

2024 B 18th Sunday in Ordinary Time August 04

We are in the 2nd half of 2024. I think it's a good time to check our expectations for this year and see if anything need to be re-adjusted.

People had expectations when they came to Jesus. The crowds had seen the miracles Jesus performed. He healed the sick. Most recently he had fed thousands of people with five loaves and two fish. So, in today's lesson, what did the people expected from Jesus? A magic show, or a day long buffet? Here is what they did not expect. Jesus' confrontation about their motives for coming to him. Jesus said, **"You are looking for me because you ate and had your fill."** Don't you hate it when someone makes you confront your true motives?

If we listen, **Jesus will tell us the truth about ourselves.** And it might not be pretty. But when you look at the times Jesus confronted the people in the Bible, his motive was never to shame them or to prove his superiority over them. His motive was to bring them closer to God. **Jesus uses truth-telling to make us aware of the gap between what we say we believe and what we actually believe.**

For example, we say, that God is love—pure love, agape love, everlasting love—Who always has our best at heart. But, in truth, do we really trust God with our future, our family, or our finances, do we? We lie in our beds at night worrying about what the next day will bring forgetting that he had taught us in Romans 8:28 that "All things work for good for those who love Him." We say that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life, but we don't believe it enough to actually tell our friends and family about Jesus.

Many people today look deep within their hearts and find nothing but a deep emptiness there. They ask questions like: Why am I here? Where am I headed? What does it all mean? For many people there are no satisfying answers. *It was to fill this emptiness, this meaninglessness, that Christ came into this world.* **"I am the bread of life ..."** says Jesus. You can search all over this earth to find that one thing that is missing in your life, but until you feed on Jesus, you will never be satisfied.

Pastor Rodney Buchanan tells of himself standing in line at Walmart one day and a woman and her young son were ahead of him. The boy was unhappy because he saw something he wanted, and his mother was not allowing him to get it. His disappointment began to crescendo, and she suddenly blurted out: What can I tell you, Billy? Life sucks, and then you die."

Imagine having that as a truth on which you were operating your life! But the truth is that God created a good world. Life is good when we live it for God and base our lives on his Word. When you live away from God, life sucks and then you die. But when you live your life for God life makes sense because it is based on truth, and because your life is based on the truth, it works.

Building a life around God does work. **“I am the bread of life ...”** says Jesus. What does that mean to you? Take for example, the grain-to-bread process. It is a demanding one. The seed must be planted before it can grow. When the grain is ripe, it must be cut down and grounded into flour. Before it can become bread, it must pass through the oven. Bread is the end-result of planting, harvesting and heating.”

“Jesus endured an identical process. He was born into this world. He was held down, bruised, and beaten on the threshing floor of Calvary. He passed through the fire of God’s wrath, for our sake. He suffered because of others’ sins, the Righteous One for the unrighteous ones. He went through it all to put to death all unnecessary stuff of this world and then make us to live and bear good fruit—for God.”

“Bread of life? Jesus lived up to the title, but unopened loaf does a person no good. Have you received the bread of God?” Have you received God’s forgiveness and love and above all, Jesus himself in the Eucharist?”

Those are the questions you and I need to answer. The world is still hungry for true bread. Christ is that true bread of life.

“Sir, the people said in response to Christ’s teaching,” ... give us this bread.”

Then Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.” And that’s the truth. The greatest need is that each of us need to feed on Christ to live a meaningful and purposeful life. Jesus came into this world to us full of life. Life in abundance.