



31 Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat. 32 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. 33 For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. 34 Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. 35 And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. 36 But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not. 37 All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. 38 For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. (John 6:31-38)

The Eighth Sunday after Trinity.

The Collect.

GOD, whose never-failing providence ordereth all things both in heaven and earth; We humbly beseech thee to put away from us all hurtful things, and to give us those things which are profitable for us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

The subject today of this parable is not new to my readers. I have made reference many times in other studies about that Bread that comes down from Heaven – that very Bread of Life. However, I have not covered this topic primarily from the standpoint of the entire exposition which Christ gives it here in these verses. If we know not that Christ is our Bread, and how desperately we need that Bread for our daily sustenance, we are indeed spiritually starving, and living in a penurious destitution that leads to a constant atrophy of soul. Our physical bodies have innate means to inform us of the need for physical bread. Our stomach growls and demands that we eat – not tomorrow, or next week – but immediately.

The malnutrition of the soul is more subtle because it does not reveal itself in a

physical manifestation. It is more subtle and subdued in its appearance. The soul, if deprived of the daily Bread of Heaven, will actually begin to wilt and die. There being no nerve system of the soul (except a keen conscience) to alert the heart of the gradual death, the soul may decline in its fervency and life juices until it has become as dead as it was ever before it came first to taste that sweet Manna of God. The first organ of the soul to fall victim to this malnutrition is the eye. No longer does the eye find the beauty of God's Creation of great inspiration. The beauty of God in all of its expressions becomes dull and unimportant to that eye. It no longer can see clearly to read the Words of God because the soul's brain is also afflicted by the want of Bread. It may even decline into spiritual Alzheimers. Next in the natural decline of the soul is the ability of the soul's ear to hear the beauty of nature and the Voice of that loving Redeemer who has continued to make that Bread available even while we reject it for lack of appetite. He remembers our souls even if they do not remember Him and have fallen away in dullness of health and love. Failure to see God in His Word and to hear His Voice calling us to return will result inexorably in spiritual anorexia. The soul dies because it does not know that it is starving to death. It is at this moment that the soul needs the miracle of Lazarus to have the Voice of Christ penetrate the dead ears and stone-cold tomb and to quicken a heart that has grown cold and moldy after a long famine of hearing the Word of the Lord.

31 Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat. This assertion of the multitudes that had followed Jesus from across Galilee to Capernaum followed this earlier exchange: *Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent. They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work?* (John 6:28-30) Jesus clearly explains that the works of God are a condition of the heart and not of the hands. The works of God in our lives is not what we DO, but what we BELIEVE! And the ONE in whom we believe makes all of the difference! Have we not seen enough miracles of God in nature itself...in the birth of a newborn baby...in the budding of a red rose...in the Lily of the Valleys? And what of the Bright and Morning Star that graces the heavens with perfect regularity? The mountains of the Lord, His seas, His verdant pasturelands....are these not signs enough?

Those who seek special signs and wonders beyond that which Christ has given in His very death and resurrection are dead already to life. ***An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.*** (Matt 12:39-40) This SIGN has already been given. Upon this Sign hangs all of our hopes for Salvation and Eternity with God. We need no other. Or, perhaps you feel that this present generation is not that "***evil and adulterous generation?***" Please sober up and look at reality. There has never been a time in the history of the United States, or the world, that nations have given the benefit of law to abortions and homosexual marriages. Never has the murder rate and other great crimes been so common.

32 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. This is a truth that we may not digest without the words of Christ given in parable and metaphor. The people of Israel wondered in the Wilderness. They were brought to that Wilderness as a means of gaining liberty, not only of body, but of conscience as well. They needed sustenance for their bodies. God gave them Manna from Heaven to sustain those bodies. With God, the physical manifestation usually precedes the spiritual one. We are told in Exodus 16 that the Children of Israel could only gather Manna sufficient for the day. If they gathered more than their need, the left-over Manna would sour and stink

the next morning. This was true for every day except that preceding the Sabbath, for on that day, they gathered sufficient for the Sabbath as well so that no labor would be expended on the Sabbath. Herein is an important lesson for our souls. We must gather of the Bread of Heaven every day. We cannot read five chapters of the Bible one day and fast from the Word for the next six days. We cannot eat enough bread today to keep us from starving three days hence. Good health requires daily food for both body and soul.

33 *For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.* Do you now see distinctly what that Bread truly is? What is it that has come down from Heaven and given us life? Do you remember these verses? *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men.* (John 1:1-4) and *And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.* (John 1:14) Who is this Word? Aren't we told in the very first verse of John's Gospel? We are even told in the first chapter of Genesis as well. It is the Lord Jesus Christ! He is the Word! He is the Water of Life! He is the Bread of Heaven!

34 *Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.* These dunces were blind to the gentle voice of God. Amazingly, they still miss the point! Let us go easy on them for so have we oft missed the point, too.

If we (or they) have further doubts (which would be unbelievable!), we have it in the next verse spoken by Christ: **35 *And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.*** Can there be any doubt of the Communion Bread and its symbolic meaning to us at the Lord's Table? If we have taken Christ into our hearts, not as a guest but as the Sovereign of our hearts, we have an overflowing abundance of Bread for our souls. It is quite inexhaustible! Have we "come" to Him – REALLY come to Him? Have we believed beyond foolish whim? Have we believed with such faith that our hearts cannot be shaken? If so, like the woman at a fateful Well of Jacob's without the gates of Sychar, we shall never thirst again from that Water He has given us. If we have been left alone face to face with the Master, we shall depart filled and brimming over with that same love the woman taken in adultery felt at the soothing words of the Stranger of Galilee. We, too, shall "***Go and sin no more!***" I do not recoil at being taken red-handed in my sins. I count it an honor and privilege to have been drawn, even by my enemies, before the only source of my salvation in Christ as was that woman. These are two women I can love and admire after their confrontation with the Lord of Life. I am privileged to have had the same confrontation!

36 *But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not.* The conscience of Thomas no doubt stung at the Words of Christ in reminding him that he had seen Christ and doubted. ***Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.*** (John 20:29) Whether we admit it or not, we have ALL seen Him. We have seen Him in the heavens, in the evening dews and damps, in the full balance of life under the Sun. We have seen Him in the innocence of a child's eyes, have we not? Whose artful Hand, pray tell, painted the iridescent colors of the sunrise, the petals of the Morning Glory or the daisy, the intricate color patterns of the butterfly or the wings of the cardinal? Do you know HIM? Knowing all of the sure mercies and beauties of God, how is it possible to doubt. Yet, some do even as Thomas.

37 *All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.* Here is full measure of comfort and joy to the Chosen of God! God the Father has given you to Christ BEFORE ever you CAME to Him! Is this some variant of Calvinism? Not at all, it is simple biblical truth! If Calvin said it, he simply

stated biblical truth in that case. The mystery of WHY or HOW we finally come we will leave to Arminius and Calvin to settle when all mysteries shall be revealed. Both will probably be taken by the surprise of truth. All that we can know of the subject, presently and with certainty, is that which has been revealed in God's Word. Theologians despise mystery. They are too proud to admit that some mystery exists in Holy Scripture of which they are not fully qualified to reveal. But they are wrong. Were there no mystery, there would be no compelling curiosity – no amazement at the power of God.

Did you sneak up unawares and surprise Christ by choosing Him as Lord and Savior? *Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you.....*(John 15:16) Do you believe these words were offered for the benefit of the apostles only? What of Paul's words to the Ephesians? *According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.* (Eph 1:4-6 (KJV) When did you choose Christ? Did you do so before the foundation of the world? Perhaps He actually chose you before you chose Him since you may have missed the forming of the world. Did we become 'good enough' at His choosing us? No, not at all. Then how came we to be good enough? "...he hath made us accepted in the beloved." Oh, I see: perhaps it is by the imputed righteousness of Christ, our Redeemer and Substitute, that we are viewed in righteousness by God! Isn't it a comfort to know that you belong to Christ and, that in belonging to Him, you are secure in your faith? Those who come to Him, He shall "*in no wise cast out!*"

38 *For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.* By what measure should we serve God? Do we serve by intricate planning and labors, or do we simply seek His perfect will in ALL that we do? Look at even the works of His Beloved Son, Jesus! He came not to do His own will, but the will of the Father in Heaven. That is no new concept, is it? Do we not pray the Lord's Prayer at every communal worship? We pray that prayer because it IS a communal prayer in worship. It begins with the possessive pronoun, OUR! Have we seriously considered the words, "*Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven?*" (Matt 6:10) or have we taken the Lord's name in vain by simply responding with the words and not the meaning? In fact, EVERY prayer we utter should contain that sentiment expressed. If we lived our lives according to our own will, what provision would that hold for faith in God? Reader, have you eaten the Bread of Heaven today? Have you sought, diligently, the will of God for your life? Do you know Him and hold Him in your heart of hearts? You will know that you are His chosen vessel if you have that burning desire to be so, and you will also KNOW in your heart that He is there (for He fills that heart up with Love).