

The Fourth Sunday in Lent – Pr. Faugstad sermon  
St. John 6:1-15: “Jesus Gives the Food That Endures to Eternal Life.”  
March 14/15, 2026 | Saude, Jerico, & Redeemer Lutheran Churches

### In Nomine Iesu

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O Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, You are the bread of life, and have promised that whoever comes to You shall never hunger: Grant us faith truly to partake of You through Word and Sacrament, that we may find refreshment of spirit and be strengthened for Your service; who lives and reigns with the Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, ever one God, now and forever. Amen. (*Parish Prayers*, ed. Frank Colquhoun, p. 60)

*Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. (Rom. 1:7, etc.)*

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*The sermon text for today is written in the sixth chapter of the Gospel according to St. John. We read selected verses in Jesus' name:*

After this Jesus went away to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias. And a large crowd was following Him, because they saw the signs that He was doing on the sick. Jesus went up on the mountain, and there He sat down with His disciples. Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand. Lifting up His eyes, then, and seeing that a large crowd was coming toward Him, Jesus said to Philip, “Where are we to buy bread, so that these people may eat?” He said this to test him, for He Himself knew what He would do. / Philip answered Him, “Two hundred denarii would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little.” One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, said to Him, “There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are they for so many?” / Jesus said, “Have the people sit down.” Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, about five thousand in number. Jesus then took the loaves, and when He had given thanks, He distributed them to those who were seated. So also the fish, as much as they wanted. / And when they had eaten their fill, He told His disciples, “Gather up the leftover fragments, that nothing may be lost.” So they gathered them up and filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves left by those who had eaten. When the people saw the sign that He had done, they said, “This is indeed the Prophet who is to come into the world!” / Perceiving then that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king, Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by Himself. <sup>(ESV)</sup>

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*These are Your words, heavenly Father. Sanctify us by Your truth, Your Word is truth. Amen. (Joh. 17:17)*

In Christ Jesus, who came to give life to the world through His flesh and blood, dear fellow redeemed:

They had been free for one month. No longer were they under the harsh rule of the Egyptians. The LORD had led them out of Egypt by His servant Moses. He even opened up a path for them to walk through the Red Sea. But the people of Israel were dissatisfied. Their bellies growled with hunger, and they began to wish they were back in Egypt where at least they had something to eat. The LORD heard their cry; He had not forgotten His people. He said to Moses, “Behold, I am about to rain bread from heaven for you, and the people shall go out and gather a day’s portion every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in my law or not” (Exo. 16:4).

Every morning, there was dew around the camp. *“And when the dew had gone up, there was on the face of the wilderness a fine, flake-like thing, fine as frost on the ground”* (v. 14). The people were encouraged to gather as much of this as they could eat, but they were not to keep any until the next day. The exception to this was on Friday when they must gather twice as much, so that no collecting would be needed on the Sabbath day, the day of rest.

Whoever did not listen to the LORD and kept bread overnight any day but Friday, found that in the morning it had worms and stunk. This was to teach the people to rely on the LORD for food day after day. The people called the bread “manna,” which means, “what is it?” because they had never seen anything like it before. God gave them this bread for forty years until they came into the Promised Land of Canaan.

Nearly 1500 years later, the people of Israel followed Jesus into the wilderness by the Sea of Galilee. No one had ever done the signs He was doing; He healed the sick. No one had ever taught like He had; His teaching cut to the heart, but it also comforted. They were so focused on the things Jesus was doing that they had brought no provisions with them.

As the shadows lengthened, the twelve disciples came to Jesus and said, *“This is a desolate place, and the day is now over; send the crowds away to go into the villages and buy food for themselves”* (Mat. 14:15). Jesus had another solution. A boy shared with Him five barley loaves and two fish. He gave thanks for this gift and proceeded to distribute bread and fish to all who were gathered there – five thousand men with women and children besides.

They had never seen a miracle like this! And then the wheels started turning. This abundant food in the wilderness reminded them of something. They thought of Moses’ words: *“The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers – it is to him you shall listen”* (Deu. 18:15). The people said, *“This is indeed the Prophet who is to come into the world!”* They wanted to make Him their king, but Jesus quietly left them and went up the mountain by Himself to pray.

The next day, the resolve of the people had not changed. Full of anticipation, they located Jesus. But their conversation with Him did not go as they had hoped. Jesus said to them, *“Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. Do not labor for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you”* (Joh. 6:26-27).

Jesus exposed the plans of the people that they were looking not for a Savior from sin but for a savior from hunger. If they wanted a Savior from sin, they should expect to find this in the One who performed all these wonderful miracles. But the people just wanted their physical needs satisfied, and following Jesus seemed like the way to accomplish this. They focused on the gift when they should have been focusing on the Giver.

This was true of the Old Testament Israelites also, but forty years of continuous manna from heaven taught them something. Before they entered the land of Canaan, Moses recounted the people’s journey through the wilderness. He said: *“And [the LORD] humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know*

*that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD” (Deu. 8:3).*

Our bodies certainly need food. That is how the LORD designed them even before the fall into sin. But we are not to live *“by bread alone.”* This means that our days and our lives should be occupied with more than the pursuit of daily bread. We learn in the Catechism that *“daily bread includes everything needed for this life.”* We also learn that it is God who gives daily bread, and we know by experience this is true. Each of us can say that God has given us earthly blessings far beyond our basic needs, just like the large amount of leftovers gathered up after Jesus fed the multitude.

But these earthly gifts can only do so much for us. They only go so far. Their usefulness is limited to our short life on earth. Jesus pointed out to the people that *“Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died” (Joh. 6:49).* It was bread from heaven, but it did not bring with it the promise of eternal life. In the same way, Jesus could continue to produce for the people vast amounts of food from very little or even out of nothing, but what good would this do for their souls?

Jesus said to them, *“I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.... I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh” (vv. 35,51).* And how did the people react to this? They *“disputed among themselves, saying, ‘How can this man give us his flesh to eat?’” (v. 52).*

Well, how could He? He had already told them: *“For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life” (v. 40).* Jesus, the Bread of Life, is consumed by all who believe the Gospel message. God’s gracious Word is the platter that serves up Jesus. His flesh and blood are the main course which satisfies the hungry soul.

But does your soul feel hunger pangs for Jesus? Are you more concerned about *“the food that perishes,”* or *“the food that endures to eternal life”*? This is a real struggle. You know very well when your stomach is empty. And you can see when your earthly goods need to be fixed or replaced. But it is not as obvious when faith is running near empty, or when your understanding about God and your perspective on life in the world needs to be fixed or replaced. If you go without food for twenty-four hours, your body lets you know; there is discomfort and pain. But you can go twenty-four or forty-eight hours, or seven days, a few weeks, or even a number of months without realizing that your faith is starving.

Faith is not some goal to reach, that once you have gotten there and know the facts—once you have faith—you don’t need to be concerned about keeping it. Faith needs to keep being fed. It hungers for the Bread of Life, for Jesus. If faith does not hear Jesus and receive Jesus and get filled up with Jesus, then it cannot last. But if faith is given a steady diet of Jesus through home devotions and the dispensing of the Word and Sacraments at church, the Lord promises that it will not expire. Your faith will be rejuvenated and strengthened just as your body is whenever you eat.

There is no better food for your soul than the food of Jesus. Your soul hungers for forgiveness and life because by nature you have sin and death. This sin is what tricks you into thinking that you have no pressing spiritual need, and that your pursuit of earthly riches is more important than anything else. But the world's goods go the same way as the manna the Israelites sinfully tried to stockpile overnight. The world's goods leave a bad taste in the mouth, and in the end they are worthless. The food, clothing, and home that you have are gifts from God. But they must never take the place of Jesus and His Word.

When Jesus comes to you through the Gospel, He counteracts the sin and death in you. He chokes the old Adam which is trying to choke you. He starves the death that wants to devour you. He has the power to do that because sin already did its worst against Him, and death already swallowed Him up in the grave. Neither was able to destroy Him, and He emerged victorious over sin, death, and hell. Whenever you consume Jesus by faith, whether by hearing His Word or by eating and drinking His body and blood in the Lord's Supper, you are partaking of His victory and filling yourself with His life.

For all who hunger and thirst for righteousness believing in His name, **Jesus Gives the Food That Endures to Eternal Life.** He gives you the food of Himself which never grows old, never spoils, and never runs out. This Bread of Life is the rich nourishment your soul needs—a holy food offered to you for this life and for the life to come.

*Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, forevermore. Amen.*

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