**Sermon Trinity 10, 8th August 2021**

By The Revd Graham Phillips

Ephesians 4.25-5.2

John 6.35,41-51

What a wonderful statement, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.”

This applies to everybody. No one is turned away, anyone who turns to Christ, recognises him as Lord and redeemer, the Son of God will receive sustenance for their soul, peace for their mind, strength for their inner being, and an assurance of eternal life. Never again will that person flounder on the waters of uncertainty, drown in the myriad of emotional assaults and lies from advertising media. Instead that person will know the assurance of God’s love for them, the stability of standing in God’s presence, a precious and adored child of God. Bought with a price, a huge price - redeemed from the sins and evils of this world.

This is the consequence of coming to Jesus, seeking his presence, receiving the salvation and the promise of eternal life that can only come through him.

 “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.” Alleluia. Praise God.

It reminds me of the song

Blessed assurance Jesus is mine

O what a foretaste of glory divine

Heir of salvation purchase of God

Born of His Spirit washed in his blood

This is my story this is my song

Praising my Saviour all the day long.

So how do we praise our saviour all the day long? The Jews are particularly good at doing this. Orthodox Jews are obligated to twice a day say a prayer based on Deuteronomy chapter 6. The first line of which is

"Hear O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One" (Shema Yisrael Adonai eloheinu Adonai ehad). This and other passages from Deuteronomy are written on a scroll put into a casing and attached to the door frames in the home to remind them of their relationship with God. We have crosses in our homes which do the same.

On Friday evenings Jewish family and friends will gather for the Shabbat meal, celebrating the start of the day of rest, the holy day, remembering that God rested on the 7th day. They will have special food and dress up and often greet each other with “Shabbat shalom.”

Some of you will have similar practices for Sunday lunch - family gathering for a special meal.

So how can we use our daily practices to draw close to God, to remind us of what he has done for us, to receive his blessings? One simple way is to say a Grace before each meal. Perhaps you have a favourite:

For what we are about to receive thank God, Amen.

One we used to sing with our children was:

Thank you for the world so sweet, hum hum

Thank you for the food we eat, Yum Yum

Thank you for the birds that sing, tweet tweet

Thank you God for everything, amen.

A Latin one we said at school was Benedictus, Benedicat, Per Jesum Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.

The scouts have a number of graces they use, here are a couple of sung ones:

Amazing grace how great Thou art,

You meet my every need,

You quench my thirst,

You guard my home,

My soul and body feed.

Some of you may know this tune

(Tune: Frere Jacques)

God, Our Father, God, our Father,

Once again, once again,

We would ask Thy blessing; we would ask Thy blessing.

Amen, Amen.

Then this is one we have done at church family meals in Telford based on Superman:

Thank you Lord, for giving us food

(actions: raise right arm overhead as Superman flying)

Thank you Lord, for giving us food

(actions: raise left arm flying)

For the food that we eat

(actions: standing with both arms over head, to the left)

For the friends that we meet

(actions: standing with both arms over head, to the right)

Thank you Lord, for giving us food!

(actions: move both hands in fists to hips and stand strong like Superman)

And finally in Emma’s mother’s house, we hold hands - COVID allowing - and Clare will say “Thanks be to God”. It is very simple but there is always a sense of connecting with God, a moment of stillness acknowledging God’s presence with us. It changes the dynamics, alters the atmosphere, enriches the meal and opens us up to God’s blessings.

If you do not say a grace, then I encourage you to do so.

Jesus said: “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.” Alleluia. Praise God.

So what other daily actions can we use to come close to God? As you leave the home you could pray a simple prayer - Lord look after me today.  If you are going on a journey - Lord protect me on this journey. If going on a holiday - Lord keep us safe and bless us on this holiday. Of course you can add any prayer to this. The point is to feed on Jesus throughout the day.

I start most days with morning prayer - it follows a pattern of readings and I also read a short reflection which helps me to engage more with the readings. Years ago I used to follow daily Bible notes by Every Day with Jesus. They nearly always spoke to me. Find what works for you, what will feed you. It may be that listening to hymns or Christian songs or bible reflections on Premier Christian radio is what will feed you with Jesus, the bread of life. Or a time of reflection and prayer at the end of the day, Or something more challenging, more demanding. Just as we need to eat physical food each day to nourish our bodies so we also need to feed Spiritually on Jesus.

Let us pray.

Amen

“I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.”

Rev’d Graham Phillips