

John 6:24-35 Seek the blessings of God that endure! Pentecost 11 August 5-6, 2018

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Grace and peace are yours to give you eternal blessings from God your Father through your Lord and Savior. The Gospel for our sermon continues in John 6:24-35.

These are Your Words heavenly Father to give us a genuine faith in Jesus. Your Word is truth! Amen!

Dear Christian Friends, in Jesus the Author and Perfecter of our faith,

I went to a Milwaukee Brewer's game recently. The Brewers were down by a run against the Colorado Rockies in bottom of the 9th with 2 outs & 2 men on base and their batter had two strikes. He fouled back a few more pitches and then got a perfect hit into the right field stands – a walk-off homerun! What excitement for Brewers fans! If only that could happen in every close game! But, we know that they can't win them all. There are too many variables in baseball. In life, it would be nice if everything could go the way we want, but that doesn't always happen either. That's why when things don't go as we plan we are not to be disappointed but to

Seek the blessings of God that endure!

First, human efforts fail to gain them. Jesus was talking with some of the 5,000 that He had fed a day earlier. They had followed Jesus back to the other side of the lake and were looking for more miracles to help make their lives easier. Jesus said, *"I tell you the truth; you are looking for me, not because you saw miraculous signs but because you ate the loaves and had your fill"* (v.26). Their main concern in life was for their daily needs: food, health, better government, and any other daily concerns. Jesus had more to offer beyond the bread, but they had no room for the great things He could have provided! Think of a very rich widow whose husband had fought in the war and later died. She took pity on a homeless veteran and offered him a place to stay, 3 meals a day, medical care, and counselors. But all he would take was \$10 for his next meal. He missed the great value of what was offered!

How much are we missing because our ways are not His ways? The Bible promises that God *will provide immeasurably more than we ask or imagine* (Ephesians 3:20). Why is our faith so narrow-sighted that we don't see God providing more? It depends on what we are asking by faith or simply looking for something by sight. Certainly, we don't always win in life just because we ask. We don't fully get over every injury or problem. We may ask, "If you are really my God, please heal me or help me with my needs." But we cannot lose sight of God's eternal goal for us despite the obstacles. Think about Jesus during His life on earth. He often went without food. He had little time to rest because of His ministry. He felt personally rejected when many Jews refused to hear His message. Even many so-called disciples later left Jesus when He said that His purpose was not to offer *"food that spoils, but food that endures to eternal life."* (v.27)

The crowd didn't understand. They thought that they could save themselves by works. They asked Jesus, *"What must we do to do the works God requires?"* "Jesus answered, *"The work of God is this: to believe in the one He has sent."* (v.28-29) Good works of unbelievers will not win God's approval. The Bible states, *"All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: 'Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law'"* (Galatians 3:10). God warns all of the consequences of His curse for those who do not repent of sins and receive Christ's forgiveness. They will be separated from their loving God forever. Without Christ, they will suffer alone in darkness with no end.

Jesus was speaking to them so they would know that He came to save them from eternal judgment. But, so many only wanted what He could provide now. They said, *"What miraculous sign will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? Our forefathers ate the manna in the desert"* (v.30-31). They were saying that before they would believe they demanded even greater miracles than the feeding of the 5,000. Do you really think that their unbelief would change to faith, if Jesus had done a greater miracle? No!

Jesus knew better and so should we. Our faith is not based on how comfortable our life is on earth. Jesus calls us to believe in Him above all to provide forgiveness and eternal life as a gift! Isaiah wrote, *“Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy?”* (Isaiah 55:2) I mentioned about the Brewers. With every game someone has to win and someone has to lose. But all people who believe in Jesus as their Savior will win! When we have Christ, God is our loving heavenly Father. He will hear and answer our prayers for our eternal life. He has promised to work everything for our good. No matter what happens to us in life, we have God’s promise that *nothing will separate us from His love in Christ Jesus!* (Romans 8:39) We have a certain future of eternal life with Christ without our human efforts!

Second, our life with Jesus will last. Even though we are tempted to put our physical needs ahead of our spiritual needs, we can be sure that our faith will last! God’s Word tells that we are saved by grace through faith in Christ alone. With the Holy Spirit’s blessing, we *“work for food that endures to eternal life”* (v.27). We will come to hear God’s Word, think about it, and pray for the Holy Spirit’s continued guidance. Then, we can fight our old sinful nature which doubts God’s promises. For just as God kept His promises in Christ, He will keep His promises to us! Jesus said, *“On [the Son] God the Father has given His seal of approval.”* (v.27) Page 3 God gave His approval at Jesus’ baptism when He called Jesus His beloved Son. God gave His approval through the miracles that He worked with Jesus. His final sign of approval was when He raised Jesus from the dead to declare that our Savior’s work was complete for us. By His death, Jesus paid for our eternal punishment and by His sinless life He earned eternal life for us. He freely offers these blessings for all. By that powerful gospel message, the Holy Spirit called us to faith and at the same time He keeps us in the faith.

Jesus said in verse 35, *“I am the Bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty.”* Who else but Jesus can help with our greatest needs? Who can give us hope in the face of serious problems in life? Jesus is our eternal Savior! That is why He came: He lived for us, died for us, and came alive for us! He came to answer our greatest need: to be saved so we could spend eternity with our loving God. Jesus He called Himself the “Bread of Life.” Have you ever heard the phrase, “You are what you eat?” Parents may make a joke with their children if they eat too many hamburgers they may turn into one. By faith we have taken in the Bread of Life, our Savior. When God looks at us on Judgment Day, He will only see Jesus who took away our sins and gave us His perfection. But, by faith in Jesus, we are what we eat!

Any who believe in Him will never have empty souls with spiritual hunger or be thirsty for a loving God. In Christ we will experience an eternal life of unending joy! Revelation 7 tells us that the things that bother us now: suffering, hunger, fear, problems, and even death will disappear. On the Last Day we will share in Jesus’ glory forever because that is what we have by faith in Jesus, the “Bread of Life.”

We can also be confident that God will help us with our daily needs. The Bible states, *“He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all--how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?”* (Romans 8:32). Jesus told us, *“Ask and it shall be given to you”* (Matthew 7:7). According to God’s will, He will answer our prayers. When our life is troubled, Jesus says, *“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest”* (Matthew 11:28). And He promised, *“Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”* (John 14:27) These are Jesus’ promises for us today!

So, we know the Milwaukee Brewers team won’t win every baseball game; and life will not always be an easy win for Christians either. But, Christ has won by His suffering and death. Because of His victory, we will never want to make temporary things our chief concern. God has given us His beloved Son! If we are ever uncertain of His love, we need only look to the cross and hear God’s promise of forgiveness and eternal life. Amen.