

Sunday Sermon: August 5, 2018

Sermon Text: John 6: 24-35

Sermon Theme: Following Jesus is not about the stuff, It's about the Savior.

²⁵ When they found him on the other side of the lake, they asked him, "Rabbi, when did you get here?"

²⁶ 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. ²⁷ Do not work for 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."

²⁸ Then they asked him, "What must we do to do the works God requires?"

²⁹ Jesus answered, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent."

³⁰ So they asked him, "What miraculous sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? ³¹ Our forefathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written: 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'"

³² Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. ³³ For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

³⁴ "Sir," they said, "from now on give us this bread."

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."

Everybody was excited to go to grandma and grandpas for a few days of vacation. It was a welcome change from the routine of the summer. As Todd and Paul were bringing the bags out to dad, he heard a part of their conversation that made him unhappy. Todd and Paul were excited because grandma and grandpa always gave them money. They were talking about everything they were going to do with the money and how they were going to spend it.

Dad stopped his boys and asked them a simple question, "Why are we going to see grandma and grandpa?"

Maybe you had a similar experience growing up where you were doing something for all the wrong reasons. Maybe mowing the lawn wasn't about helping the family but was about the money you were paid for doing it. Maybe watching the little brothers and sisters was not about letting mom and dad have a night out, but was about getting a little spending cash.

So many times, like Todd and Paul, we get caught up in the stuff, that we miss the many other great reasons that we do things. This morning in our sermon text Jesus deals with people who have become wrapped up in stuff. He teaches them that following him is not about the stuff, it's about the Savior.

Let's do a little multiple choice this morning. It will be a simple quiz.

Question #1: If Jesus were coming for a stop in Las Vegas, you would probably go, but why?

1. It is a once-in-a-lifetime event that you have to go see like an eclipse or meeting a president.
2. You might see Jesus do a miracle, wouldn't that be neat.
3. You would get to see your Savior

Question #2: Similar, but a little different. Why did the people come to see Jesus?

1. It is a once-in-a-lifetime event that you have to go see like an eclipse or meeting a president.
2. You might see Jesus do a miracle, wouldn't that be neat.
3. You would get to see your Savior

To answer either of these two questions we really have to look at our motivation. Why would we do something like this, why would we, or anyone go to see Jesus? If you believe in Jesus, you would probably go to hear Jesus preach and teach and that would be enough. But if you don't believe in him, you have no faith or a weak faith, you still might go for other reasons.

For the people of Jesus day, he was someone that they had to see at least once. To them, Jesus and his ministry, was equal parts religious, political, social and entertainment. People came to be entertained by this once-in-a-lifetime larger-than-life person. They came to be amazed by Jesus' miracles.

Jesus had just fed the 5000. The sad fact was, that there were many people who weren't following Jesus because they believed in him. They were following him because if Jesus fed them one day, maybe he would feed them the next. Even when Jesus tries to leave this area, they chase after him looking for him.

When they find him, they are upset with him for leaving them, **"Rabbi, when did you get here?"**

Jesus answers them, **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.** ²⁷ **Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life,**

These people came looking for stuff. While there were many good reasons to follow Jesus, they weren't following him to listen to him. They weren't following him to see his power and authority in miracles. They were coming looking for a handout --- looking to be fed.

Jesus tells them, that following him should not be about the bread, the stuff he might give them. It is about faith which believes in the Savior.

This was not what they had been taught a Messiah would do and preach. They had been taught the Messiah would do for them what they could not do for themselves. He would give to them, what they could not get for themselves. In their unbelief they challenge Jesus to prove himself. **"What miraculous sign will you give that we may see it and believe? Our forefathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written: 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'"** You say you are the Son of Man sent from heaven. But we follow Moses. We know he was handpicked by God. We saw the great thing that he did with the manna and quail. Can you do more? If so, show us, then we will believe in you.

They did not understand what this Old Testament miracle was really about. They did not see a great miracle of a God that loved them, even though they grumbled and complained. They did not see a God who forgave the people when he should have destroyed them. They did not see a God who met their needs. All they saw was a God of stuff who would give them food and anything else they needed whenever they demanded it from him. They saw God as an ATM who would give them what they needed whenever they came.

Whenever Jesus says I tell you truth, he is about to say something important that the people should take notice of. Jesus rebukes their unbelief. He says, **"I tell you the truth, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven.** ³³ **For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."**

The bread was not sent by Moses, but by God. The bread was not just meant to fill their stomachs. It was meant to raise their eyes in thanks and praise to the provider of this blessing. It was meant to end their grumbling and to show them the love that God had for them.

Jesus is teaching them to not make the same mistake the Israelites did in making God a God of stuff. The Messiah was about so much more than just meeting our physical earthly needs. He was about meeting our heavenly needs.

Many times we become like the Israelites and we want God to grant us stuff. We act like Todd and Paul, we only want the good stuff from our God. We want God to make life easy. We don't just want any food, we want the food we like. We want life to be all fair weather and happiness and not storms and sadness. We want God to make sure that nothing bad ever happens to me, my spouse or my family, no health problems ever come, no family issues, no financial struggles, the kids are always good and make good smart choices. That's the God I want.

Isn't this a God of stuff? Isn't this the same ATM-god that the Israelites wanted? The sad thing is, many people still that this ATM god is the god of the Bible. We can hear this false teaching on TV or the radio, we can read it in so many religious books. It is so common that we might begin to believe it a little bit. God wants to give me stuff, he wants me to be rich, happy and healthy,

The truth is the Bible never says that God will make our dreams come true. The Bible never promises that we will have the best to eat, the bank accounts that are flush, or the check-up that is clean. Instead, the Bible tells us that we will have good and bad in our lives.

That's kind of depressing isn't it? The Bible says bad things will happen. But it is not depressing because Jesus tells us what to do when these things come. The bread was more than bread, it was meant to raise the people's eyes to their loving God.

Jesus tells us, not to trust in stuff, but in him as the Savior. When God says he works through all things for those who love him, that includes even the things that we think are bad. Even in the midst of a loss of a job, family strife, a medical or health scare, even these things help us to raise our eyes to Jesus in faith.

One more question in the quiz this morning. Which is the greatest miracle?

1. If Jesus fed us in this church this morning.
2. If Jesus feed a few thousand people twice.
3. If Jesus fed over a million people everyday for forty years.
4. If Jesus, died on the cross to forgive the sins of the world and take all who believe to heaven.

The greatest miracle Jesus ever did was not about earthly stuff. If it were, the disciples and apostles would have lived wealthy lives with mansions and the best of everything. If Jesus' greatest miracle were about stuff he would have lived a very different life.

Instead, Jesus greatest miracle was not about stuff, they were about saving us. His greatest miracle included living perfectly on this earth so that we could be perfect. His greatest miracle included his suffering and death where he battled Satan and won so that sin cannot snatch us away to hell. His greatest miracles include rising from the dead to show us that all that he did for us gives forgiveness and eternal life freely and fully to all who believe in Him.

Jesus called himself the Bread of Life. But he wasn't talking about a loaf of bread. Right now as we are listening to this Word, we are being fed the bread of life, the Gospel through which the Holy Spirit works to build faith in Jesus to eternal life.

In a few minutes we will be partaking of the body and blood of Christ, in with and under the bread and wine. This is another way that Jesus gives us the bread that we need for eternal life. Through the Gospel in this sacrament, the Holy Spirit strengths our faith , forgives our sins and reminds us that heaven is ours.

After dad talked with Todd and Paul, they began to see what an amazing blessing they had in a grandma and a grandpa who loved them and cared about them enough, not only to let them come and visit, but also to give them special gifts.

What an amazing God and Savior we have. Although we get caught up in the stuff, our God still loves us and showers us with earthly gifts. But more than that, he forgives us these sins, build up our faith, and points us to the real important thing, our Savior, Jesus. Amen.