

**Call to Worship** - based on *Psalm 78*

The Lord opened the doors of heaven; and rained down manna to eat;  
he gave the grain of heaven. Mortals ate of the bread of angels; and they were well filled.  
We come to you, Lord Jesus, bread of life, to be sustained and resourced;  
to be renewed, encouraged and blessed. Amen

**Hymn StF 556** (Charlotte Elliott)

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| 1. Just as I am, without one plea<br>but that you died to set me free,<br>and at your bidding, 'Come to me!'<br>O Lamb of God, I come!       | because your promise I believe,<br>O Lamb of God, I come!   |
| 2. Just as I am, though tossed about<br>with many a conflict, many a doubt,<br>fightings within and fears without,<br>O Lamb of God, I come! | 4. Just as I am — your love unknown<br>has broken every barrier down —<br>now to be yours, yes, yours alone,<br>O Lamb of God, I come!                |
| 3. Just as I am, you will receive,<br>will welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve:  | 5. Just as I am, of that free love<br>the breadth, length, depth and height to<br>prove,<br>here for a time and then above,<br>O Lamb of God, I come! |

**Scripture:** St. John's Gospel 6: 24 - 35

**For you to think about:**

This is a fascinating word self-portrait of Jesus since bread, in some form, is used in most cultures. For us, bread is a staple diet. Bread has a satisfying quality that many other staple diets do not.

There are three things this lesson teaches us.

First, this bread called Jesus is not a product but personality. When Jesus says, "*I am*," he is claiming for himself not only the very name of God but he is claiming to be everything God is. This is something that we see seven times in John's gospel. John leaves us in no doubt that this Jesus Christ is not just another religious leader. He is the Lord God himself.

Second, we learn here that because he is personality, Jesus Christ is proposing a personal relationship between the God of heaven and each one of us. "Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty." The text says, "Whoever comes to me ... Whoever believes in me." It does not lay out any preconditions for coming.

But coming to Jesus is more than merely an action of our feet - it is a desire of our hearts to think of him more often, to study his word to learn how he thinks and to know what we can do to please him. We come to him desiring to be more like him. We pray to him because we desire to be in communication with him. We trust him to take our lives and make them what best suits him, and we walk in obedience as never before. We hear that he died for all who trust him and we determine that we will trust him even if no one else trusts him.

We have seen that Jesus Christ is a real personality and that he desires to have a full relationship with us but thirdly, we hear that Jesus Christ fully satisfies - he promises in our text: "Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty" (NRSV).

Jesus speaks to this society of ours that is bloated with overindulgence in money, sweets, and cola. He compares our deepest needs to hunger and thirst. Perhaps to us it may not mean much to speak of hunger or thirst. We use these words and what we often really mean is that we feel a little peckish for a treat or would like to stop at McDonald's. To those who have been truly hungry or thirsty, however, these words mean everything. There are no worse human pains than the

pangs of true hunger and or true thirst. The craving for food and water are the two most powerful natural appetites for us. Jesus understands hunger – he experienced it in the desert where he ate nothing for forty days (Luke 4:1-2). Imagine no food for forty days! Jesus was hungry for real food.

There are many people in our world today who are starving, not just for food for the stomach but food for the soul! To all of us, Jesus comes and says, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty" (NRSV). Christ wants to touch our lives – YOUR LIFE - in a way that will permanently and completely fill our deepest needs. The enjoyment of new life in Christ Jesus is the substance of true satisfaction. Trust him completely, believe that his presence in our lives will make us complete, choose to love him, live in his embrace and he will never let you go. Amen.

### **Prayers of Intercession**

Gracious God, we pray for those who find it hard to believe that their lives can change;  
those who feel they will never have enough money to live on;  
those who feel they will never find work;  
those who despair that there will ever be peace in their country;  
those who despair that they will ever be well;  
those who have given up believing that they can be forgiven;  
those who struggle to go on believing in themselves;  
those who struggle to go on believing in you.

Lord Jesus, the crowd came to hear good news. They came expecting to be fed.

We pray for those in our world who wait expectantly to be fed.

We pray for those who hunger for words that will feed their spirits,  
words that will change the situations that they live in.

We pray for politicians and administrators,  
for those in power that all might be able to share the bread of your creation.

The crowd came, as many still come,  
Lord, we pray for those agencies whose work supports the needy, the homeless, those devastated by life.

We pray for all who work to bring food to a world where many are still waiting to be fed.

The crowd sat and were fed.

Lord, we pray that we may use all the resources we have to feed the world, to share and support one another, we are all part of your family. May all be fed with your living bread.

Lord, be their strength, be their assurance and be their hope.

We ask this in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

*Our Father, who art in heaven .....*

### **Hymn StF 303 (Samuel Medley)**

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| 1. I know that my Redeemer lives —<br>what joy the blest assurance gives!<br>He lives, he lives, who once was dead;<br>he lives, my everlasting Head!  | 3. He lives, and grants me daily breath;<br>he lives, and I shall conquer death;<br>he lives, my mansion to prepare;<br>he lives, to lead me safely there. |
| 2. He lives, to bless me with his love;<br>he lives, to plead for me above;<br>he lives, my hungry soul to feed;<br>he lives, to help in time of need. | 4. He lives, all glory to his name;<br>he lives, my Saviour, still the same;<br>what joy the blest assurance gives,<br>I know that my Redeemer lives!      |

### **Blessing**

The blessing of Almighty God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be amongst us and remain with us always. **Amen**