

“Our Origin & Promised Future”

Message by DD Adams

Providence United Methodist Church

August 9, 2015

The scriptural text for today is taken from the gospel of John, chapter 6, verses 35, and 41-51. I'll be reading from the *Common English Bible*. Jesus replied, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. The Jewish opposition grumbled about him because he said, “I am the bread that came down from heaven.” They asked, “Isn't this Jesus, Joseph's son, whose mother and father we know? How can he now say, ‘I have come down from heaven’?”

Jesus responded, “Don't grumble among yourselves. No one can come to me unless they are drawn to me by the Father who sent me, and I will raise them up at the last day. It is written in the Prophets, and they will all be taught by God. Everyone who has listened to the Father and learned from him comes to me. No one has seen the Father except the one who is from God. He has seen the Father.

I assure you, whoever believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your ancestors ate manna in the wilderness and they died. This is the bread that comes down from heaven so that whoever eats from it will never die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever, and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.” This is God's word for God's people. Thanks be to God. Let's pray. God of all-sufficiency and all-blessing, move in us today with your convincing grace. Stimulate all our senses to feel your living presence in our lives moving us closer to you. Cause your Holy Spirit we pray to help us not be afraid, but rather to taste and see the blessedness of

knowing you in a relational way as this bread comes down from heaven to our hearts. Amen.

This is the third week we've been in the sixth chapter of John's gospel. In this week's lesson, verses 35, 48, and 51, Jesus states three times that he's the bread of life or the living bread. Jesus invites everyone to be with him and eat. He said in verse 35, "Whoever comes to me . . ." Jesus isn't particular who he eats with, but I'm thinking most everyone who *will* eat with him on a regular basis has more on their mind than just filling their belly. After a few free meals some will lose interest, but those who are truly seeking are being called by the Father.

In verse 51, Jesus states, "Whoever eats this bread will live forever." We have trouble grasping the concept of eternity and living forever. The Greek translation of "living forever" actually means we live into the age; this is our promised future. This "age" as a different dimension; it's a spiritual realm where there's no time. It's a place where God and those he's called live outside of time, and time doesn't exist. It's a place we'll never feel restless or hungry or thirsty.

The Jews in opposition to Jesus grumbled because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." This is the reason they were complaining. They couldn't figure out how a carpenter's son could come down from heaven. That's not how they understood it. They knew Jesus as Joseph's son, and they knew his mom and dad.

So what Jesus and the Jews are really talking about is Jesus' origin, but the Jews are having trouble believing. Jesus' origin was from the beginning John says. We read about it in the first chapter of John, "In the beginning was the Word . . ." Jesus is the living Word, he was made flesh, and came down to us, and lived among us. This was Jesus' origin. In the text that was read, manna was provided for the Israelites in the wilderness and they died. Jesus is the living bread who

came down from heaven and supplies all our need. What this says to me and to our church is that no matter where we find ourselves, God will supply our need.

We as a church, like other churches, have a tendency to only see what's right in front of us. Our vision can be eclipsed and foggy. We look at the circumstances. Our faith is challenged because we can't see around the corner. Yet . . . we believe in this living bread that came down from heaven and supplies all of our need, but we can worry and feel anxious. Yet we believe and know—we don't live by what we see for we walk by faith, and because we walk by faith, we don't lose heart. We must trust God and pray and believe, or we will lose heart.

The Jews in opposition to Jesus had trouble with that. They could only see Jesus—the carpenter's son. They didn't like that Jesus said he came down from heaven. They believed in God, but who's this Jesus? They said, "Isn't this Jesus, Joseph's son, whose mother and father we know? How can he now say, 'I have come down from heaven'?" Jesus said, "Don't grumble among yourselves. No one can come to me unless they are drawn to me by the Father who sent me, and I will raise them up at the last day."

Then Jesus asks us about our origin. Jesus said we're drawn to him by the Father. So let me ask you a question. Have you accepted that invitation by Christ to come into your heart and life? Maybe *this* is your origin? That very moment you accept Christ into your heart is the very moment you begin to live forever. Jesus assures you, whoever believes has eternal life, and this is a present tense statement. So at the moment you accept Christ is the moment you begin living forever.

The physical bread we talked about last week is so temporal and short-lived. You know all the things we buy and the things we covet. When we focus too much on the things of this world, it's as if the measure of faith that God has put in each one of us is sleeping. But when we turn to Christ in faith and decide to live for

him, our spirit is awakened, and everything becomes new. The bread we eat becomes the living bread that comes down from heaven. It strengthens and nourishes us to become who we were destined to become in Christ.

In this passage, Jesus tells those who eat the living bread their promised future; it's so much more and beyond the material things this life has to offer. Jesus assures us and says, "**I am** the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever." Is this *your* future? Is the Father drawing you through Christ to commit your life to him? Jesus is telling you what your promised future *can be*. He promises that you'll live forever, and God will raise you up in the last day.

You'll always feel a resistance of some kind when God is drawing you. You're afraid and unsure of the future. You don't know what will happen if you let go of the physical and exchange it for the spiritual, but will you break through that resistance?

It's not just those who haven't accepted Christ, it's also hard working believers in the Church. They're afraid to trust God and pray. They're afraid to let go when their resources seem dried up God the Father draws us, and those who believe in his son, Jesus the Christ, will have eternal life. We'll be raised up in the last day. *Our response, our initiative* is to believe and trust in the one whom God has sent. All the Holy Spirit can say to you today is to taste and see the goodness of the Lord. O taste and see that the Lord is good. Amen.