**John 6:22-35 August 1st 2021**

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

Our text for this morning comes from the Gospel of John the 6th chapter here re-reading these words. “Jesus answered them, ‘Very truly I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw signs I performed but because you ate the loaves and you had your fill. Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you.” This is our text.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Why have you come here? Was it because of our event in the park? Family Fun Day? Did you come to see if we would be handing out the leftover donuts, cotton candy, and snowcones? Did you come for games and entertainment? Did you come to hear the children sing songs from this past week’s Vacation Bible School? Did you wander in off the street after seeing our sign or our website? How did you come to get here? Were your parents members of this church and now you are too? Maybe you don’t even remember. Are you visiting the area and looking for a place to worship? At the end of the day, does it really matter why you are here? No. What’s important is that you are here, hearing God’s Word and growing in your faith. What’s important is that you’ve come to God’s House and are in His presence. But we also have to face our own intentions, and look into the mirror of God’s Word to see if we are reflected in the intentions of the crowds who sought Jesus in John chapter 6.

In our Gospel lesson for today the crowds went to see Jesus, even hunting him down and traveling by boat all the way to Capernaum. Going to see Jesus was the right decision, but their intentions were wrong. It is entirely possible to do the right thing, with the wrong intentions. If I stop to help someone who is in need with the sole purpose of receiving a reward for my effort, than I have done the right thing, with the wrong intentions. If I purposely spend time getting to know someone, and talking with them only to use that information against them, than I have done a good thing with the wrong intentions. Here the crowds came to find Jesus but they aren’t necessarily there to hear his new teaching, or even to have revealed to them the truth of the Law of Moses; the very fact that they were sinners who needed to repent. Instead they come to him with the assumption that he will continue to do what he did before. Earlier in Mark chapter 6 and now here in John chapter 6 we find the miracle of the feeding of the 5000. Jesus himself makes reference to the fact that the people came because they had eaten their fill of the loaves. Now they expected that to continue. They wanted another taste of this miraculous food, the bread that was provided from the miracle worker who could keep them fed and happy the rest of their lives.

Those were their bad intentions. Think about your own life, when do people come to you with bad intentions? What do you do in those situations? In my time as a Father I like to think I have a pretty good idea of the intentions of my children when they come to me. For example, with my youngest Son, if I pick up something shiny or different, or interesting, whether it’s a new toy, the television remote, or even something dangerous, when my son comes over to me, I know it’s not just to give his Dad a hug. I know his intentions are to grab this new thing and play with it. Which is I have to recognize those intentions and misdirect my child from the dangerous thing to something harmless or more suited for them to play with. He comes expecting to get the new and shiny object, and he leaves with a different object that I want him to have like a harmless toy or stuffed animal. Misdirection is the name of the game, this is true for children in your own family, and even during the week of Vacation Bible School when you are just trying to survive.

In a way that’s what happens with this crowd that comes to see Jesus. They come expecting another miraculous gift, similar to the feeding of the 5000, and Jesus knows that right from the start. He knows why they are coming up to him from the moment they first ask him “Rabbi, when did you come here?” But instead of addressing the loaves he points them to something better. Something that lasts, as he explains to them, “do not labor for the food that perishes.” In a sense he’s saying “Forget about the bread, and the loaves, and any kind of earthly food for a second, leave that behind. Instead focus and labor for the food that endures to eternal life. The food that can’t be obtained on your own, but this is food that we still receive today here in God’s house as God’s children and this food that we still need today. This food is obtained by the Son of Man, who gives it to you.

Just like when my son comes to me expecting one thing and instead is given another, we, like the crowds, come to God here in his house, come to God in prayer, come to God in family and personal devotions, and while that is itself the best thing we could possibly do on a Sunday morning, or any other time of the week, we don’t always come with the best intentions. Again, if we stop and think about ourselves and how we even got here, we may not have all come from the same background, or with the same intentions even this particular Sunday in the Summertime after so many events have happened this past week. At times we come to Church, expecting something. Expecting praise, recognition, expecting some credit for the good things we’ve done in our lives the past few weeks or months, expecting God to pat us on the back for being Good Christians, completely ignoring the sins that we commit the second we walk out of those doors, and the sins we commit while we are sitting in the pew. And before we start pointing our finger at the crowds who came to Jesus expecting earthly rewards and literal bread, let’s not kid ourselves. How many times have we asked God for earthly wants, rather than spiritual needs? How many times have we given in to the lie that we deserve more money, more food, better health, a bigger house, a nicer car, all because we are Christians. That’s the lie, that’s the false intention, to believe that since we are here this morning we are somehow better and therefore deserve a reward for our actions. But our actions are done, with the wrong intentions. Truly every inclination and intention we have when it comes to the work that we do in this world is tainted with sin. Sin that doesn’t want God’s kingdom to come, sin that wants to focus only on the perishable joys of this world, rather than the imperishable promises that God has given us.

Promises that we see here in John 6 this week, and promises that we will have the opportunity to hear about in the next few weeks as we stay in this text, and hear about the bread of life. The bread that goes beyond our understanding of sustenance in this world’s standards, where a loaf of bread can last for a few weeks, but a really fresh loaf of bread will last for a few days if that. Here Jesus is talking about bread that lasts, forever, bread that destroys any kind of hunger that we as humans could possibly experience. While we come to Christ with false intentions, while we come to Jesus seeking the wrong thing, and focusing on the wrong things, and failing to recognize our sin until we see His Law and the standard of perfection that we can’t possibly meet, he still sends us away with His love, and with His forgiveness in the bread of life, which he explains to us here in John 6. After the people hear that the bread their ancestors received in the wilderness came from God providing for them, and that physical bread isn’t what Jesus is describing, that he’s talking about the Bread of God that gives life to the entire world. He shows them who that bread is by saying. “I am, the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.” Where does true satisfaction come from? Jesus. Jesus, the answer to the rumblings of our sinful self, seeking to be satisfied. He is himself the bread of life. For God sent him, to give life to the entire world. Not by miraculously multiplying loaves and fish until everyone has earthly and perishable bread to an abundance. That wasn’t his focus, even though it was the focus of the crowds. And in a way their expectation was another temptation for him to seek earthly power and majesty rather than the reason he came which was to be a servant to God’s Will by dying on the cross.

He throws all of that away, the earthly fame, the earthly power, the temptation to use his divinity to make the crowds happy for their own reasons, and points them to the true source of eternal life that can never perish. He points them to himself. To his person, as God’s own Son, to his identity as the Savior of the world. To the fact that he has come, to be given by God himself, as we are reminded of John’s words earlier in chapter 3, that God has given him to the world, that whoever believes in Jesus, the bread of life, will not perish, but have eternal life. A message so simple to understand that even this past week we were singing the words of John 3:16 set to music at Vacation Bible School.

When the crowds came to Jesus seeking earthly bread and heard of the bread of life they asked Jesus “Sir, give us this bread always” and Jesus answered that the bread they were seeking was right in front of them. Again we are reminded that in their seeking of Jesus they were doing the right thing, they were going to the source of life, peace, and the satisfaction of their hungry souls, they were just going with the wrong intentions. Here today we again seek this bread, and that’s why we come to God’s house. For this is where Jesus comes to us. Where we receive His forgiveness and the clear teaching of His Word to guide our lives and give us peace.

So this day, no matter what the reason was that you came through those doors and into God’s house, may you leave with the sure promise, that God has provided for you himself as your life and himself for the forgiveness of your sins. May you have the confidence that through faith, faith that was given as a gift, faith that is the work of the Holy Spirit, that through that faith, you receive salvation and therefore your life is not a work of yourself, but a gift from God. God be with you and bless you as we remember the miraculous mission of God who sent His Son Jesus Christ to save us, and also as we come with the best intentions to bask in the presence of Jesus our Savior.

Amen.

The peace of God which surpasses all human understanding keep our hearts and minds through faith in Christ Jesus.

Amen.