

## Let's Eat

August 2, 2009

(Pentecost 9 - Year B)

John 6: 24-35

*St. Alban's Episcopal Church, Waco, Texas*

Every morning, before the members of my family leave for work or for school, we make sure that our dog, Grady, has everything that he needs for the day.

We take him outside to go to the bathroom, we refill his water bowl and we make sure that he has dog food in his feeding bowl.

During the day, Grady eats his dog food, which has all the special nutrients and vitamins that he needs.

Yet when we come home at night and eat our people food around the dining room table, even though Grady has had all the food that he needs, our little dog walks sadly around and around the table, making a pitiful little face.

Now we do not feed Grady any "people food" from the table.

But I do know that Grady would rather chow down on a potato chip than on Purina Dog Chow.

He would rather eat a bite of pizza than some Kibbles and Bits.

Because Grady wants "people food" more than the dog food that he needs.

A good friend of ours has a dog who has gotten very fat and unhealthy. This friend of ours took her dog to the vet to see why the dog was so sick and overweight.

When the vet asked her what she feeds the dog, she replied that she fries up bacon and makes Hungry Jack biscuits for her dog's breakfast every morning,

Because that is what her dog wanted.

Jesus also knows that we want "people food" more than the food that we need.

The crowds who got into their boats and followed Jesus across the lake to Capernaum had just been filled with people food.

The crowds who followed Jesus across the lake were still licking their

lips from the bread and the fish that they had just eaten, when five thousand of them were fed off of 5 loaves of bread and 2 fish. Yet Jesus knows that eating only “people food” every day is not good for you.

Jesus knows that eating Hungry Jack biscuits and fried bacon everyday, just because you want it, will give you clogged arteries and heart problems.

So instead of giving us just “people food,” Jesus offers us the food that we need, the food that endures for eternal life.

As Jesus says in John’s Gospel:

“Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures for eternal life.”

Jesus is the bread of life.

Jesus is the food that endures.

Jesus is the food that we need.

Last Friday night, I began to notice that several cars would drive slowly down our street, then stop right in front of our house.

They would sit in their cars and write something down, then drive off.

The next morning, I realized what those cars had been doing.

On that morning, our neighbors across the street were having a garage sale.

And the cars that had driven by on the night before were obviously casing out the merchandise that had been set up in the driveway - and planning their routes - to hit as many Saturday morning garage sales as possible.

And when I went out on Saturday morning to get the newspaper from my yard, I saw all the cars, up and down our street, eagerly awaiting for the garage sale to begin.

A part of me wanted to get in on the action and walk across the street to see what they were selling over there and see if I could get in on the bargain hunting.

A part of me was willing to get caught up in this consumeristic frenzy that wants more and more stuff.

Instead, I resisted the urge.

And I walked back into my own house, which is already overflowing with things that I had at one time wanted, but don't really need. I resisted the urge to want more things, desiring the food that I really need, the true bread that endures.

You see, it is a constant battle within ourselves, to not beg for the Hungry Jack biscuits and the pizza and the people food that we really want.

It is a constant battle within ourselves, to not go to the garage sales and the shopping malls and the car showrooms to get what we want.

It is a constant battle within ourselves, to keep our eyes focused on Jesus, the true bread of life.

For no one wakes up on sleepy Sunday mornings and says:

“Boy, I am just starving for a good, ole, dried out communion wafer.”

No one says:

“Man, my mouth is just watering for a nice, thin, round disk of compressed bread that is the size of a poker chip.”

The bread of heaven that we receive into our hands around God's Table is not what we want.

Yet this bread is exactly what we need.

After the five thousand followers of Jesus ate the bread and the fish that Jesus had provided from 5 loaves and 2 fish, within hours of that miracle, they were hungry again.

After we bargain hunt at a garage sale, after we stuff our purchases into our packed houses, we are hungry again.

After we have eaten a chicken fried steak, smothered in cream gravy, we are hungry again.

But Jesus says:

“I am the Bread of Life.

Whoever comes to me will never be hungry.”

When we come to Jesus, we will never be hungry again.

Because Jesus gives us food that lasts forever, food that sustains us for the journey of life.

Jesus gives us peace, a peace that passes understanding.

Jesus gives us forgiveness, a forgiveness for things done and things left undone.

Jesus gives us love, a love that welcomes everyone home with open arms.

Jesus gives us a cross, a cross so that we will see that nothing, nothing, can ever separate us from the love of God.

And this Jesus becomes a part of us, becomes one with us, each Sunday when we eat that thin, round disk of compressed bread that is the size of a poker chip.

Jesus is not the food that we want.

But Jesus is the food that we need.

And this world is hungry, hungry because all of us eat the food that we want, rather than the food that we need.

This morning, after we receive the bread of heaven into our hands around God's Table, then Jesus asks us to feed a starving world with the bread of life.

Jesus asks us to make peace, a peace that passes understanding.

Jesus asks us to forgive, for things done and things left undone.

Jesus asks us to love, a love that welcomes everyone home with open arms.

Jesus ask us to bear our cross, a cross so that everyone will see that nothing, nothing, can ever separate us from the love of God.

Jesus asks us to feed each other - with the bread that gives life to the world.

So, my friends, the dinner bell has rung.

The candles are lit.

The bread's on the table.

Let's eat.

AMEN.