

The Living Bread That Came Down From Heaven

**I am the bread of life,
They who come to me shall not hunger;
They who believe in me shall not thirst;
No one can come to me
Unless The Father draws them.**

**And I will raise them up,
And I will raise them up,
And I will raise them up,
On the last day.**

For several weeks now, we have been talking about Jesus as the Bread of Life. Today, the emphasis is on Jesus as Living bread. “What,” you may ask, “is living bread?” Of course, you understand that it has nothing to do with a literal meaning. The Gospel of John is making a connection with the Eucharist or Holy Communion that we celebrate regularly. John explains the way we relate to the living Christ today. Living bread has to do with our relationship to God, to one another and to Jesus Christ.

I. Living Bread, A Relationship With God

Eating the living bread is having a positive and loving relationship with God. Solomon had a positive relationship with God. He spiritually tasted of that bread when as the ruler of all of Israel, he asked God not for power, riches or fame. Instead, he asked for the wisdom of an understanding mind to govern his people. He asked for a discerning spirit to show him the difference between good and evil. And he trusted in a soul-filled relationship with the Living God. He knew that he could not govern his people without God’s help.

God granted Solomon those wishes. He is said to have become the wisest man that ever lived. He solidified and unified the two parts of Israel. And, he established peace in Israel for his time and for many generations to come. God gave Solomon all of those things and more. God gave him riches and honor and longevity as well. To eat the living bread is to be in an obedient, loving and close relationship with the living God. Solomon was in a close relationship with God as was his father David and many others before and after him.

II. Living Bread Is To Be In An Integral Relationship With One Another

The Pauline writer spoke of wise living, making the most of the times, understanding what the will God is and of being filled with the spirit of God rather than with wine or wild passions. Then he said that one should fill ones heart, mind and soul with songs, psalms and spiritual hymns. In other words, we are what we eat, mentally and spiritually just as much as what we eat physically. Let me put it this way, Psalm #1 advises that birds of a feather flock together. It basically says that you are not to walk in the council of the ungodly, to linger in the way of sinners nor to take your seat among those who are evil and against God. Let me put it positively, aged and saintly wisdom teach that you can learn to swim

only by getting into the water. If you want to be a doctor, lawyer, priest or teacher, then surround yourself with persons and things of those professions. We learn best, bad or good, by those with whom we association. So, life from living bread has also to do with our living in a loving and integral relationship with one another.

III. Living Bread Is Regularly Partaking of Body and Blood of Christ Jesus

**The bread that I will is my flesh for the life of the world,
And they who eat of this bread, they shall live forever,
They shall live forever**

**And I will raise them up,
And I will raise them up,
And I will raise them up,
On the last day.**

What then did Jesus mean by saying that he was the living bread that came down from heaven, that gives life to the world and that whoever eats the flesh of the Son of Man and drinks his blood will have eternal life?

Well, we know what living water is. Living water is water that comes from a flowing stream. It is water that is not stagnated. It is water that is purified by being filtered by the things over and through which it travels. We know that water from the tap is not always as pure as it should be, however, if we allow the water from the tap to run a little while, it become cleaner. There are several things also that we can do to water when we think that it is not safe to drink such as boiling it or adding a little clear household bleach to it and letting it set for a while. We know what living water is. But what is living bread?

For forty years, the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness and were sustained with manna given by God. It was the food that sustained them until they were able to eat of the produce of the land of Canaan. (Joshua 5:12). The widow of Zarephath was sustain during a time of drought in I Kings 17:8-14. But in the end, that physical manna and the widow's replenishing jar did not keep them for dying. Physical bread represents the staff of life which gives and sustains physical life, but physical bread cannot sustain us forever.

Jesus as living bread is the one who gives us the nourishment to sustains spiritual life, now and forevermore. Perhaps, if we think about the process of physical nourishment, we can get a clue about spiritual nourishment. The process of eating physical bread requires us to chew on it, to mix it with some of the digestive juices and then to swallow it for the digestive processes to work their miracle of giving nutrients to the body. So too, in a parallel way, eating the Living Bread is reading and meditating on God's words in the Bible, putting our faith in the teachings of Jesus, believing that Jesus is God's unique son and living by his precepts. When we do that we are then nourished by the Living Bread from heaven, now and in the age to come. Jesus said that if we eat and drink of him we shall live forever.

What can all of this mean? It certain can not mean that a Christian will not physically die. Christians die all of the time. I believe that it means that those who eat of the Living Bread of Christ live with the knowledge that whether we are physical alive or we die in the Lord, we are with the Lord. Then, if we are alive with the living Lord, we are alive indeed.

We, therefore, need not fear living abundantly nor dying bravely when our time has come, because we are confident that we are and shall be alive in the Lord who sustains us with Living Bread.

So, my final words to you this morning, especially to you have lost loved ones whom you miss dearly, is to entrust them to almighty God, knowing that they are alive with the Lord. And, it is our hope that one day we shall all be reunited with those whom we love.

**Yes Lord, we believe that you are the Christ.
The Son of God who has come into the world.**

**And I will raise them up,
And I will raise them up,
And I will raise them up,
On the last day.**

Let us pray. Lord of the Living Bread: sustain us with love and life giving power. Give us the faith to believe in you alone, the love to share with others and the hope to always live with the expectation of abundant life here and everlasting life in the Ages of Ages. We pray this in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.