

Listening for the Promise

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL

Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 14) – August 11, 2024

“⁵¹I am the living bread that came down from heaven.

If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever.

And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.”

-John 6:51-

We continue to hear from the “Bread of Life Discourse” in our gospel readings. Last week we recalled the physical needs that God provides for us to care for us, needs like food, water, clothing, etc. And while those things are good and important, they don’t ultimately provide us with salvation. Jesus was teaching the crowd the difference between the earthly bread that God provides for us and the life-giving bread we receive in Jesus Christ.

Jesus gave us his flesh when he died on the cross. He gave himself up for us, destroying the power of the devil, death, and sin. Jesus gives us his flesh in the bread we receive at Holy Communion.

Martin Luther says, “Holy Communion is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ under the bread and wine, given to us Christians to eat and drink, as it was instituted by Christ himself.” Furthermore, Luther says, “the forgiveness of sin, life, and salvation are given to us in the Sacrament, for where there is forgiveness of sin, there is also life and salvation.” Jesus Christ is the Bread of Life. He is the living bread, which we receive when we come to his table.

Jesus proclaims that whoever feeds on his flesh and drinks his blood will abide in him, and likewise, he will abide in them. (See v. 56). The same gift of life that is provided for us through Christ’s crucifixion is also provided to us through the Sacrament of Holy Communion. Those who believe in Christ crucified and risen from the dead have salvation and forgiveness of sin.

Jesus invites sinners to come to his table that he has set before us. As we hear the Words of Institution spoken and we eat the bread and drink the wine, we can leave our Lord’s table feeling the load of sin being lifted off of ourselves and placed onto Christ. We are free from the weight of sin. As we rejoice that we’re freed, we can invite others to receive the living bread.

Prayer: Gracious God, we give you thanks that you have given us the gift of your life-giving bread. Help us to receive it with grateful hearts, that we might share it with others. We ask this in Jesus’ name, amen.