

Scriptures:

Ephesians 4:25 - 5:2

John 6:35, 41-51

## **Bread for the Hungry**

It must have been an amazing sight, thousands gathered, listening, learning, suddenly hungry. Jesus gives thanks, and begins to feed thousands who were gathered there with only 2 fish and five loaves of bread. It was such an amazing sight that the people wanted to make Jesus their king.

He had provided beyond compare and yet he had so much more to give. As the people come asking for more Jesus gives them more than they bargain for. He gives them opportunity for new life. If you choose to participate it is there for your nourishment. You can't get much closer to something than when you eat of it.

It has been like this from the beginning that is how God made to earth. Imagine how rich the earth was in those early chapters of Genesis. We read of the promised of a land flowing with milk and honey.

Each time we take part in the communion feast we participate in a long history of being nourished by the creator. That's why I like to call it a feast. The communion feast is part of a prophetic call for us not to forget that we have been nourished and fed and we are all to provide as we have been provided for. When we eat this bread we are to remember the gifts and the opportunities of life.

"We cannot eat of this bread and forget.

We cannot eat of this bread and walk away.

We cannot eat of this bread and go on with life as usual. (Can we?)

In fact, when we eat and when we drink, when we become part of the central activity and posture of our life together, the central reason for our gathering--we too are saying that God's will for all of us . . . all of us . . . and all the world is to be restored, saved, healed, made whole!"<sup>1</sup> That is the bottom line. That's it. If you come here wondering why God? Why church? Why faith? What is it for? Why am I even here? It is that we may be fully connected to the Holy through this community of people, and through our worship in such a way that we are restored, saved, healed, made whole.

"We come to the "bread of life" again and again with the promise that God will come, that the spirit we are calling will show up, that the claim that we make will be made present, that you and

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<sup>1</sup> [http://day1.org/4041-sharing\\_in\\_the\\_life\\_of\\_jesus](http://day1.org/4041-sharing_in_the_life_of_jesus)

I will find ourselves part of a new reality, transformed into God's own, pushed, propelled, into the reality of God's kingdom in the world.

When we eat and drink together, we recognize that Jesus, the "bread of life," is showing us the way to one that is available and yet mysterious, showing us that we too have access to the divine life, that we too can come into God's presence."<sup>2</sup>

I am so weary of conversations about the other, about division, about who is doing what right and who is doing that wrong. I hear the concerns that we care more for our neighbours than those in our doors and that saddens me. It saddens me because each of us here has been given so much. We have received and received in this congregation and I can't help but wonder how can we view ourselves as under nourished. What would it be like for each of us (including me) to know beyond a shadow of a doubt that I am Holy Loved? I think if we knew that we would love one another more and we would discover what it would be like to be a church that fed people as Christ fed? What would it be like to offer every day some kind of healing to those most in need? What would it look like to follow in the footsteps of Jesus?

There is so much hunger in our world. There is such desperate need for physical food, for relationship, for acceptance, for love. "Maybe if we spent more time and attention in becoming a "feeding people," if we put our attention in becoming a community of the "bread of life," if we took more seriously the reality of God's own presence in our meal, we would spend less time and attention in things that separate us, that exclude others, that close our doors, and that questions God's image in others.

Eating assumes that we are hungry, that we are in need of sustenance. Part of the challenge of the Christian life is the recognition of our dependence & our interdependence."<sup>3</sup>

This place today is filled with beautiful, loving faithful people. There are people who have been a part Of Squamish United Church all there lives and there are people who snuck in the door today to check us out. All of us are hungry for something. All of us need a space filled in our lives. Clergy or lay, member or new comer. That is part of the journey of faith. That is part of discovering love and community together.

Why are we church? Why do we gather week after week? Are we just like those looking for another sign? Have you gathered for years and you are still waiting for God to show up? Last week a small group of us gathered and we talked about being nourished by this bread of life but we also acknowledged that we live in a world that wants a quick fix. Jesus feeds and they want manna from heaven but when manna from heaven was received the people complained. Jesus fed 5000 with a couple fish and a few loaves of bread and they said "we need a sign" give us manna, and Jesus said I am so much more. And yet just as with anything in life if we don't make it a

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<sup>2</sup> IBID

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regular practice, if we don't participate and let ourselves be nourished, if we just judge and don't hear the call to action we will never be filled.

Do we gather week after week and eat of the meal and then leave going on with life as usual? I honestly believe we are often not transformed because we have too much. We spend our days worried about petty things while people outside and inside our doors are starving for food, for love, for welcome, for acceptance.

"I am the living bread!" says Jesus . . . Open your eyes! See the light!

We, you and I, have been beneficiaries of an amazing life. Don't hear that wrong. Life is FULL of challenges and some of you here have had more than your share. And if you are just discovering the sustaining one I hope you are becoming nourished. The prophet challenge for others of us however is "We have found our sustenance and instead of using it to propel us into the neediness and hunger of the world, instead of finding that sustenance and having that energize us into speaking on behalf of those that have no voice, instead of having that sustenance call us to task again and again into the ways that our own life is part of the problem, we have continued eating our fill, acting as if we've earned it, ignoring the plight of those who need this sustenance the most.

The community called the church is at its core a community of people who hunger. A community of people called together around table, whose own identity is rooted in what it means to be sustained by the presence of Christ's self each and every time we gather together.

From the very beginning of the story of faith, God has been giving us of God's self and inviting us to take this sustenance and use it as a source of being the light of the world on behalf of God's kingdom. So part of our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving is our recognition that when we leave our doors and leave our gatherings of prayer and praise, we are to walk out of the doors and work tirelessly for the sustenance and feeding of a hungry, hungry world."<sup>4</sup>

We have been so very richly fed and nourished. We rarely recognize it. It is my desire as we continue to worship, and learn and discern and grow together that we may know how loved we are by the most holy creator and when we truly get that I know we won't know how not to go out and offer love and nourishment to a hungry world.

May we so live.

Amen

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<sup>4</sup> IBID