

St. Barnabas  
Pentecost 12  
August 3, 2008

IF I CAN COOK, YOU KNOW GOD CAN  
OR  
JESUS AND THE GREAT SOUL FOOD ADVENTURE

AS THE DAY DREW TO A CLOSE AND THE DAYLIGHT BEGAN TO FADE, AND SENSING THAT THIS SOMEWHAT SURLY CROWD MIGHT HAVE BEEN FOOLISH ENOUGH TO TRAVEL ACROSS THE LAKE WITHOUT BRINGING ANY FOOD WITH THEM, THE DISCIPLES BECAME CONCERNED ABOUT HOW THE CROWD WOULD EAT. IF THEY HADN'T BROUGHT THEIR OWN, HOW WERE THEY TO EAT? WHAT WERE THEY EXPECTING TO DO FOR SUPPER ON THIS GREAT OUTING? LOOKING AROUND THE DISCIPLES SAW NO PIZZA HUT ON THE BEACH OF THE SEA OF GALILEE. NO SIGN OF A WENDYS IN CAPERNAUM, NO THE WEST BANK BURGER KING. NO DOUBT A WHOPPER, FRIES AND A COKE MIGHT SOLVE THE PROBLEM INSTANTLY, BUT SADLY NO FAST FOOD AND THE DISCIPLES DIDN'T HAVE ENOUGH MONEY, EVEN IF THEY WANTED TO BUY FOOD. TWENTY POUNDS WAS MORE THEN A MONTHS WAGES! ALL THAT SEEMS AVAILABLE IS SOMEONE, WITH TWO FISH AND FIVE LOAVES OF BREAD. MATTHEW AND JOHN TELL US, THIS SOMEONE IS A LITTLE BOY. NEVER THE LESS FOR THE DISCIPLES, WITH NO MONEY AND A SCRAWNY SNACK, THINGS LOOK HOPELESS. FOR THE FIVE THOUSAND THE SHELF IS BARE. THEY WOULD HAVE TO LOOK ELSE WHERE FOR LUNCH OR GO HUNGRY.

BUT IN THE TWINKLING OF AN EYE THE MOOD CHANGES, JESUS SEATS THE CROWD, TAKES THE 5 LOAVES AND 2 FISH, OFFERS PRAYERS, FEEDS THE CROWD AND ORDERS THE LEFTOVERS TO BE COLLECTED IN 12 BASKETS. ALMOST BEFORE YOU KNOW IT, THE CROWD IS REPLENISHED, RENEWED, RESTORED. THE END OF A GOOD STORY. NO SO IF YOU LOOK BEYOND THE WELL PLACED WORDS. THERE IS A DEEPER AND FAR MORE COMPELLING POINT. IN THIS CASE WE ARE TOLD THAT FOOD FILLING OUR HUNGRY STOMACHS CAN IN NO WAY MATCH THE SATISFYING PRESENCE OF THE LIVING CHRIST MARK TELLS US THAT JUST AS

JESUS FEEDS THE FAMISHED 5 THOUSAND FROM HIS OWN HAND, SO THE LIVING CHRIST FEEDS US IN SOULARD, ON WASHINGTON AVE, NO ST. LOUIS, THE CENTRAL WEST END, UNIVERSITY CITY, KIRKWOOD, BELLEVILLE, OR EVEN IN FLORRISANT, YOU NAME IT HE IS THERE.

AND JESUS'S FOOD? HIS BREAD/ HIS OFFERING TO US? THE SIMPLE AND RELIABLE MESSAGE THAT YOU ARE LOVED. THIS GOSPEL STORY TELLS US THE GENEROUS LOVE OF CHRIST IS FOOD THAT NOURISHS US, CARRYS US THROUGH ALL THE CONTINGENCIES AND CRISES, THE TRAGEDIES AND TRIUMPHS OF OUR LIVES. THIS STORY TELLS US WHAT WE SEE, WHAT WE KNOW, WHAT WE BET ON THAT THE STAPLE JESUS CHRIST PROVIDES FOR OUR LIVES IS MORE VITAL, MORE SUSTAINING, MORE LIFE GIVING THAN ALL THE STAPLES KEEPING US ALIVE EVERY DAY: BREAD AND WATER. BELIEVE YOU ARE LOVED MY FRIENDS. NOW THAT'S SOUL FOOD. ITS AS SOULFUL AS GRITS, COLLARDS CORNBREAD AND CITTLLINGS.

SOUL FOOD. THIS FOOD, THIS SURE AND CERTAIN CONVICTION THAT WE ARE LOVED, THIS UNDYING REFUSE -TO- LOSE LOVE, A LOVE THAT PROMISES TO BE WITH US EVEN AMID THE CIRCUMSTANCES THAT APPEAR THE MOST LOVELESS AND DEPRESSING.

MY DEAR FRIENDS THERE RESIDES SOMEONE WHO IS BEYOND THE VASTNESS OF THIS UNIVERSE WHILE BEING AS CLOSE AS THE HAIRS ON OUR BODIES, SOMEONE WHO NOURISHES US WITH LOVE AND CARE. SOMEONE WHO IS THE TRUE STAPLE, THE TRUE BREAD OF LIFE, JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD, WHO GIVES US STRENGTH TO FORGE NEW POSSIBILITIES, OVERCOME NEW CHALLENGES. WHO FEEDS US WITH LIFE-GIVING LOVE. NOW THAT'S REAL SOUL FOOD