HEAVENLY FEAST

John 6:25-59

Key Verse: 35

“Then Jesus declared, ‘I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty.”

Back in around 1985 in Winnipeg UBF just like today, when someone was inspired to agree they would say “Amen.” One young man insisted on saying “heavenly Feast.” I wished he would stop it because it sounded odd when he would say over and over “heavenly Feast.” But he was not wrong for Jesus is a Heavenly Feast. In John 8 we thought about Identity, our identity as disciples when we hold to Jesus teachings and Jesus identity as “The Eternal One.” Before Abram was born “I am” In today’s passage we will think about a metaphor Jesus used to describe himself. “I Am the Bread of Life.” Heavenly Feast Indeed.

Part I The Work God requires

All of creation is embroiled in a constant battle of survival. Darwin coined the phrase “survival of the fittest.” To describe the chief preoccupation of all living things to compete for limited resources, and to reproduce. In a documentary I saw a male eagle going hunting to bring choice morsels of food to a prospective mate until she is content that he can be a good provider for her and her chicks, and who can blame her? Most people behave much like animals with respect to food. At my mom’s apartment they give away food sometimes. Little old ladies become crazed, pushing shoving and even fighting each other to get their share. Psychologist Abram Maslow famously established a “hierarchy of needs” with bread/food at the base.  Higher goals such as “self-actualization” he said “could not be attained without this essential need as first priority.  In fact, most human activity and effort is focused on working for food security.  In a recent survey “money stress” ranked first for American citizens even though the US is the richest country on the planet and has experienced the greatest boom in food production in history.  Millions around the globe are fully preoccupied with their savings and stock portfolios working for a secure retirement.  They are ready to jump out a window If they lose this.  Little wonder then that when Jesus was able to feed over 5000 people with 5 loaves and 2 fish on 6 :4-15 says “after the people saw the miraculous sign that Jesus did, they began to say, “Surely this is the prophet wo was to come into the world.”  Jesus knowing that they intended to come and make him king by force, withdrew again to a mountain by himself.”  Jesus’ popularity rating went way up.  A popular Jewish expectation was that when the messiah came he would solve the bread problem, solve the bread crisis which was their chief preoccupation.  Jesus took off to the other side of the Lake, but the people followed.  Look at verse 25 “when they found him on the other side of the lake, they asked him, “Rabbi, when did you get here?  Jesus answered “I tell you the truth, you are looking for me , not because you saw miraculous signs but because you ate the loaves and had your fill.  Do not work or food that spoils but for food that endures to eternal life which the son of man will give you.  On him God the father has placed his seal of approval.” The purpose and main aim of our life is not to work for food that spoils.  We are created for a higher spiritual purpose to work for the food that endures to eternal life. Gen 2:6 says “the Lord God formed man out of the dust of the earth and breathed into his nostrils the breath of lie and he became a living being, a living soul, or nephesh, a oneness of body and soul.  However, the curse of sin meant that earning a living would now be hard and painful and the spirit of man withered and starved apart from the life of God.  Since then humankind has spent time mostly with their faces in the dirt working for food that spoils away from the abundant life God intended and ultimately return to the dust from whence we came. Even in times of great material abundance we can never be satisfied by it because we are, in essence, a living soul.    Look at verse 28, “What must we do to do the works God requires.?”  They were very eager to do anything God required of them if it meant they would get more bread.  They were joiners if it meant food security. They understood well the principle that “you don’t get nothing for nothing in this world.” This is the foundation of all religiosities in the world.  Humankind trying to placate God with some effort, set of rules, sacrifice, so that crops would succeed, and prosperity in the material world would result.  Once a woman sitting in a church pew was annoyed because someone shouted out, “praise the lord.”  She turned back wagging her finger and replied “this is church!, we don’t praise the lord here!”  Perhaps she believed the purpose of church was to store up brownie points with God and persuade him to overlook the bad things she had done and went dutifully each week and gave something to the food bank to do the works God requires and build her stairway to heaven.  The prosperity Gospel states that God wants everybody to be rich but Jesus did not give them a list of rules to follow like they wanted. Look at verse 29. “Jesus answered, ‘the work of God is this, to believe in the one he has sent.’” Believe in him whom God the father has placed his seal of approval.  The purpose of John’s gospel is spelled out in chapter 20 verses 30-31 “Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.”  by believing you may have life in his name.  The life of the flesh may come from bread, but the life of the spirit is fed by believing in Jesus Christ.  The work we do by teaching and preaching and loving students and others should have one clear purpose, “that they may believe that Jesus is the Christ.”  Martha, Martha you are worried and concerned about many things but only one thing is needed.

Part II Bread of Heaven

Look at verse 30 “so they asked him “what miraculous sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you?  What will you do? Our forefathers ate the manna in the dessert; as it is written: ‘He gave them bread from Heaven to eat.’  Jesus said to them “I tell you the truth , it is not Moses wo has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my father who gives you the true bread from Heaven.  For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”   John 1:1 says “The word became flesh and made his dwelling (tabernacle) among us we have seen is glory, the glory of the one and only   who came from the father full of Grace and truth.”  They knew Jesus as the son of the carpenter Joseph in his flesh and humanity but here Jesus reveals that he came from heaven like the manna which fell from the heavens.  God, not Moses, had sent bread from heaven to sustain the lives of the Israelites.  They were not supposed to gather and save it but to believe that the next day God would provide newly.  It is God’s pleasure that his children look to him for their daily bread.  In this way we learn to trust God not in our job or bank accounts or education.  He does this because we, in our flesh, easily become complacent and forget about God in times of plenty.  We must invite God into our work and home economies and cry out to him as he intended praying “Lord please give us this day our daily bread.”  However, this is not God’s priority for he knows that eternal life or eternal death hangs in the balance which far outweighs the stuff we worry about, like our houses, cars and careers.  Surely God is ready to give us this day our daily bread.  Look at verse 35” Then Jesus declared “I am the bread of life he wo comes to me will never go hungry and he who believes in me will never be thirsty.”  If we have Jesus, we have everything we need.  If the Grace of God is in our hearts, we are full.  If we grasp and believe that Jesus is the eternal one who came down from heaven to give life to the world we are satisfied and not anxious.  Godliness with contentment is great gain.  The International Monetary Fund, European Union, China,  all predicting recession,  Global food shortages due to the war in Ukraine, Inflation melting paychecks.  The globalization of money with technology means that it is possible for the whole global economy to collapse together for the first time in history. Inflation happens when governments print too much money and the printing presses have been running nonstop since the 2008 recession when in Zimbabwe a bag of sugar cost 90 billion of their dollars.  Money printing sped up during the covid global lock down. We studied in Revelations that this is a characteristic of the end of days. “a quart of wheat for a day’s wages and do not damage the oil and the wine…but I have Jesus who said “I am the bread of life.” Do you truly believe, Are you ready? Do you have the Bread of Life?

Part III You are what you eat

You have heard it said “you are what you eat.”  If that is true my son on Mark is a pumpkin Pie with ice cream and missionary Joshua Lee is a Kim Chee bowl.  I love to serve a nice feast.  Last Sunday I made family thanksgiving dinner turkey and Shinnok Salmon several sauces and all the trimmings and it was delicious.  Serving good is a way to show love.  Serving the Bread of life is the highest and greatest love.  The missionaries taught me to always serve spiritual food first at a feast keeping priorities straight.  When we eat quality food, our bodies will be strong.  However, Man does not live on bread alone, he needs the Word of God, food for the Spirit and of the Spirit.  After preaching to the Samaritan woman Jesus told is disciples on 4:32, “I have food to eat that you know nothing about.”  For upon the son the father gives the Spirit without limit.  The bread of heaven even vitalizes and can energize our bodies in a supernatural way.  We must feel greatly honored and very special all the time if the father has drawn us to Jesus. look at verse 37 “All that the father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away.”  I find great comfort and security in these words.  Jesus will never abandon me, and he loves me.  Look at verse 39-40 “And this is the will of him who sent me that I shall lose none of all that he has given me but raise them up at the last day.  For my fathers will is that everyone who looks to the son and believes in him shall have eternal life and I will raise him up at the last day.” And verse 45” whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life and I will raise him up at the last day.”  This verse is the basis for the doctrine of transubstantiation which states that when a priest as the holder of Saint Peters Keys blesses the elements of communion bread and wine they become Jesus and are sacrificed over and over at the mass which is needed to obtain salvation.  It has been used as a method of control and a claim to have the control over who has eternal life.  How foolish.  Consuming Jesus body and blood is consuming the Gospel.  Jesus body as broken for us.  He suffered and died on the cross shedding his blood for the life of the world.  We must consume this Jesus, this bread of life.  We must look unto Jesus and he will raise us from the dead on the last day and give us everlasting life.  You are what you eat.  Though we may die, yet shall we live for the perishable must be clothed with the imperishable and the mortal with immortality.  Where O death is thy victory where O death thy sting ?  Jesus has conquered death, and what a strong shepherd holds you in is hands.