

Lessons for the Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost

August 4, 2024

Psalm 145:10-21 ~ *A Psalm of praise for God's creation and his mercy to the needs of his creatures.*

Exodus 16:2-15 ~ *God provided quail and manna for the Israelites in the wilderness.*

Ephesians 4:1-16 ~ *Christ nourishes His body, the Church as He builds us up in the unity of the Spirit.*

John 6:22-35 ~ *Jesus is the Bread of Life and far more valuable than bread which molds and spoils.*

GATHERING THE TEXTS: Food for Eternal Life

God sent manna and quail to keep the Israelites alive in the wilderness. That was food for the desert. Years later in Galilee, the crowd that had enjoyed Jesus' bread in the late afternoon learned that God had provided an even greater food for heaven. Jesus is the Bread for Eternal Life. Just as the manna fed the whole company of the Israelites and the bread strengthened the crowd on the hillside, so Jesus nourishes the body of believers in the bond of peace and keeps us united to serve one another with His gifts of love in the unity of the Spirit.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERVICE: Merciful Father, thank You for giving me faith in Jesus, Your own Son. May my life be enriched and nourished for eternity by the Bread from Heaven, so that I may not struggle desperately for the things I need each day, but accept them gratefully from Your generous hand -- and as generously, share them with others. Amen.

STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT: God provided food for the daily needs of His people, but the bread that was stashed away as a hedge against God's bounty, spoiled the next day. Why do we work so hard to keep the things that God provides, instead of sharing the one thing that keeps us all in God's love -- Jesus, the Bread of Life?

OFFERING PRAYER: Bread from Heaven, much of what we have today
Only serves our wants and quickly wastes away.
Bless these earthly gifts to serve You mightily,
Feeding hungry hearts with Life eternally. Amen.

CONVICTION AND COMFORT: We concern ourselves with provisions for our body and eagerly expect luxuries that ease our lives and enrich our recreation. God provides them willingly, but desires even more that we embrace His greater gift, the Bread that nourishes our faith and gives us eternal life. Jesus is the One who feeds us the Bread of life that we may grow up in every way into Him who is the head, into Christ our Lord.