



# Hear the Word

from Pastor James N. McEachran



Gather... Encourage... Equip... Send...

## Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost

August 5, 2018

### With Jesus --- The Bread of Life

John 6:22-40

Week 2 of a three week series...our common theme has been "Growing Forward." In times of transition and renewal, in times that some will say are uncertain. Yet, filled with opportunities to share and to live the good news of Jesus.

Last week, two miracles: a feeding and survival on the rough seas. As if to teach the congregations in John's time, around 115 AD/Common Era, that Jesus is the One sent from God who feeds the hungry, with leftovers, and has power to still the storms.

Recall, that Jesus feeds the 5000+, not the disciples as in other Gospel accounts, and calls His own to believe and receive Him. No mere Bread King or quick fix, but the One who calls and sustains the work, the mission of the Church.

Let me set the table. The disciples went by boat to the other side of the sea where; meanwhile, crowds arrived at the place where Jesus had fed the crowd. Drawn there, most likely, as news spread about the miracle.

But, the disciples were not there and it was not known how Jesus got to the other side. (Spoiler alert: By walking on water and arriving before the disciples got there. As seems the custom, Jesus is out ahead of the disciples, even in our own day!)

To be clear, they were curious, not puzzled, but asking "Where is Jesus?" Looking very hard, they found him waiting for them.

"Rabbi, teacher, how did you get here?" Not a bad question, given the hours before, but diminished since some had said he was "the Prophet who is coming into the world." And the dialogue begins...

✠ Jesus is kind of in their face, "You seek me because of the sign, you got fed, a good meal and were pleased. But, wait, work hard for good food that will stay with you clear into deep lasting Life, the food that the Son of Man, me, on whom God the Father has set His seal of approval." "Sealed," once for all, is a word used for Holy Baptism in the earliest Church. As in the new life of the child baptized today, sealed with us into the Body of Christ.

Jesus cuts to the chase, gets to the point that counts. Some seek fast food, convenience food; Jesus deepens the conversation for them, for you, and for me!

✠ Search is over, seeking faith is met by grace alone. And they ask, we ask...

“OK, what must we do to be doing the works, the will of God?”

And here, beloved, is getting to the bottom line and we can offer any number of “human” answers.

Like: give more, love more, work at church more, forgive my \_\_\_\_\_, pray more, read the Bible more, join the Stewardship Committee, go on mission to \_\_\_\_\_. I am often amazed that I tend to quantify discipleship. Do you?

There is a mystical truth coming for us. Listen UP!

We often ask what WE should do, so that we are doing the WORKS of God. We seek a check-list to salvation, forgiveness and new life.

Jesus teaches that WE becomes YOU should TRUST in the One that One sent. And that is THE WORK, singular, not several things, but to be IN CHRIST. To trust and obey for there is NO other way.

God’s trust is given in the heaven-sent ONE and that the ONE who seeks us is THE ONE himself who fills us with love, forgiveness, life that we might receive the TRUE BREAD OF HEAVEN TO STENGTHEN AND SUSTAIN US IN JESUS FOREVER.

Paul is the one who grounds us in what this means for us each day: humility and gentleness (What the world needs now!), with patience, bearing with each other in love, being used of the Holy Spirit to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (What the world hungers and thirsts for now!)... WHY? The One we trust is the source, one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one God and Father who is the whole meal deal!

✠ The dialogue reaches the “what matters point.” Still they/we seek a sign. Jesus is the SIGN, seek no other. THE BREAD OF GOD IS THE ONE..GIVING LIFE! Jesus, in effect says, “VOILA, ME!”

No longer, PROPHET to come, BREAD KING to coronate. They say “LORD, please give us this bread ALL ways, always.” And Jesus simply says, “Dear people, you do not need a new Moses with new and better manna for the people to prove I am authentic. Here us the crux, CROSS, of the matter. You need, rather and much more simply right now, to see and appreciate the cosmic miracle standing right here in front of you. What you are looking for as proof is talking to you.”

“I, I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE. THE PERSON SIMPLY COMING TO ME WILL NEVER EVER GO HUNGRY, AND THE PERSON SIMPLY TRUSTING ME WILL NEVER EVER GO THIRSTY---EVER.”

Here AND now. We have been raised up in mission. We have shared years of common goals in mission to be discipleFIT! Yet, at times, we find ourselves trying to find our vision, our mission, our foundation. That is good, but it is here in this circle of LIFE!

We are, most would say, a faithful and healthy Christian community. Sometimes we are tempted to say “The best ever.” There is not one thing we do better than thousands of other churches. QUANTIFICAITON IS NEVER THE KEY!

The mark of our community is trust in Jesus! Simply and clearly sink our lives deeper into Jesus which leads to trans-clarity in mission, in love, in service at all times in our life together.

Raised up to be in Mission. In the Word, at Font, at Table, in a community of peace which knows where we are going and who it is that is going with us, the One who is “THE BREAD OF LIFE” that feeds us and meets us where we are and where there is hunger, thirst, guilt and anxiety, fear and restlessness at the corner of our hearts, our communities, with the One who has the whole world held in trust forever.

In Jesus’ name, Amen!