

Sermon August 1st 2022

Jesus Is Our Bread

Have you ever fasted from food for a period of time? In preparation for surgery or blood work. Or as a religious ritual during Lent. Or to cleanse your body during a health kick.

Have you ever gone on a diet to try and lose some weight? You give up your Friday night salty potato chips. Your late-night sweet tasting chocolate cake. Those juicy barbequed steaks (**Image**).

Have you ever been so busy that you skipped a meal? You need to get to that early morning meeting and instead of a hearty breakfast you settle for a Tim Horton's coffee. Or you are busy getting your lovely children's lunches ready that you neglect to eat your own lunch. Or you forget to pack those snacks for that all-day outing.

When we fast, or diet, or skip a meal we find out rather quickly how much we depend on food for our survival. Our stomachs begin to rumble. Our minds wander. Our bodies feel weaker. Our eyes get heavier. Our muscles start to ache.

Our physiology is created in a way to warn us when our bodies are not getting enough food.

But as we diet or fast, we also find out how much we depend on food for our well-being. We enjoy the taste of food. Especially the worst foods for us. Salty, sweet, greasy foods (**Image**). When we try to shift our diet to healthy foods, we often find ourselves spicing them up with lots of salt and pepper to hang on to that taste.

We also spend a lot of time connecting with one another around food. We like going to restaurants. Cafes. Potlucks. Food gives us great opportunities to gather as community (**Image**). In fact, when we add an opportunity to eat at an event more people tend to show up. When we diet or fast, we often abstain from these opportunities, leaving a social void within us.

We depend on food for our survival, and for our well-being.

Sorry. All this talk of food is making me hungry. I'll be right back. Just need to order a pizza.

Do we crave Jesus as much as we crave food? Do we depend on Jesus for our survival and our well-being as much as we depend on food? Do our stomachs rumble when we are not getting enough Jesus in our lives? Do we feel weaker or more distracted? Do we crave Jesus?

It doesn't surprise me that in our gospel today, Jesus uses food, something we depend on so much, as a metaphor to describe himself to us (**Image**).

Jesus wants us to depend on him like we depend on food. Not just because he can meet our physical needs. But, also, because Jesus gives us much more than food. Jesus gives us life. Jesus gives us meaning and purpose. An invitation to be revealers of God's kingdom come. Jesus shows us that there is more to this world than our physical needs. That we have mental, spiritual, and relational needs that are just as important for our survival and our well-being. Needs that Jesus focuses on throughout his ministry.

From healing people so they can reconnect to their communities to hanging out with people who have been rejected by their communities, because they have been labelled as sinners, or part of an unacceptable profession. From teaching his disciples how to pray to helping his disciples through their anxieties and fears.

Do we crave Jesus as much as we crave food? Do we depend on Jesus for our survival and well-being?

When we go through hardships in life like the pandemic, or a chronic illness, or a mental illness, or the death of a loved one, or the break down of a relationship, we can feel like we are enduring a long fast or a torturous diet. Sometimes, we can forget, that Jesus is standing right there inviting us to depend on him for our survival and well-being.

The good news is that Jesus keeps trying to get our attention until we are ready to see Jesus in the midst of our suffering. Jesus keeps calling out to us until we are ready to depend on Jesus for our survival and our well-being.

Whether it is through people or through scripture or through prayer or through some other means. Jesus keeps trying to get our attention.

When Jesus finally gets our attention, we see that Jesus strengthens our minds and our bodies so we can face these challenges. Jesus does this also through people, through scripture, through prayer, through communion (**Image**). Jesus gives us what we need to survive. Jesus gives us what we need to enhance our well-being.

When we have faith in Jesus' love for us, we are able to handle so much more than if we rely on just the material things in life to provide for our well-being.

We feel like we can get through anything. Like we are at some eternal buffet where we can keep coming back for more (**Image**). And our bellies don't grow an inch.

We gather in worship every Sunday to receive what Jesus has to offer. The Word of God, which we hear in song, in reading the stories of scripture, and in reflection of the sermon. We receive the Sacrament where we take and eat. Where we experience community, forgiveness, and renewal. We receive prayers giving us hope in God's promises and in one another. We leave worship feeling renewed, and ready to face the challenges of the week to come.

When we are not at worship, we dive into the scripture whenever we need to hear God's voice. Often times these stories, these passages lift us up, giving us hope and endurance.

We pray to God whenever we need to feel God's presence. Whenever we need someone to just listen. Whenever we need some answers.

We often worship, pray, reflect on scripture with others, because we feel energized by one another. Like taking a bite of a juicy T-bone steak. We are relational creatures. We need each other. We need Christ.

Jesus is our bread, and more.

Jesus invites us to believe in him. To depend on him for life.

So, that we can experience all that life has to offer. Not just delicious greasy, salty, sweet foods.

Let us pray, loving God, we give thanks that you sent us Jesus to be our bread. To help us survive through the hardships we face, and to enhance our well being. Giving us a foretaste of your kingdom come. **Amen.**

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