

10 Pent B. John 6:24-35

We are going to hear a lot about Bread and Jesus being the Bread of life in the coming weeks. The way the crowd races behind Jesus to get another belly full always reminds me, oddly enough, of my Husband, Ron. He can't think straight when he is hungry. We will be out and about and I can tell when he starts getting cranky and miserable he is thinking about lunch. Lately it's been happening at the Home Depot. We are remodeling a bathroom by ourselves and we have to spend quite a lot of time picking and choosing materials and there comes a point where I ask him something and he has this desperate look on his face and he says "I don't know, I can't think straight with an empty stomach."! And we have to make a fast exit for home so he can get sustenance so he can think again.

I hear that same hunger desperation in the crowd who chases Jesus down for another belly full of bread. If you will remember Jesus performed quite a miracle to feed them.

He took a little bit of fish and a couple of baguettes and fed 5 thousand women, children and men. And now the crowd is back for more. They didn't seem to realize, in their feeding frenzy that Jesus' miracle was pointing them to something new. This miracle was showing them something new about God and their relationship with each other.

The crowd wanted a sign like their ancestors got in the desert, in the olden days. And Jesus says you aren't looking for me to understand that new way of believing or the new way of living in relationship with God you just want another free lunch! You say Moses gave our elders manna from heaven Jesus says, but it wasn't Moses who fed you, it was God who did it. And today God is giving me , the True Bread of Life, as nourishment that will always sustain you. You will never hunger for want of me.

But isn't that like us all? Missing the miracles right now because we are focused on what we did in our past? Anglicans especially

are prone to this thinking. Tradition and the past always trump the new experience.

Some of you know the writer Barbara Cawthorne Crafton, she used to write a blog with wonderful insight and she said “Jesus seems to be saying that it is not the medium of the experience you are seeking, meaning the eating of the bread, but it is the experience of God itself you are searching for. The living , breathing experience of God- as real as the physical feeling of food in the stomach. Jesus says maybe you had the experience of the living God yesterday. But don’t imagine that you will have the same experience today. Today is a new day. Let it be new.”

Some folks in the church, like me, don’t always like to hear something like that! When we develop a new successful thing like a new ministry, a program, a celebration or class for example, don’t we want to repeat it next year?

In most Episcopal Church's I have been in that is the case. So, usually as church folk in this situation we want to have that same good experience, so we agree to do it again next year and what do we do? We form a Committee to insure it will be just as great next year. And the next year we do it again and it becomes tradition! And as Crafton illustrates we soon assign that program or ministry its on budget line and we couldn't stop doing it every year if we tried!

Blaise Pascal, a theologian and mathematician in the 17th century said that we are all born with a hole in our heart. That can only be filled by God. We try and try to fill it with other things like business, tradition or drugs or food- but only God can fill that void in our hearts. Jesus tells us today that it is not about our stomachs, or the need to be filled over and over with the things of this world. They just leave you wanting more every day.

We hear today that it is really all about believing, maintaining, surviving spiritually on faith and genuine relationships with Christ

and each other. That is what Jesus, the Bread of life is- he is the substance that sustains us. What I am saying is; our relationship with Jesus will easily escape our notice if we only focus on the bread of this world. Our hunger is much deeper than stomach aches or our need to want to re-live past glory days.

Jesus reminds us today that our craving is a spiritual craving. Nothing can satisfy our hearts craving as much as loving each other and seeing Jesus in every one. When we are fed with the Bread of Eternal Life, something we do every Sunday, we can be filled with joy and we know that Christ is ever present in all circumstances. And more Good News is: Through the Spiritual food-the bread (what we believe, because Jesus said so,) to be the body of Christ and wine (Jesus' blood) we share together today may we come to know a way of living with God and each other that will be much more satisfying in every way than just a full belly. Amen.