat to the point that we simply can't eat any more. You would think after eating all this that we wouldn't be hungry again for a long time. But how many of us, even though we've eaten the biggest meal of the year, sneak to the refrigerator a few hours later to snack on a bit of that turkey...or maybe have just a sliver of pie for a treat. No matter how much we eat for our Thanksgiving dinner...we always become hungry again.

Our text for tonight starts out with a similar theme. Some people find Jesus beside the sea - There you are! When did you come over here? We couldn't find you! This was not long after Jesus had performed the miraculous act of feeding the more than 5000 people in the field with just a few loaves and fish, and the people realized that don't know where he is. So they went looking and found him.

But Jesus doesn't ask them why they sought him out. He doesn't even ask what they want. He already knows. They are looking for him, because, in a way, they are ready for the leftovers. They ate a meal, not thinking too much about the impossible circumstances, they ate to the fill, maybe over fill, and now they are hungry again. They had their fill when they weren't expecting it, and now they want more.

Now, they might have expected Jesus to just turn and say, what? You're hungry again? Well, let me just whip something up for you...that's what my mom would always say in the evening when we'd look at each other and say, you know, I'm hungry again - I ate so much, I'm hungry again.

But just as he did and does in many situations, Jesus not only doesn't respond how the people expect, he responds with a lesson that seems like it should be very clear. Don't work for food that perishes, but for food that endures.

Perfectly clear, right? Don't worry - it wasn't all that clear to them, either. In a lot of ways, even after hearing this response, they are still thinking about their once full and now empty stomachs. They don't take the time to ask Jesus what he means. They don't even ask him to reconsider...they just jump in and ask how THEY can perform such signs. What must we do in order to do what you did?

Can you just imagine how frustrating this conversation must have been for Jesus Here he is, he has these people's attention, and he is giving them the only answer to ANY question they will even have. He is basically telling them that they will be given all that they will ever need, and the people just want to know how they can get their own food! How frustrating - and I think that you can hear his frustration as the conversation goes on. This is what you have to do...believe in the one God sent. Maybe he should have added...and that's me, just so you know. But again the people don't give him a chance.

Ok. That's nice and all, but we need a sign - our ancestors had Moses who did all kinds of neat tricks so that they could believe him. What are you going to do for us? It was almost a challenge wasn't it? We believe, but only if you do something really cool.

Again, can you hear the frustration? I can't believe they aren't getting it! Moses? MOSES gave you bread? Moses didn't do anything that he wasn't told to do! Where do you think that he got the bread? Do you think that he baked it every night? There aren't ovens big enough anywhere in the desert for that. Moses didn't do anything. It was my father in heaven who gave them that bread.

Ok, the people reply. Then give us that bread. We want the bread that gives us life. We're hungry you know, in case you hadn't figured that out. Give us that bread from now on and we won't have to bother you again. Just as long as we don't get hungry again, of course.

They just aren't getting it, are they? They are so hungry for food, that they aren't hearing anything beyond the word bread. They aren't hearing that this bread that Jesus is talking of is more than just flour water and yeast. They aren't hearing that they will never need anything beyond this bread. And most importantly, because they are so hungry, they are not hearing that Jesus is this bread.

What are we hungry for? Maybe, after thinking about turkey and all the fixings, it really is food, but we live in a society where we are usually hungry for much more. We go to stores, or watch tv, and we see all the things that we are supposed to be hungry for. The so called Christmas season, and I say so called because it's hard for me to think that Wal-mart should decide when Christmas starts, started months ago in many cases, and we have been told since Halloween what we are to be hungry for this year. Look at these electronic things. They do neat tricks...look at these expensive clothes - you will look so good in these! Look at these toys...every child needs to have on of these under the tree! Ah...you need to eat in this restaurant or you won't have a merry Christmas.

Or maybe it is something that isn't material that you are hungering for. Maybe it's acceptance from the world around you for who you are. Maybe it's a companion that just seems to be out of your reach. Maybe it's a perfect body as the world defines, and no matter what you do you never seem to measure up. Maybe it's a sense of peace that never seems to come about illness, addiction, loss. Maybe it's just a hunger to figure out just who we are in this busy world. What ever it is, we all have those feelings...what are you hungry for?

So we can identify with the people in their hunger...no doubt about that. But are we too not listening to the response that Jesus gives us even today? Are we only listening for the words that will meet the needs that we think we have right now? Are we missing the fact that we already have all that we could ever need?

When we truly listen to what Jesus is telling the people and us today, we realize that we have that bread of life. Not that bread...we might still be physically hungry, or aching for something else, but we have been given that bread of life. We come to the table, and we eat and we drink together the bread and the wine and we know that we are being filled. That hunger that we feel, in a sense, disappears. We know that because of this man, this savior, this resurrected Lord, that we have been given the gift of life. And no earthly bread could ever fulfill us in the same way. We are able to hear Jesus say, I AM the bread of life. I am what gives you hope. I AM what fulfills every need you have. I AM what you should be thankful for.

So we have this chance again tonight. This chance to come to the table. To take part in the meal of the church, and to know that we are being given the gift of the living bread. To have that hunger that the world tells that we need to have be taken away, if only for a brief moment. It is my prayer that we can let that moment linger, and to know that the grace of God is sufficient for anything we might need.

And in that moment, let us rejoice and give thanks in the fact that God loves us, loves you. So much, that he sent his only son into the world. Come Lord Jesus, be our guest, and let thy gifts to us be blessed. Amen.