

Ministers mini-message: Lent 09

Jesus said: **I am the Bread of Life!**

What did Jesus mean by these strange words? In John's gospel (chapt. 6: 48-59) he goes on to say : "***I am the living bread, that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This Bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world***".... "***I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.***"....! During Lent we will be exploring these ideas and teachings here at St. Giles both during our morning worship and the Sunday evening lenten series.

There are many "**Bread**" stories in the bible, and they each teach us important spiritual lessons that build on each other, to eventually help us come to a deeper understanding of what Jesus was saying in John's Gospel. Most people in His day didn't understand these stories and when he spoke these strange words, many of his disciples abandoned Jesus as their Rabbi. They stopped following him because of his crazy talk. Have you ever learned to appreciate and understand the various "**Bread stories**" of the bible? Have you come to know Jesus as your daily bread, the living bread, that God has sent to you? Do you feed on him daily and eat his body and drink his blood regularly? (Hint: this is more than a question about taking the sacrament of communion regularly.)

During Lent we will be asking the question of what kind of breads do we eat today, in our everyday lives, and what spiritual lessons can we connect to these? During Jesus' day there were only a few varieties of breads readily available. Today, we have many more at our finger tips. In Jesus' day there were Breads like; the unleavened bread of Passover, a coarse Barley Bread of the common folk, and a finer wheat flour bread for the more wealthy and established families; each was understood in its own way. There was the sacred "Show Bread" on the alter of the temple, which was changed daily. There was the famous story of the Manna, the Bread from heaven, that fed the Israelites as they wandered through the barren dessert. Each of these and many of the other stories point eventually to Jesus the Christ, in some way. They can each add to our understanding of who Jesus truly is.

We invite you to come and learn more about the role and symbolism of Bread in the context of your spiritual life. Come and grow in your appreciation of how each kind of bread can take on a sacramental meaning, that you can use to celebrate the **fullness of the life** that God has given you. Learn how you too can **enjoy the Manna** of God, sent from heaven, even today. How you can be nourished spiritually by eating the flesh of the Son of Man and by drinking His blood on a daily basis. For these are wonderful spiritual truths that can add to the joy and celebration of your lenten journey as you approach the Great Passion of our Lord during Easter Week, when he will break the bread with his disciples at the last supper and give his body for the life of the world. May you too receive Him and be filled with His saving grace now and forever more.

Rev. Tijs