

Food that Lasts

John 6:22-35

The Tenth Sunday after Pentecost, August 2, 2015

Immanuel Lutheran Church, Broadlands

Have you noticed how money disappears?

Many of you warned me about how sleep disappears upon taking up the vocation of father. Only one of you hinted that money would disappear at a faster rate also. But even without the vocation of father money disappears.

You get paid for whatever it is that you do. You deposit the check. You pay your bills. Once your bills are paid it seems like there is not very much that is left over. If you have yourself tangled up in debt, then even less is left over. When there is debt it seems like money will disappear for a very long time. By the time the debt is paid, you are that much older and that much neared to death. You have spent all of that part of your life paying off the debt. Money disappears.

We eat. We are satisfied. We get hungry. We eat again. We are satisfied. We slowly get hungry again. We eat again. The cycle seems endless. The same thing happens with thirst or sleep. We get rested. We function for a while. Then we wear out. Then we sleep. We get rested. We function for a while. Then we get tired again. On and on it goes. When is it ever enough?

When have we eaten enough? When have we drunk enough? When are we rested enough? When do we have enough money? When do we have enough land? When do we have enough achievement? When do we have enough friends? When are our grades good enough? And even if we do achieve good grades do they care when we get our first vocation?

As God has pointed out to us, "The ear never gets enough of hearing. The tongue never gets enough of tasting."

This is the food that does not last. You may work and work and work for it and it does not last. It lasts for a little while and then you need more of it. Eventually no matter how much of it you have, you die.

Therefore in the grand scheme of things food is futile. You may have as much of it as you like throughout your life and you are still going to die. Your fate is no different than a man who starved to death. You may never have a shortage of drinking water for as long as you live and you will still die. In the grand scheme of things having drinking water does not last past what you can drink. You may make as much money as you like and you will still die. Your money will not save you no matter how much of it you have amassed. You may think that money can provide you with those things necessary to live and it can, but only for a while. It does not grant eternal life. Eventually the money will run out. Eventually the money will not be able to pay for the procedure or medicines that you need. Eventually money will not be enough to purchase your way out of death.

None of it lasts. It is futile. It is part of this world. It is perishing. Eventually these things will be taken from you. Are you ready for that day or are you still too attached to them to worship God?

It would seem then to be imminently practical that if you really wanted to invest your time and effort in something that it would be prudent to invest it in something that would last longer than food and drink and sleep and a paycheck.

To put it bluntly: if you are going to work, do not work for food that perishes. Work for the food that remains into eternal life. Do the works that God requires. Do the work that God requires and you will have food that will remain to eternal life. Such food is not futile. You are not wasting your time with

such food. With such food is ultimate satisfaction. With such food is achievement. With such food you finally arrive at a goal onto which you may hang.

Such food comes from God.

Now beware here at this point. The food that perishes also comes from God. In other words even though God always provides us with the food that perishes there are times when God provides us with the food that perishes in a supernatural way. It is not enough to have a miracle from God.

For example, when Elisha stayed with a widow her vial of oil filled many bottles and the oil did not run out until all of the bottles were full. If she had had more bottles she would have had even more oil. Elisha fed 100 men on one occasion with twenty loaves of bread. Our Lord magnified that miracle several times when on one occasion He fed five thousand men, plus women and children, with five loaves and two fish and on another occasion fed four thousand people, plus women and children, with seven loaves and several fish. There are times when our Lord miraculously provides food even though such food perishes.

The most extensive phenomenon of this kind is when God fed the Israelites manna in the wilderness for forty years. For forty years God miraculously provided bread for the Israelites in the wilderness. It would appear on the desert floor when the dew fell. People would go out of their tents and gather it for their families. On each day enough manna fell for that day, no more and no less. On the sixth day enough manna fell for each person to eat for two days so that the Israelites could rest on the seventh day and not have to gather manna on the Sabbath. This was miraculous. But the people who ate that bread died. In spite of the fact that God Himself provided it in a miraculous fashion, they still died. The manna was food that perished.

The people whom Elisha miraculously fed died. The five thousand and the four thousand whom our Lord fed perished. While it was a great miracle, they perished anyway. Even the people whom our Lord healed died. Even the people out of whom our Lord cast out demons died. It lasted for a while and then they were dead.

Even expecting a miracle is not faith enough. One must work for the bread that remains to eternal life.

And so there will be times in your life when God saves you from a tight financial spot. It has probably already happened to most of you. You get yourself into a situation from you cannot extricate yourself financially speaking. Then an opportunity opens up or money comes in unexpectedly and everything is fine. God saved you. But in this instance God saved you financially. Money is bread that perishes. It is not bread that endures to eternal life. Even when God miraculously provides bread to eat, it is still the bread that perishes. It does not remain until eternal life.

If you are going to invest your time and energy in it, do not invest your time and energy in food that does not last. What sense does that make? Do not wait for a miracle from God to feed you and take care of you in this life only. Wait for God also to give you the bread that remains to eternal life.

What is the bread that remains to eternal life? It is the One who came down out of heaven and gives life to the world.

The One who came down out of heaven is the one who made the heaven and the earth in the beginning. All things exist through Him. He gave life to all things. In the beginning He gave eternal life to all things. There was no death. He is the One who was in the beginning. He is the One who came down from heaven. He is the One who came to that which was His own. Since He made all things all things belong to Him. He made the world. The world belongs to Him. He came into the world. Since He came into the world He came down from heaven.

Here our Lord claims to be the One who came down from heaven. He will have to defend this statement because the crowd to whom He is speaking knows that He is the son of Mary. He was born in Bethlehem and raised in Nazareth. How can He be the One who came down from heaven?

The conclusion that you must reach is that our Lord came down from heaven in the sense that prior to His conception in the virgin Mary He was God over all forever praised and after His conception He was a baby in the womb of Mary. Prior to His conception He was the creator of all things only. After His conception He is still the creator of all things, but has now entered into His creation and has become like unto a created thing Himself. In this way He came down out of heaven. He was outside of His creation and has now entered into His creation.

Since He was originally outside of His creation, He is the creator of all things. Because He is the creator of all things, He gives life to the world.

Since He is the One who gives life to the world, the life that He gives is superior to any other kind of life. It may be impressive that through Moses the Father of our Lord gave the Israelites manna to eat in the wilderness. But do not be deceived the salvation that the One who came down from heaven achieves is far greater than merely bread coming down from heaven like with Moses and the Israelites.

Since He is the creator of all things, He gives life to all things. Since He gives life to all things, He gives eternal life to all things.

This then is the greater miracle. It is greater by its extent. Moses kept a couple of million Israelites alive for forty years by means of manna. Jesus keeps all who believe in Him alive by means of His almighty power and He keeps them alive forever.

If you are going to strive for something, strive for Jesus.

The bread that you eat will only last in your belly for a short time. It therefore is a waste of your investment to spend your effort and life and money on such bread. If you are going to invest your money and time and life wisely and get a return worth having invest in Jesus. He gives eternal life. Work for the bread that endures to eternal life and not the bread which perishes.

And what are the works of God? What work does He want done in order for you to invest all that you are and have in it? The work of God is this: to believe in the One whom He has sent. The One whom God has sent is the One who came down from heaven. He is the One who gives life to the world. It is in Him that you shall invest with all of your heart and soul for only the return on Him is worth having. Everything else lasts only for a little while and then it is gone.

People who are dying know what the value of things are. They will give all kinds of things away. They will give it away because they know that it is worthless. All of the things that you spent your time and effort obtaining and guarding become useless when you are in hospice care. Only Jesus avails there. One man in hospice quit reading the books he used to enjoy reading and read only the Scriptures because only the Scriptures testify to Him who came down from heaven and gives life to the world.

Do not waste your lives investing in more and more things that do not endure to eternal life. Land, equipment, homes, cars, money, are such things. They have their place and their use, but when they displace a person's investment in the only bread that lasts, then they are idols that bring damnation. Only Jesus rose from the dead. Only He lasts. Only He gives life. He gives it as He did in the beginning. He gives it to last forever.

He is the bread of life.

In the Name of Jesus. Amen.