

The 10th Sunday after Pentecost

Sunday, August 9, 2009

Eat and Live!

Texts: 1 Kings 19:4-8, Ephesians 4:25-5:2, John 6:35, 41-51

Medical experts usually say the average person can live for 4 to 6 weeks without food.¹

In my mind this is not too long. In the life of a fly, it's very long. In the life a newborn baby, this is a long time. But for most of us 4 to 6 weeks is not very long unless you are a state employee waiting for our state to pass the budget so that you can be paid. If we were given only a month to six weeks to live, none of us would consider it a long time. Without food, humans can only live for a month to six weeks. We need food to live. Bread is a basic food, a staple of life. It makes sense to us that Jesus uses bread to talk about life.

Even though we can technically live much longer without food than most of us think, most of us never desire to try to live a week without food let alone a month. I know that I get miserable if I miss one meal – and by two or three, I'm useless. Our ancestors in faith too wanted to be sure that they had enough to eat. When the Israelites finally got to leave Egypt, they found themselves in the wilderness without food. Of course God was not going to allow the people to starve to death, but you would have thought so. God provided manna. They were fed and had enough to eat every day. When Elijah was fleeing for his life from Queen Jezebel, he needed nourishment. He is ready to die after all of this but God is not ready for his life to be over. He sits under the broom tree and falls fast asleep. When God's messenger comes and wakes Elijah up, he is fed a meal. Bread is provided for his journey just as bread is provided for our journeys in life.

But no matter how bread God gives us, we need to eat every day or at least every month to survive. We cannot live without eating something. After we eat one day, we need to eat again. But Jesus tells us that he is the bread of life. God has provided us with bread which never leaves us hungry. God provides us living water which never leaves us thirsty. God provides us with the bread of life which never goes stale. We have everything we need for true life through Christ our Lord.

Now, we still do get hungry. We need to eat to live. But we also need Christ to really live. Yes, you can survive more than 4 to 6 weeks without having Jesus in your life. In fact, some live their whole lives without knowing how Christ has touched them. But to really be alive, we need to have Christ with us. Just like bread, Christ should be in our lives every day.

For those sitting in the pews who already trust that Jesus is the bread of life and already have Christ with them and know it, what difference does Christ make? How does eating this nutritious bread change us? When we are eating the body of Christ and drinking the blood of Christ, we are one body in Christ. As a body, we are called to live as imitators of God. This means that we put away bitterness, wrath, anger, wrangling, slander, and all malice. We are what we eat! So live being kind to one another,

¹ <http://www.caring.com/questions/how-long-can-someone-live-without-eating> by Kate Rauch, Caring.com senior editor on 8-5-09.

tenderhearted to all others, and forgiving one another as you are forgiven. When we eat Christ, we demonstrate and live Christ as well. For Jesus there is nothing more important than relationship with us. The love of Christ flows through us and guides us daily.

Eat and Live! Do not simply eat bread to survive from day to day. Eat healthy. Eat the body of Christ. Be the Body of Christ. Live as the people of God because you have the bread from heaven within you. Come today and receive that gift from heaven once again. After communing, go out and share Christ with one another.