

**"Table For One, Please"**  
**August 5, 2012 -- 10<sup>th</sup> of Pentecost**

2 Samuel 11:26 - 12:15

When the wife of Uriah heard that her husband was dead, she made lamentation for him. When the mourning was over, David sent and brought her to his house, and she became his wife, and bore him a son. But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord, and the Lord sent Nathan to David. He came to him, and said to him, "There were two men in a certain city, the one rich and the other poor. The rich man had very many flocks and herds; but the poor man had nothing but one little ewe lamb, which he had bought. He brought it up, and it grew up with him and with his children; it used to eat of his meager fare, and drink from his cup, and lie in his bosom, and it was like a daughter to him. Now there came a traveler to the rich man, and he was loath to take one of his own flock or herd to prepare for the wayfarer who had come to him, but he took the poor man's lamb, and prepared that for the guest who had come to him." Then David's anger was greatly kindled against the man. He said to Nathan, "As the Lord lives, the man who has done this deserves to die; he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity." Nathan said to David, "You are the man! Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: I anointed you king over Israel, and I rescued you from the hand of Saul; I gave you your master's house, and your master's wives into your bosom, and gave you the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would have added as much more. Why have you despised the word of the Lord, to do what is evil in his sight? You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and have taken his wife to be your wife, and have killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. Now therefore the sword shall never depart from your house, for you have despised me, and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife. Thus says the Lord: I will raise up trouble against you from within your own house; and I will take your wives before your eyes, and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this very sun. For you did it secretly; but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun." David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the Lord." Nathan said to David, "Now the Lord has put away your sin; you shall not die. Nevertheless, because by this deed you have utterly scorned the Lord, the child that is born to you shall die." Then Nathan went to his house. The Lord struck the child that Uriah's wife bore to David, and it became very ill.

### **Ephesians 4:1-7, 11-16**

4:1 I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, 4:2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, 4:3 making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4:4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, 4:5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 4:6 one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all. 4:7 But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift.

4:11 The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, 4:12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, 4:13 until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ. 4:14 We must no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by people's trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming. 4:15 But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, 4:16 from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love.

John 6:24-35 (NT: 98)

6:24 So when the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they themselves got into the boats and went to Capernaum looking for Jesus 6:25 When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, "Rabbi, when did you come here?" 6:26 Jesus answered them, "Very truly, I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves 6:27 Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For it is on him that God the Father has set his seal." 6:28 Then they said to him, "What must we do to perform the works of God?" 6:29 Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent." 6:30 So they said to him, "What sign are you going to give us then, so that we may see it and believe you? What work are you performing? 6:31 Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'" 6:32 Then Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven 6:33 For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." 6:34 They said to him, "Sir, give us this bread always." 6:35 Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty

For a few weeks, late in the summer we are talking about being filled. About hunger in its various forms. Hunger is an interesting topic when discussed by people for whom physical hunger isn't much of a reality, unless we are ill unable to eat. In our mouths discussions about hunger, about the need to fill are much more likely to be about helping to fill others. Physically, we work very hard on the feeding of other people. We address the very real hunger of people in our community, of school children, of people in other, poorer countries to which we are drawn by our desire to do as Jesus did, to feed and to fill need.

In the church we also address the other hungers. Our hunger for satisfaction and gratification, our hunger for knowledge and hopefully for knowledge of God. Discussion of hunger and our desire to offer nutrition, spiritual nutrition, is increased as we move to begin again our Christian nurture programs for the coming school year. We've been stocking up on spiritual food to share and have a great desire to do so. But it seems these days in our culture that the hunger to know God and to know about God has changed. And in far too many ways, the church has not.

In our passage from John today Jesus Christ declares to us, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty." Jesus isn't really talking only about food to us, although he knows about feeding the poor -- Jesus is talking about satisfying a greater hunger that

exists within us -- a greater need for fulfillment and satisfaction and the feeding of our hearts and minds and souls—that includes feeding people. Not only does Jesus know we need this spiritual food -- he knows that he is the bread of life -- the source of that food, that spiritual nourishment.

In a few weeks we'll be kicking off our LOGOS program for a new school year. Each evening of LOGOS culminates with a shared meal. The kitchen crew will cook pretty good food for 50 or 60 or hopefully seventy. In LOGOS, the goal for the whole program and not just supper, is to provide much more for children and youth to chew on. We, quite literally seek to provide them with the LOGOS, the Word that is, was and ever shall be God in Christ.

Jesus has promised to meet us where we are -- wherever we experience the hunger for the bread of life -- and feed us there. And we're hungry.

Everyone is hungry for something. In the 51<sup>st</sup> Psalm, David is hungry, no starved for God's forgiveness. Earlier he had appeased a different kind of hunger in acquiring Bathsheba for his wife, after being called to account in a dynamic way by the prophet Nathan who declares to David, "You are the man," David now he seeks a far more deeply needed satisfaction, the satisfaction that he is restored by God's grace to right relationship with God once again. "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me..let me return to the joy of may salvation....," the plaintive cries of a man who has done wrong and who now

hungers for forgiveness. Of a man who longs to be back in God's presence and providence.

Are we any different? Are we not often estranged from God? Surely, we come here to feel within us that re-creation of relationship to God and one another. We come in the hopes that our hunger, our desire to make some sense of our lives, and the world around us will find some expression, some explanation, some bit of spiritual nutrition to in which to sing our teeth? What keeps us coming here and licking our lips for more of what is for us so good, so satisfying -- so real—like that time of fellowship across the way when we see and talk to and enjoy the company of other people who are looking for more than just a brownie and a cup of coffee? And we come with jelly in hand or buy a jar, or with a couple of boxes of mac-n-cheese, or some coupons for milk, or some pennies for Jemm or some dollars to fill backpacks? There is something wonderful about providing sustenance – real food, real love, real goodness, real grace. And in that place that living bread takes on many forms.

Paul calls it a “life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 4:6 one God and Father of all, who is above all and

through all and in all. But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift." Don't we hunger for such a life? A table for one, when one is all of us? Is this not how we want to live?

Last Sunday we gathered and took part in a miracle that begins when a small boy shares his bread so that in the hands of the master all can be fed. At the end of the meal, John has Jesus telling the disciples to gather up every single fragment, every morsel, and let nothing be wasted. Baskets filled with bread. Baskets filled we will soon come to realize with something so precious not to squander, so important not to waste. A foreshadowing of His body broken. His blood poured out. John wanted us to make the connection with those baskets made up of his compassion and his love and his presence and his grace which were preserved and picked up and shared over and over until today, like tens of thousands of occasions over hundreds of years in millions of places like this place – someone graced by God to say the words over and over and over – this is my body – given for you – become these baskets, and pieces and fragments and cubes and loaves of his body are once more distributed to those Jesus would feed.

We gather at the table and we, like his disciples asks, " Jesus, when did you come here?" How does he do it? How does Jesus get here? How is he right now in this place blessing this gathering, inviting us to this table, enable this miracle of feeding, giving us a meal of grace in himself. And in this place as it was on the

hillside beside the sea, because he is here, we wait to be fed. And in this place as it was in that place there is far, far more than hunger for a morsel of food, a dram of liquid. There is hunger for so much that in the silence of the moment when the only sound is the sharing of bread and cup and the low muttered words, “this is his body, and this is his blood, we take in our hands and pass to those who, just like us, are gathered, hungering for so many things.

And as he did, he does, and one by one we take and eat, we take and drink, and there is more left – for the next time and the next time – because the one providing the meal loves those gathered that much-

‘The body of our Christ is in never ending supply -- take and eat your fill -- take and be filled with this living bread.’

We come to this place hungry believers in the one God sent to us to fill us. We come to be fed, again, because we have gotten a taste of the bread, because the sweetness of the cup lingers on our lips, because inside of us, deep inside of us we have a need to be filled over and over and over -- to feed upon the living bread that alone can satisfy the deepest hunger of our being -- that will allow us to live and serve and feed others, forever.