



**Midweek Service of Word and Prayer
Grace Lutheran Church
Lincoln, Nebraska**

Introduction to Sunday

Jesus says that the bread he gives for the life of the world is himself, and whoever eats this bread has eternal life now and will be raised on the last day. In Ephesians Paul tells us what this life Jesus gives us looks like, this life we live as those marked with the seal of the Holy Spirit in baptism. We live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us. The whole purpose of life is giving yourself for the other. So, this week consider how others have impacted your life and how you have impacted the lives of others around you.

Greeting

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

Prayer of the Day

Gracious God, your blessed Son came down from heaven to be the true bread that gives life to the world. Give us this bread always, that he may live in us and we in him, and that, strengthened by this food, we may live as his body in the world, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

Readings

1 Kings 19

5Then he lay down under the broom tree and fell asleep. Suddenly an angel touched him and said to him, "Get up and eat."

How have you experienced God's care for you?

Psalms 34

8Taste and see that the LORD is good; happy are they who take refuge in God!

How have you experienced the goodness of God in your life?

Ephesians 4

31Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice, 32and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you.

Is living with others easy or hard for you? Why?

John 6

51"I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh."

What is significant about the reality that God comes to us in the body of his Son named Jesus?

Reflection

The Greatest Bread

Jesus uses the image of bread to demonstrate that, even compared to all the great things God has done before, God's greatest miracle is in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Jesus, the bread of life, is a greater miracle than the manna God sent in the desert (Exod. 16:14), greater than the bread the angel brought to restore Elijah (1 Kings 19:4-8), greater even than the loaves Jesus had just multiplied to feed a crowd of more than five thousand people (John 6:1-14)! In Jesus, God gives bread for the journey—not only for this life, but also into eternal life.

We're so familiar with this image that it loses some of its original power. But the claim Jesus is making here is a radical one—and a dangerous one. To Jesus' original audience, his claim to be the bread from heaven, the Son of God, must have sounded like outrageous blasphemy. "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?" they say. "How can he now say, 'I have come down from heaven'?" (John 6:42). Who does this guy think he is? Jesus' message is both outrageous and outrageously comforting: anyone who eats this bread will live forever. The Son of God meets us in this life and gives us real and certain hope for eternal life. Normal bread is amazing in its own right; manna is miraculous. But Jesus Christ is the true bread and the greatest miracle of all. "Taste and see that the Lord is good" (Ps. 34:8).

Music Offering

"Bread of Life" – Bernadette Farrell

Lord's Prayer (together)

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Apostle's Creed (together)

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended to the living, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Responsive Prayer

Show us your mercy, O God,

and grant us your salvation.

Give us the joy of your saving help again,

and sustain us with your bountiful Spirit.

Give peace in all the world;

for only in you can we live in safety.

Keep the nations under your care,

and guide us in the way of justice and truth.

Let your way be known upon earth;

your saving health among all nations.

Let not the needy be forgotten,

nor the hope of the poor be taken away.

Create in us a clean heart, O God,

and sustain us with your Holy Spirit.

Lord, hear my prayer,

and let my cry come before you.

Closing Prayer

O God, in you we live and move and have our being. Guide and govern us every day by your Holy Spirit, that in all the cares and occupations of our life we may not forget you, but remember that always we are walking in your promises; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Dismissal

Go in peace. Serve the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Blessing

Almighty God (+) bless us, defend us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen.**