

The Reverend Theo Robinson's Sermon for October 12, 2025
John 6:25-35
"A Bit of Bread Goes a Long Way"

May only truth be spoken and truth received. Amen.

"Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty." What a powerful final verse to our reading today, the Sunday of Thanksgiving weekend, a time where many of us will gather with family, eating to our hearts content. Turkey, stuffing, gravy, pie, and, of course, bread.

For thousands of years, bread has been the symbol of necessary food and the sustenance of life. It is easy to understand why. It is nutritious, providing carbohydrates, starch, and protein to the body. Bread is essential and it's more than just nutrition. It's comfort. The texture, the weight, the taste, all combine to make bread both the staff of life and the number one comfort food. And yet, so many people lack access even to a small amount of bread. A little bit of bread could be everything to someone who is hungry. It's a staple in most households, and yet we take it for granted that that loaf of bread will always be available to us.

Based on data from the 2023 Statistics Canada's Canadian Income Survey, 10 million Canadians, including about 2 million children, live in food-insecure homes. That's about 25% of our population wondering where their next loaf of bread will come from. Those numbers have doubled in two years, and I fear that they aren't getting any better.

The Bible is unambiguous about our duty as Christians to feed the hungry. In the Hebrew Bible, God provides manna from heaven to feed the Israelites in the wilderness (Exodus 16). The prophet Isaiah exhorts his listeners to respond to God's abundance with acts of justice and compassion, including sharing our food with all who hunger and dismantling systems that produce hunger in the first place (58:7). Perhaps most significant of all is Jesus' instruction in Matthew 25 that how we treat people suffering from hunger, thirst, and other vulnerable situations is how we treat Christ himself (31-46). As we sit down to our dinners over the weekend, let us remember those who won't have that same opportunity and ponder what we, as Christians, can do to live up to our duty to protect our neighbour.

Let us ponder once again that final gospel verse, “Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.”

Every culture has bread in one or many forms. There’s white bread, wheat bread, pumpernickel, French, Italian, pita, tortilla, sour dough, and the list goes on and on. Say the word “bread” and chances are some good image, or taste, or smell, or texture is bound to pop up in our heads. All of those breads will grow stale and inedible in a relatively short period of time. Even the manna from heaven that fed the Hebrews in the wilderness was temporary.

But Jesus came offering a new kind of bread, one that doesn’t go bad, one that isn’t temporary, one that nourishes perpetually and lasts forever, one that sustains relationships and bolsters hope. Jesus is pure love and compassion for all people on the earth. Jesus is the source of life, the source of eternal life, the source of the values of our daily lives, the pattern of love for our daily lives. Jesus is never just regular old bread. Jesus is the bread of life.

As we consume physical bread, it gives us nourishment and energy for our physical lives. As we consume Jesus into our lives, his indwelling presence becomes the source for compassionate energy without our lives. He becomes the nourishment and energy for our spiritual, emotional, and moral lives. When we absorb Christ into our daily lives, we take in the mind and heart of God who loves all people as God's children. That is what it means to be filled with the Holy Spirit, what it means to have the Spirit of Jesus living inside of you. It means to have the heart and mind of God living inside of you. Jesus is the Bread of life and whoever eats of Christ will never hunger again. When we eat and absorb Jesus’ words, spirit, and love into our lives, Jesus lives in us, and we will never die.

The basic food staple of the world is bread, and Jesus is the basic spiritual staple of the world. There is a shortage of physical bread in this world of ours, but there will never be a shortage of spiritual bread. God's nourishment is not the old bread of life which fed some, but the new bread of life who feeds all. The true bread is the bread of God that has now come down from Heaven in the person of Jesus.

Jesus points to bread beyond bread, to that gift from God which not only comes to the world through Jesus but is in fact Jesus himself. The bread which endures to eternal life is this relationship which has been made possible by the incarnation of the Son. In fact, the bread which endures is the Son himself, whom God gives for the world. As we absorb the

spirit of Jesus Christ and his love, justice, and compassion, these qualities live more fully in us.

While we celebrate this weekend, let us not muddle our understand of thanks as praising God for material possessions. Jesus' greatest gift to us is not the clothing, cars, computers, all the other physical gifts we earn or receive that are temporary. As wonderful as all of that is, it is Him, His teachings, His example, and His undying love that leads to eternal life...that is the greatest gift.

If we want eternal life, we must eat the food only God can give. We must believe that Jesus was the One sent down from heaven, by God, to show us the way to eternal life. This good news of Jesus' life and teachings is enacted in the Lord's Supper – where bread and wine become our way of connecting again and again with Christ, the Son of God. We are to then go live out that example and that connection, and to be grateful for the gifts of nature and neighbour. So, we are invited to come to Him, to study His word, follow His teaching, and put our trust in Him.

We are hungry for so many things in life. We are impatient in our hunger and want to satisfy our perceived needs as quickly as we can. Yet so much of what we hunger for doesn't last. When we eat food, we are hungry again. As we turn toward Jesus in our hunger for life, we find forgiveness, we find hope, and we find love. We are fed something that doesn't perish but rather something that flourishes – if we nurture it. In our everyday lives, we have seen it: the gift of bread, of mercy, of beauty, of healing. What can we possibly say, except thank you? For all that is, for all that has been, for all that still will be, O God our God, be above all and in all and through all, we give thanks for providing us with the bread of life, your Son, Jesus Christ.

Amen.