**Good Shepherd Lutheran Church**

**Watertown, WI**

**“The Work of God”**

Pastor Aaron Reseburg

August 4, 2024

John 6:22-25

Our reading for today takes place directly after Jesus walks on the water as the disciples were struggling. The crowd finds Him on the other side of the lake, and not imagining that He could have walked across the lake, they are understandably confused. "Rabbi, when did you get here?"

Jesus wastes no time and gets right to the matter. The people aren't seeking after Him because they understood the significance of the bread and fish; not even His own disciples understood that. The people are just following Him to get more bread.

Jesus is here today, in this room, in His Word and Sacrament. He is here. Certainly, you aren't here today just to receive bread to eat and fill your bellies. We will receive the Lord's Supper in just a little bit. But if you expect it to fill you up, I can assure you that it won't. So why have you come today?

What's your answer to that question? Do you have an answer to that question?

Why are you here today? It's a good question to ask yourself.

Are you here for the music? Are you here for the fellowship? Are you here because it makes you feel good? Are you here because it makes you look like a good person? Are you here because someone else is forcing you? Or are you here because it's just what you have always done?

If those are the reasons you are here, you are here for the wrong reason. Don't get me wrong, music, fellowship, obeying your parents or anyone else who is making you come, or just coming out of habit are not bad things—they aren't even bad reasons to come. But if they are the only reason, you are in trouble, and you are missing out on something far better. You are thinking too small.

The people were amazed by the multiplying of the food and they wanted more, but the problem was that they didn't want enough. Their desires were too small.

They wanted food to fill their bellies, but Jesus offered them much, much more. Jesus offered them food that would sustain them until the end. He offered them Himself.

We fall into the same trap. We think too small. We spend so much time seeking after the things of this world: money, glory, attention, prestige, comfort, security, happiness, etc., etc... The world around us is so focused on those things; don't be like the world. Don't think like the world; don't think so small.

Stock markets crash, money comes and goes. You can spend your whole life eating the right things, taking the right medicines, being as safe as you possibly can only for a drunk driver to hit you head-on.

You can spend all your time driving your children around to all their activities, making sure they do their homework, making sure they get into the best schools, only for them to grow up and forsake you.

We are thinking too small, dear Christians. The things of this world come and go, bread gets old and rots—although it seems like some of the bread in our grocery stores doesn't.

I asked you all to think about why you are here today. But I confess that it was an unfair question, I know the answer. I know why you are here today. You are here today because God wants you to be. You are here today because God knows that you need to be here. You need to be here more than you need anything else. You need to be here more than you need to sleep in, you need to be here more than you need to go golfing or any other activity.

You need to be here because it is here and here alone where you can receive bread from heaven. You need the Lord's Supper, you need His church, you need baptism, you need your sins forgiven. That is real and solid food, that is the reason the church exists: it exists because God knows that you need heavenly food.

In the garden of Eden, there was a tree which bore fruit that gave life everlasting. That tree is gone, and one day we face death. It could come after long suffering, or it could come in an instant. We have no way of knowing. But here is the good news, dear Christians: God has brought you here today because He has a cure for death. He has medicine which is capable of defeating all illness, all disease, all cancers, all injuries, and even death itself.

God has brought you here today to give you His medicine, to give you His bread of life. Here in the Divine Service, you will find it in abundance: in His written Word, in the forgiveness of sins pronounced by the pastor, as you remember your baptism with the sign of the cross, from the pulpit, and yes, at His altar from His body and blood.

All that's left for you to do is believe. That's what Jesus says in our reading for today: believe. Have faith. Put your trust in Him. Take Him at His Word. Tum away from the perishing things of this world, turn away from your pride, your greed, your anger, your fear, and anything else that makes you doubt His Word. Believe in Him, and receive gladly all that He gives to you.

The world thinks too small. There are people all around us who are starving for the bread of life. There are children in our school every day who don't understand that they are starving. They might look well-fed and cared for; your neighbor might have a big house and a new car, but inside, they are starving.

They are thinking too small, and when their life ends, they will realize how hungry they have been but it will be too late.

So think big! Not small. The things of this world seem big, the promises that they make are bigger. But they won't deliver. They might make you happier for a little while, but one day, the end will come. One day, we will all die.

Those who have believed in Christ, those who have put their faith in Him and Him alone, those who have sought after Him above all things, will find that although they may have had less money, although they had a simpler life, although their kids may have not had all the experiences they could have had, although their life didn't appear great to the world, they lived a happy and meaningful life: a life well-fed.

If you live your life seeking after Christ, you will even find that although you will die, your life will not end. On the last day, Christ will raise you from the dead. He will call you up out of your grave, and you will never again hunger or thirst because Christ Himself will sustain you forever.

In the name of Jesus, Amen.