

Notes for Brian's Sermon at Brentwood Presbyterian Church

Sun, Oct 13, 2019 – Thanksgiving Sunday

Thanks for the Bread of Life

(Ps 100 and John 6:25-35)



Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, whoever believes in me will never thirst.”

(John 6:35)

Insights from the story within the story

Most Thanksgivings when I was a kid were spent at the Nana's – Dad was a banker – in those days, the banks were open for a half day on Sat, so we left for the 2-hr drive to Georgetown, ON, mid-afternoon and arrived for dinner – then church on Sunday morning and back to Nana's for the big dinner at noon – nourishment for the family in the warmth of a loving home – our eating was preceded by Nana's pronouncing of Robbie Burns' Selkirk Grace – “Some hae meat and canna eat / And some wad eat that want it: / But we hae meat and we can eat, / And sae the Lord be thankit.” – the bread at that meal was in the dressing – I'm still a sucker for dressing – seasoned and saturated with the juices of the bird – my favourite part of the meal

And from that cluster of childhood memories this week came a deeper realization of how central bread is to our nourishment in so many cultures – grain, water, air, and fire – the basic elements combined to enable us to survive and thrive – no wonder that Jesus talked of bread when he was preaching and teaching about how essential our relationship with God, grounded in divine forgiveness and reconciliation, is to our flourishing – Jesus himself, especially in John's gospel, is the embodiment of that nourishing relationship – the bread of life – to be received as gift with joy – as we sing every month at this table, “All who hunger, gather gladly / holy manna is our bread. / Come from wilderness and wandering, / Here, in truth, we will be fed. / You that yearn for days of fullness, / all around us is our food. / Taste and see the grace eternal. / Taste and see that God is good.” – Canadian hymn writer Sylvia Dunstan – spent part of her ministry as a prison chaplain in Toronto – nourishing hungry souls to flourish in the most troubling forms of wilderness and wandering – in the midst of such trauma, fear, and anger, offering a healing love that will never abandon a beloved relative

Provocative points to ponder – as always, too many to cram into one sermon

- The conversations with Jesus that constitute so much of the gospels are themselves bread for our journey into faithfulness, into a deeper, more trusting and more nourishing relationship with our Creator - fed by every breath that we take, by every spark of energy that activates our lives – fed in so many ways that we barely notice, that we so often just take for granted – and, in taking it for granted, we too seldom acknowledge its worthiness of praise and thanksgiving –

How does this apply to our mission here at Brentwood?

I sincerely hope that you feel fed by that bread of life in your relationship with the friends of Jesus who call Brentwood “home” – I sincerely hope that at our tables, here in the sanctuary and downstairs, you find the basic elements of God’s forgiving and reconciling love coming together in a way that nourishes you to flourish in the lives that God has given you for the blessing of the whole world – in so far as we manage to provide that bread, let us know you are thankful – in so far as we fall short of feeding your souls, and we will, let us know so we can work together to be better waitresses and waiters of the bread of life that is Jesus Christ – and in all of our life together, give thanks, to paraphrase Paul in his letter to the saints in Ephesus, for the power within us that provides abundantly far more than we can ask or imagine (Eph 3:20)

My Notes

My Prayers

