

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

The portion of Scripture before us this evening is found in the Gospel according to Saint John the sixth chapter beginning at the forty-first verse, and we read in Jesus' name:

The Jews then complained about Him, because He said, "I am the bread which came down from heaven." ⁴² And they said, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that He says, 'I have come down from heaven'?" ⁴³ Jesus therefore answered and said to them, "Do not murmur among yourselves. ⁴⁴ "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. ⁴⁵ "It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father

comes to Me. ⁴⁶ "Not that anyone has seen the Father, except He who is from God; He has seen the Father. ⁴⁷ "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life. ⁴⁸ "I am the bread of life.

Heavenly Father, these are Your words and therefore they are the truth. We pray, Lord, that You would increase our faith through them. Amen.

Dear Redeemed by the Blood of the Lamb,

Jesus had just fed over 5,000 people with five small loaves and two small fish... how would He continue to wow the people? He tells them that He was sent down from heaven. Wait, what? Jesus just fed people, people have known Jesus His entire life, and now He is trying to convince them that He is from heaven? I think it would be reasonably safe to understand the Jews confusion and 'grumbling' that was going on.

However, Jesus does tell them, and us, that He was sent from the Father in heaven. He has come to give life to all people. And that His flesh and His blood will allow us to never hunger and never thirst. Yes, friends, Jesus does indeed make this claim and praise God that He does. For through faith in our Savior Jesus Christ we can know that what He said is true, that “Jesus is *the bread of life*.”

We see that the Jews who were with Jesus were having a hard time believing Him. They complained or murmured amongst themselves, “Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?” Isn’t this the guy we grew up with? Didn’t His dad fix our door or our gate? Didn’t His mom throw a great wedding? Isn’t this just another guy? These Jews who were with Jesus just could not believe that He was anything more than just another person.

This too, is very difficult for those in the world and even for some in our own midst today. So often we want to see Jesus as one of two ways: God or man. We want to see the miracle performing Jesus who helps in all situations and does everything in a rather ‘Godly’ way. OR We want to see the man who understood all of our infirmities. We want to see the man who walked this earth and knew the struggles that we go through. So often we want to take Jesus and break Him apart and hang on to the side, or nature, of Him that we like best.

And when we so divide our Savior we are sinning... in fact we are being heretics. We very often hold to the ancient heresy that Christ has two natures that are not combined, because we don’t want them to be. We want one nature and the other one can go hide somewhere. Or we fall into the Crypto-Calvinist trap of Christ being a God

but abandoning His powers while He was a man. None of this is true about Jesus. He was and is always fully God and He is fully man. There is no way to separate or pull them apart, but we sure do try.

I like seeing my little baby Jesus as a plump little infant lying in the manger. I like seeing my Jesus as the almighty God healing people and calming the storm. I like seeing my Jesus as the one who ate food and went to quiet places to pray alone. I like my Jesus to be risen from the dead and going through walls.

But He is both. Jesus Christ is both God and man and there is no splitting Him up. And while the Jews of His day may not have completely understood these heresies that they were starting to espouse, they certainly were wanting to split Jesus. He is a man... we know His mom and dad, we lived with His family, He ate at our house a couple of

times. HE IS NOT THE BREAD FROM HEAVEN! They could not understand that God had come to dwell with them... and they fought this notion.

And Jesus has news for them and also for us, “***No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him.***” You see, they are trying to use their reason and their minds to figure Jesus out... that’s not going to happen. Without God calling them, without God drawing them, they could not understand Christ. And we cannot completely know and understand Jesus with our reason. We cannot know of the incarnation (of God becoming man) by our reason alone. We cannot know how we are justified from all of our sins by our reason alone. We cannot believe that Jesus is both God and man by our reason alone. We cannot even understand many of our own actions by our reason alone... so to assume

we are going to understand God and all His wisdom, it is not going to happen.

And yet, Jesus holds out hope for us. If the Father calls us, then we can come to Jesus. If the Father reaches out for us, then we can know Him and His Son by faith. If the Father reaches out for us, then we will be taught by God and we will come to Jesus.

Yes, this same Jesus who is both God and man. This Jesus who lived the perfect life of obedience to God His heavenly Father. This Jesus who suffered the pain of hell on the cross for each and every one of us. This same Jesus who rose from the dead... when the Father calls us and teaches us, then we can know Jesus.

We can know that if Jesus was not fully and complete God, His perfect life would never have happened... nor would it have been sufficient payment for all sin of all time. We

can know that if Jesus was not fully and complete man, He would not have been able to be born under the law nor could He have died for us. When we are taught by God, then we can know Jesus and all that He has done for us.

And it is through faith that we can know all of this. Yes, the Father calls and teaches us, through His word, which gives us faith and strengthens the faith which He has already placed in us. Through faith, which is given us in baptism, He allows us to know our Savior who lived and died for our sins. Through faith, which He strengthens when we partake of Christ's body and blood for the forgiveness of our sins, He allows us to know that heaven is ours because of our Savior Jesus Christ.

And as Jesus Christ Himself says, “***Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life.***” When we believe

in Jesus, to Whom the Father calls us, we have everlasting life... we have heaven. For it is Christ who also tells us, "***I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.***" In another place in John's Gospel we read how Jesus spoke to a woman at a well and told her that if she had asked Jesus for a drink of the water that He offers should would never thirst again. Thus we can see, time and again, Jesus telling us that He is the food and drink that we truly need this side of heaven. Nothing else can even compare to what Christ can offer us.

No earthly food can give us forgiveness of sins. No earthly food can live a perfect life. No earthly food can die on the cross. No earthly food can give us faith and strengthen it. No earthly food can even compare to Jesus Christ, our God man, who did everything for us.

Dear friends in Christ, Jesus is indeed the bread of life from heaven that was sent to fill each and every one of us. Jesus came into this world so that those who come to Him should never hunger and those who believe in Him should never thirst. He had just shown how He had control of earthly elements by feeding the 5,000+ people and now He is showing that He has control over spiritual matters... offering to us the forgiveness of sins and life eternal through faith in His holy name.

Thank God that He has called me and taught me about His Son Jesus Christ. Thank God that He has deemed me worthy to come to Christ and believe in Him. And thank God that He has given us His Son, who is the bread of life.

Thanks be to God. Amen.