

October 7, 2018  
**Food For The Journey**  
John 6:47-51  
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I would like to ask you a question which has been asked by many people for a long time. Which one preceded the other? The chicken or the egg? This is one of the most puzzling questions. Then I have one more question, which is a more serious question. Do you think that we eat to live or we live to eat? Let us think of ourselves for a while whether we eat to live or we live to eat. This is a basic and existential question in our life. Even though Jesus said, "Do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'" Those worries become the important economic issues in our society, as well as in our daily life.

Today, economy and its globalization affect the entire world, including politics, culture, religion, art, technology, and so on. Whenever I go to a restaurant, I have difficulty deciding, "What shall I eat," searching the variety of food from the menu. But for many people the worry of "what shall I eat" is not a matter of decision of the menu, but the matter of "to be or not to be."

Have you ever suffered from hunger or starvation? There are many people who are suffering from hunger in Africa, South Asia, South America, North Korea, even in the U.S.A. The people from my grandparents and parents age experienced hunger during 35 years of the Japanese colonial period, and during 3 years of the Korean War, and a decade after the War. I didn't have that experience, but I experienced the shortage of food, especially rice, which is the main and basic food for Korean people. When I was a child, it was hard to get enough rice, so my mother cooked rice mixed with beans, rye and other crops for my family. I couldn't have candy, cookies, drinks, or bread. I could eat them only on special occasions, especially birthdays or holidays.

Even though the purpose of life is not to eat, food is important for our living and makes our life more bountiful. I am very thankful for living in a society which has abundant food. But, on the other side, I am sorry and feel guilty for those people who are suffering from hunger around the world, especially thousands of people in Indonesia who were killed and are still suffering from the earthquake and the tsunami this past week. We need to find a way to help them from their hunger.

The United States has encountered economic difficulty for several years. It becomes harder to find a job for college graduates. There are many homeless people in the United States. They need food, clothes, and shelter. They are suffering from poverty, not from hunger. Compared to other countries, however, the United States is still the wealthiest country in the world. We

are enjoying the abundance of natural resources, wonderful public facilities, and beautiful landscapes. I think the more critical issue in America is not the economic problem, but the spiritual problem. Many American people are suffering from spiritual hunger in their convenient and plentiful lives. They don't or can't find meaning, purpose, or direction in their lives. They try to escape from their meaningless, purposeless, and uncertain lives through drugs or alcohol. They are involved in cults and practice oriental meditation such as yoga. They also sometimes feel bored, tired, or isolated in life. From time to time they want to give up living because of the heavy burden and the meaningless, or uncertainty of their lives. Therefore, they really need a rest and food for the journey.

What about your journey? Are you running on empty? Do you sometimes feel that you do not have the strength to travel onward for another day? It is time to eat. The food is all round you, especially in this place of worshipping God, and in the people who sit beside you, people who have faith and support and pray for you. God is here. God is here in truth as we share the word of God during worship, or a small group meeting, or Sunday school class. God is here in the bread that is about to be passed around this sanctuary during Holy Communion. God is here in the light that enters through the windows, in the water that flows in the rivers, and in ordinary things - the rising and setting of the sun, and the moon and the stars, and the everchanging mountains, and the rhythm of the seasons. Especially, God is here in Christ. In the Gospel lesson this morning, Jesus said, "*I am the bread of life*" (48) and again "*I am the living bread that came down from heaven - whoever eats of this bread will live forever*" (51). Jesus promises the bread of life for our journey. Solid food is available for all of us. The food will sustain us on our spiritual journey. It will be a great tragedy if we do not take it up and eat it.

The bread Jesus provides for us might be ordinary bread, which we can get by joining in our ordinary worship service. We can get the bread when we are involved in our ordinary ministries at the church, and especially when we come to the Lord's Table. This ordinary bread is powerful and magical. The ordinary bread from our daily routine of life and ministry nourishes us as we go on our spiritual journey. We have to have the eyes to see the importance of spiritual food.

God has provided us with food for our journey. Let us take and eat the food, the bread of life. We can be strong in God. We can reach the place God is calling us to and we can do what God wants us to do. Amen.

### Questions for Reflection

1. Do you eat to live or live to eat? Do you worry about 'What shall I eat??' How important is food in your life?
2. What is the bread Jesus provides for you? Is it powerful and magical for you? If so, share the reason(s)?