

feeding . . . gathering . . . carrying . . . leading . (Isaiah 40:11)

June 8, 2010

Dearest Brothers and Sisters,

What joy to be with you Sunday! The presence of the Lord was palpable and I look forward to “supping” with you again, soon!

Luke 24:35 says, *He was recognized in the breaking of bread.* And we took a quick ride through history to see how that is so.

A few weeks ago, in the Ask Series, Pastor Stuart used the model prayer of Jesus as the template for our asking. During Biblical times, rabbis would give topics of study to their followers (disciples) for them to study and to meditate on and that is exactly what Jesus did in The Lord’s Prayer.

The first directive to asking in this prayer is the request for our most basic need for survival, food. In the earliest years, bread was the staple. It was grain that drove Jacob’s sons to Egypt to stave off starvation. In this agrarian society, it was grain that caused the Israelites to be willing to part with all their livestock, their land and eventually themselves and agree to lives of servitude to the Egyptians ultimately for 430 years. (Gen. 47.17-21) Bread has taken quite a beating in this low carb, simple vs.

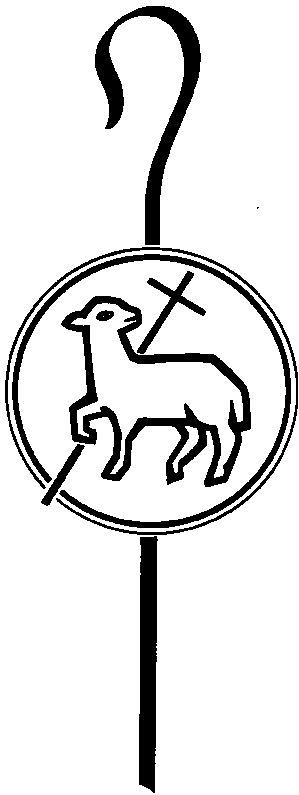
complex carb, refined grain modern society. If you go to the grocery store, there is an entire wall of various assortments of bread. White, wheat, rye, sandwich, bagel, multi-grain, rolls, buns, French, Italian, Jewish, Indian, and I’ve even seen Armenian! Because of its plenteous, even (in our diet) superfluous nature, modern man does not have the same understanding of bread making as the difference between starvation and life.

Taking a look at bread throughout Biblical history, our starting point was the Exodus. As the Israelites were fleeing Egypt, they had to gather the dough out of the kneading troughs for there wasn’t enough time to let the bread rise. The unleavened dough was baked into thin cakes to eat with the roasted lamb and bitter herbs per God’s instructions getting ready for the Passover. God’s instructions were very specific and intended for a life-time practice. (Ex. 11-12) But more on Passover in a minute.

During the dramatic Exodus from Egypt, the Israelites (the number could have been 2 million and if they walked 10 abreast, it would have made a line 150 miles long!) found themselves in the middle of the hot, arid desert. But God in His sovereignty provided the most basic of survival food – bread, called manna or “man-hu” meaning “what is it?” I encourage you to read and digest Exodus 16. What is manna? Food from above – Bread from heaven, Fine, flake-like thing – like frost, Faithfully supplied – the exact amount available, Fresh – every morning, Fickle – it would rot if too much was taken, Fleeting – disappeared with the morning sun, Fulfilled Sabbath instructions – wasn’t available on Sabbath (enough was given the previous day), Flavorful – sweet like honey, Forever reminder – manna cakes were in the ark as a reminder, Forty years – the entire stay in the desert, it was what they ate. Ex. 16.12 says “You shall know I am the Lord your God. Upon entering Canaan, the promised milk and honey must have tasted especially sweet!

The next stopping place in the look into bread is the place of Bethlehem. Bethlehem actually translates “house of bread”. The small town of Bethlehem prophesied as the Messiah’s birthplace (Mi. 5.2), and that prophecy was fulfilled in Luke 2 when Mary and Joseph made their census trip to their home of. Jesus, who called himself *the bread of life*, was born in the town known as the *house of bread*. How fitting, how apropos!

The first time Jesus refers to himself as the bread of life is just after the feeding of the 5,000 (yet another miracle with the ever precious bread). Multiplying 5 loaves and fishes to feed the equivalent of two Watkins Glen, NY - my husband’s home town! John 6.24-58. The backdrop is not only the miraculous “potluck” but Jesus teleporting to shore, walking on water, and rescuing the disciples in the boat! The people’s motivation was their full



tummies. Human nature longs for sensationalism. Jesus wants the focus to be off the temporal and the crowd's response was, "OK, what shall we DO?" Jesus' answer, it's not doing, it's believing! "OK, what will YOU do so we can believe?" Are we looking for external things to motivate us to believe? It is the Father who gives us true bread. It is we who must believe. This is the bread that slakes thirst and allays hunger (v. 35), comes from heaven (v. 38, 41, 50, 51, 58), that gives life (v. 33), is for eternal life (v. 40, 47, 58), for resurrection (v. 39, 40, 44, 54) – a resurrection personally attended to by the Messiah: *I will raise him up on the last day*. Jesus stated and re-stated these points hoping to drive the truth home so that when he announced in v. 53, "...unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have *no life* in yourselves", perhaps his followers would recall these words as they watched as His flesh was torn on the cross and as His blood flowed from His hands and feet. It is there, on that cross, we join ourselves to Him as we die to ourselves and live to Him. As we pray "Give us this day our *daily bread*", it is oh so much more than filling our tummies! May each of our hearts cry, "ever more, give US this bread"!

With this teaching still resonating in the ears of Christ's disciples, they were called upon to prepare the Passover celebration - this same one that had happened over 1,000 years previously. For their whole lives, each of these devout Jews had followed the same ritual in their homes. Now, they would celebrate it with their beloved Rabbi, Yeshua. Throughout history, there are traditions that are followed. They were familiar with the tradition of observing 3 matzohs symbolizing the patriarchs of the faith – Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The middle one (the one signifying the son) is taken and broken, wrapped in a cloth and hidden (buried) to be taken out after dinner. There are 4 cups of wine drunk throughout the meal,

- The Cup of Sanctification – from God's statement, "I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians"
- The Cup of Judgment or Deliverance - from God's statement, "I will deliver you from slavery"
- The Cup of Redemption – from God's statement, "I will redeem you with an outstretched arm"
- The Cup of Praise or Restoration – from God's statement, "I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God" Ex. 6.6-7

It was after dinner when Yeshua brought forth the wrapped matzoh, the same matzoh that symbolized the son, and the disciples heard, "This is MY body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of ME." Who among them remembered His words, "I am the bread of life"? It was of that third cup of redemption (so familiar to the ones partaking of the meal) that Yeshua said, "This cup is the *new* covenant in MY blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of ME." Little did these followers of Yeshua know when God said, "I will redeem you with an outstretched arm", they would see the very arms of their beloved Rabbi stretched on a wooden cross. Who of them remembered Moses' words as he said to the Israelites, "This is the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words." God spoke through Moses, "The time is coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them," declares the LORD. "This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time," declares the LORD. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the LORD. "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more." (Jeremiah 31:31-34)." The time of the new covenant is here. "I AM that I AM the bread of life. He who eats of it will never hunger."

Any time we come to celebrate Communion, allow the taste of the bread to linger. Remember Jesus' words to his followers. Meditate on what it is to "eat the flesh of the Son of Man" as we align ourselves with His death, burial, and resurrection. As the bite of the juice flows over the tongue, reflect on what it was for the disciples to hear that the Cup of Redemption was Jesus blood, shed for them, for me, for you. Ever more, give us this bread. AMEN! May God richly bless you all!

~Shelley

<http://www.christourshepherd.org/pastlet.htm> (and follow links to download MP3 audio of sermon)

Announcements

WOMEN'S SATURDAY SUPPER: Women, you are invited to our last Saturday Supper before we break for the summer, June 12th at 6 pm. Join us at Jen Smoker's house, 641 Elliott Street NE. Potatoes and sweet potatoes will be provided. Bring a short testimony to share about how God has been moving in your life and bring food by last name: A-G bring toppings for potatoes and sweet potatoes, H-Z bring a summer salad or side!

PARENTING DISCUSSION GROUP: There will be a parenting discussion group meeting on 4 Saturdays this summer (6/19, 7/17, 8/21, 9/18), for parents, or parents in waiting. The group will meet from 6:30-8 pm at COSC with childcare provided. Contact Luke Goodrich if you are interested, lukewgoodrich@gmail.com.

PORCH'S GOT TALENT: On wednesday, June 16th from 7-9pm, come enjoy talent, testimony, and togetherness of the youth from The Porch as they share who they are and the ways God has worked in their lives this year. Location: Washington Community Fellowship, 907 Maryland Ave. NE 20002

ROMANS BIBLE STUDY: Men, if you are interested in a summer-long study on the book of Romans, contact Brian Slusarz, bslusarz@worldvision.org or 847-971-1172.

SUMMER BARBECUES: The Summer Barbecue schedule for June has filled up! Be sure to contact the office if you would like to organize a barbecue for a Sunday later in the summer. This is an opportunity for people in the congregation to raise money for an organization or cause that they support.

For general questions or building use inquiries, send an e-mail to office@christourshepherd.org.

To communicate updates for the pastoral letter and/or the church bulletin, send an e-mail to ben@christourshepherd.org. The church bulletin will be completed by end of day on Thursdays.

Bulletin Board

*Postings not officially sanctioned by COSC.
Ads will be posted for up to 4 weeks. After that time period, please contact the church office to see if space will permit the ad to remain posted.*

HOUSING AVAILABLE: Furnished bedroom and bathroom available starting Aug. 1 for CF at 10th & E St. NE. 15 min walk to Union Station and Eastern Market Metro. Shared kitchen and laundry plus internet access and ample storage. Must appreciate young children. \$750/mo or \$1000 split between two renters (includes utilities) plus \$100 security deposit. If interested, Contact melsunnuk@gmail.com.

HOUSING AVAILABLE: Room for rent—4 miles NE of church in Mount Rainier, MD. Looking for a male. Beautiful, clean and spacious 14x20 ft. private, upstairs room in renovated historic home. W/D, A/C, \$500/mo. + 1/4 utilities. Near bus line. Contact trobry@msn.com.

HOUSING WANTED: Looking for low-cost summer housing with a Christian Family in the DC or Arlington area, ideally close to a Metro stop, for a tall, friendly British college student for 8 weeks, starting late May/early June. Rob has an opportunity to travel to DC to do an internship with SIL International Relations department but needs somewhere to stay at low cost. Please contact his father at simon_caudwell@wycliffe.org.

MATH TUTOR NEEDED: The Southeast White House, a non-profit organization in SE DC, is looking for a summer math tutor to match with one of the girls in their program. This would entail 1-2 hours a week. If interested, contact Karen Tuttle at sekids@gmail.com or 202-575-3337.

MATH TEACHER WANTED: Rivendell School in Arlington, VA, is committed to "helping children explore God's world and discover their place in it." If this mission excites you and you are a math teacher, we'd love to hear from you! We are looking for a part-time math teacher to begin work Aug. 2010. Please find application materials at rivendellschool.net, or call the school office, 703-532-1200.

PERFORMANCE: Shelley Waite will be singing in a concert at June 13, 7pm at Providence Church, 9019 Little River Turnpike, Fairfax VA. To reserve tickets, call 703-978-3934. Tickets are \$20 in advance (\$10 students/seniors) and \$25 at the door (\$15 students/seniors).