



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

## Introduction to Sunday

Apparently not satisfied by Jesus' feeding of thousands, some who were there press him for a sign of his power; perhaps it is daily manna they want. As always in John's gospel when people want a sign, Jesus offers himself. He is the bread come from heaven to give life to the world. He calls us to come to him and believe in him, and through that relationship to know the one who sent him. So, this week, ponder what you have learned about God and the world around you through Jesus.

## 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

O God, eternal goodness, immeasurable love, you place your gifts before us; we eat and are satisfied. Fill us and this world in all its need with the life that comes only from you, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

## Readings

Exodus 16

<sup>3</sup>The Israelites said to them, "If only we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots and ate our fill of bread; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger."

When has your despair impaired your vision of God's will for you? What did you learn?

Psalm 78

<sup>25</sup>So mortals ate the bread of angels; God provided for them food enough.

How do you interpret the "bread of angels"?

Ephesians 4

<sup>4</sup>There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling,...

What is the hope of your calling?

John 6

<sup>27</sup>Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures for eternal life,...

How does the promise of eternity impact your daily reality?

## **Reflection**

### **From Rumbling Bellies to Living Bread**

Today's texts move us from rumbling bellies and flaring tempers to a refocusing on the blessings poured out and the primary benefactor. We see the gifts of God, which come in a variety of ways: physical nourishment, roles and talents lifted up in community, new life given now and into the ages of ages.

We find that gifts from God are responses to various actions—complaining, building for the future, longing for signs of promise and hope. Yet each of these actions and the gifts mean little if we are not able to see the one who is the giver and to recognize that the gifts are not merely about what we can do to get them or what signs are needed to prove them; rather, it is about trust in God, who is the source of life and living—the one who provides the true bread from heaven.

Our role in this story is to tell the history of God's giving, similar to the psalmist. It is to open our eyes to the way the bread of heaven is sustaining us today, physically and spiritually. And as a community living in God's promise, we look to the one God sends to us as *the* bread of life.

In many early Hebrew and Greek writings, the stomach was a driving force and a place where hope and faith were lodged. The readings point us to see how a longing for food opens a greater dwelling place for the gifts of faith and promise. From our physical depths we are called to experience a greater spiritual reality.

### **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.**