

## **“You will get it!” John 6:24-35**

**“So, when the crowd saw that Jesus was not there, nor his disciples, they themselves got into the boats and went to Capernaum, seeking Jesus. When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, “Rabbi, when did you come here?” Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal.”**

**Then they said to him, “What must we do, to be doing the works of God?”**

**Jesus answered them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.” So, they said to him, “Then what sign do you do, that we may see and believe you? What work do you perform? Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’” Jesus then said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” They said to him, “Sir, give us this bread always.” Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.”**

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ!

The truth is that we are so small, we are so tiny and so petty. And our God, the Triune God the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, on the other hand, is someone so great and so powerful, so, so much surpassing everything that we are capable of wrapping our thoughts around.

Therefore, we really struggle to comprehend His grandeur, His holiness, or how much He loves us – how much He loves you – or how much He has done for us and how much He desires to give us. Today’s Gospel account reminds about this again.

Those people from the account we read today were just like us. Ordinary people. Living their mundane lives in this world, concerned and worried, fearing and dreaming about the same things that we do.

And then something rather extra-ordinary happened. Not something, but rather someone. This Jesus from Nazareth. Suddenly there was this man with those amazing abilities. He could heal everyone who was brought to Him.

He could win every argument and He was teaching with such authority. And as it appears, that He could also feed thousands and thousands with ... almost with nothing. He could just take and multiply food until everyone was satisfied.

This is it! Let’s make Him a king! Can we relate to that? Shouldn’t be that hard. Someone who can take care of all our needs, get our health issues fixed and even can stand against those with power who may not be treating us the way we like it.

That's what those people saw. They saw what Jesus was capable of. But they didn't see any further. However, as Jesus said – all those were simply signs. Signs pointing to some much greater, much more awesome, much more enticing reality.

All of these signs were pointing to the true identity of Jesus, awakening people to see that the Kingdom of God was among them in the person of the King Himself. They didn't get that, but they certainly wanted more of the good stuff that Jesus had given them, so they went searching for Jesus.

The way Jesus greets those who came to Him is quite remarkable. If we paraphrased what He said it would sound something like: "I tell you the truth, you all have come to me for the wrong reasons. You just don't get it what this is about, do you?!"

Nicely put, Jesus. Of course, they couldn't comprehend the grandeur, the magnitude, the scale of what they were witnessing with their own eyes – the Eternal Word who was in the beginning, through whom everything was created that there is, He had become flesh, and He dwelt among them, full of grace and truth, making known to us what God the Father is like.

The truth is that we too struggle to comprehend the otherworldly greatness of the Gospel message. It's too big for us. Just reflect on what were our reasons that led us here. Some of them may be similar to those people. Why are we here? Some may be searching Jesus trusting that He may heal us.

Others may be hoping that He will help us with whatever we hope to attain. For some it may be a matter of habit, or a family tradition; this is what we do. Some may be fearing for their daily bread and seeking His favour. Others may be enjoying this community, or simply have nothing better to do on Sunday mornings.

Yet others may be concerned and fearful about the Last Day; we better go to that church from time to time, just to show some respect. Some may be looking for a place of rest and restoration, bruised by this rough life and exhausted by the burdens we sometimes need to carry against our will.

From our perspective all of those are real needs. They may be where our focus today is zoomed in. Real life issues. Real life struggles and challenges and fears. And you know – Jesus always had compassion on those who came to Him. That has not changed, today He still has compassion to us, whatever burdens we may be carrying.

I remember it too well, that I didn't come to Jesus driven by some lofty motives, it wasn't about searching for the truth. It wasn't about looking for the fellowship with the Triune God. No, we were just facing challenges in our life which were larger than ourselves, and we needed someone greater than ourselves to help us through.

And that's okay. No need to be ashamed whatever were the reasons that brought you to Jesus at first. But the point is this – we should not stop with those reason. Otherwise, Jesus may say to us: "I tell you the truth, you still don't get it, do you?!"

Imagine the most powerful, the wealthiest, the most generous person, and this person invites you and says: "Come, I want you to be a part of my family, and I want to

share with you everything that I have, everything!” And we would just reply: “That’s okay, how about you give me 1000\$ and I am out of here.” It just wouldn’t make sense. Why to hope for so little?! Why not to embrace what is offered?!

But what we have here is so much more, so much greater – you have been chosen and invited into the fellowship with God the Creator and the Ruler of the Universe, and He offers to share everything that He has with you. And what do we hope for?

“Do not work for the food that perishes!” This is a gentle reminder that everything that we may hope for in this world perishes. Everything. Don’t put your hope in the things of this world, whatever attractive they may seem.

Material things, fit bodies, fame, pursuit of pleasures or knowledge, careers, and so on. These may be good and even needed things, but they all do perish. There is nothing lasting in this world, as Solomon wrote at the end of his life: “All is vanity.”

This is why Jesus offers: “[Work for the] food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you.” Strive for what endures to eternal life! As if Jesus was saying to us: “I have not come to fix your tiny earthly problems. Think way bigger!

I have come to restore the whole creation. I will bring forth a new heaven and a new earth. The Spirit who hovered above the waters in the beginning has now begun to work for something even more incredible. I am commencing my divine reign which will last forever and I want to share it with you. All your worries will be gone.”

There will be no more health issues, no more injustice, no more loneliness, no more pain, no more suffering, no more drudgery, no more burdens, no more broken hearts, for our God will make everything new and He Himself will dwell among us.

But what should we do, how can we get there? That’s what the people asked. There is nothing that we can do, or should do. It is our Father who puts these divine gifts into our hands. He gives us the food that endures to eternal life. The bread of life.

He gives us someone who has come down from heaven and who gives true life to the world. Jesus is this bread of life and He has come to give you eternal life with Him and all the saints. Just be humble and grateful to receive it.

He comes to us and joins us to Himself, as the Spirit Creator indwells in you. Which means – you already are a part of His new creation. It has begun. This is what the Father gives you through Jesus. But why do we struggle to get this?

There is one thing that hinders us, that blinds us, that makes us foolish, that stands between our gracious and generous Lord Jesus and us, and that is – our sin. It is our sin that gives us a wrong picture of who our God is.

That is our sin that doesn’t allow us to see this beautiful reality of God’s grace. It is our sin that turns us away from Jesus and makes us flee from God’s presence, from His love, from all the divine and eternal gifts that He so desires to share with us. That is our sin that robs us of all these wonderful blessings.

Our sin is like a decay of the soul, which cannot be fully removed. At least not in this life. It can be cleansed, and purified and washed away and scrubbed off... but the next moment it stubbornly begins to grow back again.

In the midst of this our miserable state the grace and wisdom of our God shines on us. He knows our situation, and He comes to help. He sets for us this weekly rhythm where He Himself invites us in His presence. Every week He comes to cleanse and restore us, to cheer us up as He feed us with the bread from heaven

Concluding two more things about bread. Just think about bread. Bread is not something fancy, or extravagant. On the contrary, it is very basic. As is the bread of life that our Father gives us from heaven – Jesus. How ordinary He seemed to those who were blessed to see Him?!

Yes, He had come from heaven, all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell in Him, and in Him were hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. But He looked just like us. So ordinary... and the same is true for how He comes to us now.

In His written Word, the Bible. Look at the Bible, it looks just like another book. Or in His spoken Word, when called and ordained servants of Christ – ordinary and flawed people among us – speak His life-giving message to His beloved.

Or think about the Sacraments – water, bread and wine – ordinary elements of creation. Nevertheless, it is through these ordinary means that our Father gives us the life that will remain. I pray that we all may join with psalmist saying: “As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God.” (Psalm 42:1)

Now the second thing about bread. Regardless of how much bread you ate yesterday, today you are hungry again. You need to eat again. The same is true with the bread of life. We need it weekly. We need it daily. Without it we wither and fade away.

But if you stay with Jesus, – and the Holy Spirit helps us and brings us to Jesus – if you receive and eat Jesus as the bread of life, if you cling to Him, then you will never hunger and never thirst. For if you have Jesus, then together with Him we have everything that we may ever need. “Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all the other things will be added to you.”

That’s Jesus’ promise to you, and as Jesus is much greater than we can comprehend, so are His promises. We are just too small. Therefore, for now, this may sound to us like a nice and comforting story that pastors tell us, but we may struggle to believe it or to experience it fully. That’s okay.

But don’t you worry, for the day is coming when pastors won’t be preaching about God’s promises anymore. They won’t be preaching about the greatness and beauty of our Lord Jesus and of His Kingdom anymore, for there will be no need for that.

The day is coming, and it is near, when we will be there and we will see Jesus as He is and what we now struggle to get – that will be our reality and we will be rejoicing in everlasting blessedness. This day just can’t come soon enough. Amen.