

A few weeks ago, I referenced a joke about the cat on the roof, but I didn't actually recite it. So here it is: A fellow returns from vacation and meets with the house sitter. He asks, "How did everything go while I was gone?" The house sitter, without preamble, says, "Your cat died." The homeowner goes ballistic. He exclaims, "That was harsh. You should work up to something like that." The house sitter asks, "How?" The homeowner responds, "Say something to prepare me for that, like, 'I lost track of the cat, he got up on the roof, we called the fire department, they failed, and eventually, the cat fell off and died.' Now, is there anything else you want to tell me about while I was gone?" The house sitter says, "Yes, your aunt was up on the roof and..."

I can tell that joke because the entire Gospel of John is crafted in such a way as to introduce you to incredible, mystical, and mysterious truths by making those truths themes that build slowly throughout the book. You are then prepared for the incredible thematic wonders of the Gospel. Belief, of course, is one of those. In John 3, it states, "For whosoever believes shall not perish," and in this passage, Jesus says, "To do the work of God is to believe in the one who sent Him." Then John's Gospel climaxes the belief motif with the famous Doubting Thomas scene in which Jesus says, "Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed."

There are many more themes like that in John, but this morning, in this chapter, He says, "I am the bread of life, the true bread that comes down from heaven." Jesus, throughout John, uses the "I am" sayings, which lead up to the dramatic "I am," reflecting the divine nature of Jesus based on the burning bush statement of God, "I am." When Jesus says this, 1,000 Roman soldiers fall to the ground. He has many "I am" sayings which lead up to that: "I am the light of the world," "I am the good shepherd," "I am the way, the truth, and the life," and here, "I am the bread of life." The bread which He gives to any who ask will become part of Him and part of His people.

In the Lord's Prayer, the petition we use is, "Give us this day our daily bread," which is a reference to the manna in the wilderness that rained from heaven and was given to all who traveled with Israel. God was fashioning a group of slaves into a great nation. In John, Jesus is fashioning a new reign of God where all are included, as Jesus here feeds everyone in the crowd. This symbolizes the events when we have open communion, where we, as one people, share the loaf and the cup.

In Chapter 4, Jesus says, “I am the water of life; whoever believes in me will never thirst.” That theme is repeated in this chapter in verse 35, where Jesus declares, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.” Another theme in John is the one people. It often says “whoever,” like in this chapter: “Whoever believes in me shall never hunger nor thirst.” Throughout John, Jesus keeps speaking of the time that has not yet come. In fact, that is what He says to His mother when she wants Him to supply wine; He says, “My time has not yet come.” Later, when the Greeks are seeking Jesus, He says, “My time has come.” At another place, He speaks of being the good shepherd and having sheep that are not of this fold.

Jesus, in John’s Gospel, is leading us to important truths that Paul phrases this way: “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.”

A recent book by the Pope, **Laudato Si**, says, in sum, that we are all one family created in God’s image on the earth, our home which God created. All ethics stem from the fact that we are all one family living in one house, and everything we do affects others. People speak of the Red-Blue political divide. Well, all are welcome at this Table.

Mark Adams, our missionary from Mexico, came here and spoke to the children about the “three tables.” He set up two folding tables in front and said one was in the United States and one was in Mexico. He asked the kids who would eat at those tables, and what would be served at each one. They immediately knew. Then he spoke of the Lord’s Table, which straddles the border—not just the political border, but all borders: moral, racial, and demographic. God is the host, and we eat of one bread, we drink from one cup, and we are all one people—the people of God—because He sent His Son as the living bread to give life to those in the world. That is the miracle of the bread of life. It is the bread that satisfies the hungry soul. When people come to Trinity, they are looking for the bread of life. Let’s give them that bread freely and without hesitation, for that is our call.