

WEEKLY SERMON

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”This is the bread that came down from Heaven ...”

John 6:58 - “This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which your ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live for ever.”

We continue with the “bread” theme that has been the subject of the last few weeks Gospel readings; the feeding of the five thousand kick-started this and then turned into a teaching/preaching opportunity by Jesus to talk about himself being the bread of life.

Bread has very much been on my mind recently, when a book was recommended to me called, ‘Ultra Processed People - why do we all eat stuff that isn’t food ... and why can’t we stop,’ by Dr Chris van Tullekin. This is a fascinating and frightening exposé about the ultra-processed food industry; the use of additives, preservatives, emulsifiers and more, which are not natural ingredients, but are added to food to preserve it; have a longer shelf life, to ‘improve’ the flavour and give it a palatable texture ... and frankly is considered the cause of many health and weight problems. I have now started scrutinizing the ingredient lists on the food I buy, making my supermarket trips even longer! Reading the list of ingredients on my favourite wholemeal sliced supermarket loaf has encouraged me to bake my own homemade, organic additive free wholemeal bread, the taste and texture is out of this world. It feels healthy, good for me and is fully satisfying ... like Jesus, as the bread of life, it is life-giving, not life-shortening.

The great crowds that followed Jesus, were physically fed, but were also spiritually hungering for something more. Jesus as the bread of life, doesn’t offer himself as a cheap ‘supermarket’ loaf, but instead ‘his bread’ his body is life-giving, full of goodness, that builds you up, that protects you and nourishes you leaving you fully satisfied. His bread, his life, costs, for he gave his body for us on the cross, and by faith and with thanksgiving at the Eucharist we feed on him, the life-giving bread.

Are you craving more of Jesus? Are you hungry for more of him in your life? Are you feeding on the good wholesome bread, his body broken for you? Jesus, the bread of life, that is the source of all life, once tasted “whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty” is eternal life. (*John 6:35*) To accept the bread of life, to believe in Jesus, is to receive the gift of eternal life whose only “preservative” is the power of the Holy Spirit.

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