

**ST PAUL'S (RONDEBOSCH)  
TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST  
01 AUGUST 2021**

**READINGS: 2 SAMUEL 11:26-12:13a// PSALM 51:1-12//EPHESIANS  
4:1-16 // John 6:24-35**

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**Oh God, “Our thoughts are not your thoughts and our ways are not your ways.” We open our hearts and minds to your spirit that you might help us... to get out of our own way and hear what you have to say to us. Amen.**

“South Africa has been brought to a standstill in the wake of protests that have rocked the country that is simultaneously battling a third wave of COVID-19. The protests, which began on July 10, 2021-17 July , have escalated to mass looting of shops, and malls, the destruction of property, and the loss of lives in the crossfire, are being seen as a result of the increasing rates of poverty and inequality in the country.

The violence left more than 200 people dead and hundreds injured, with damage to the economy estimated at billions of dollars and especially communities battling to buy basic food necessities.

The operations of bread production had been affected by the riots resulting in bread becoming scarce commodity. Due to the scarcity and the impact of looting a loaf of bread was being sold between R40 to R75 for a loaf.

As residents scrambled for food supplies due to unrest in Durban at least 20 businesses and non-government organisations and non-profit organisations distributed 40, 000 loaves and 40 000 litres of milk to communities” (Sunday Times)

***In John 6:35 Jesus declared “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”***

Our text for today takes place the day after Jesus had fed thousands of people with only five loaves of bread and two small fish. The crowds ate and had been

filled. Although the crowd witness and experienced the feeding of the 5 000 and their physical needs (hunger) were met they still asked for a miraculous sign to help them believe who Jesus was and who he claimed to be.

In v27 we read *Jesus said “do not work for food that spoils but for food that endures to eternal life which the Son of man will give to you”*

In today’s society we work so hard to get ahead financially and materially that we often slip into thinking that food and prosperity are the primary sources of our happiness. But we slowly discover true happiness is not found in money and material goods.

It is not wrong to want more money, a bigger house or a better job – but will it truly satisfy us? Will it gives us true happiness? Will it earn us more respect? It’s not wrong to want people to respect us. But no matter how much respect others may have for us, if we are empty inside, we will be no more satisfied than when no one looked up to us. When we seek to satisfy our hearts with stuff that isn’t eternal, we will only get temporary happiness. The problem often is that what we crave most, what we think will make us happy, isn’t what truly satisfies. That’s why Jesus tells us along with the crowd to work for “food that endures to eternal life.”

And then in v 28 we read *“then they asked him, 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*

What they actually asking is what work must we do to have eternal life Like them, we concentrate on doing something. All of life has prepared us for the assumption that we must pay our way. We don't get something for nothing. Therefore, if we seek a relationship with God, there must be something we can do to secure that relationship. But the problem is, when we concentrate on earning our way, we lose the idea of grace: God's gracious acceptance of us in spite of our unworthiness. The way we get right with God is not by doing something to earn God's favour, but simply by relying on God's acceptance.

When the crowd asked how to be made right with God, Jesus answered, *“Believe in him whom he has sent.”* To believe in Jesus is to trust him: to trust him when he says that God is our friend, and we do not need to be afraid; to trust him when he says that God is like a father who loves and cares and forgives, all we have to do is to belief and trust in God’s acceptance of us .

But that was still not good enough for them then they asked him “*What miraculous sign then will you give that we may see and believe*”

The crowd probably reasoned that Jesus had done little compared to Moses. Jesus had fed (5000) Moses had fed a nation. He did it once, Moses did it for 40 years. He gave ordinary bread. Moses gave bread from heaven Jesus response on this was that it is not Moses who has given them the bread but his Father who gives the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world (v 32-33) They did not understand the Jesus Himself is the Bread that sustain life.... “in Him was life’ (John 1:4)

*So what does it mean for us when Jesus says I am the Bread of Life?*

Let us firstly look at the significance of **Bread**

Bread is the very staple of life. Bread is necessary food. (I know dieticians may differ) When we can't afford to eat nothing else, we eat bread. It is food that all need. It is food that suits all; old and young, weak and strong, most of us like bread. It is the most nourishing kind of food. Bread sustains life. Carbohydrates, which are a major ingredient of bread, is metabolized by the human body and used for fuel.

*Yes there is a definite need for bread and food as we have seen now during these protests, rioting and looting.*

*In our country's Bill of Rights it says that every person has the right to access sufficient food and water. And yes it is not right what was done during these violent protests and looting but behind it is the desperation plea of the hungry and poor whose basic need like food is not met.*

*These protests were driven by economic issues, not so much the political issue of freeing Jacob Zuma. The former president's detention triggered wider rioting and looting, fuelled by job layoffs, economic inequality worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic (Global Citizen) By Khanyi Mlaba July 13, 2021  
MERVYN ABRAHAMS)*

But Just as our physical body needs bread, our spiritual body needs the Bread of Life (Jesus Christ) for sustenance and growth especially during such turbulent times in our country in our communities and in our own lives.

The "bread of life" means that spiritual bread which conveys life to the soul; that living bread which does not merely feed the body, like common bread, but supplies eternal sustenance and nourishment to the eternal soul.

In v 35 we also read “*Jesus says he who comes to me will never go hungry and he who believes in me will never go thirsty*

Many of us today live hungry, empty lives , and searching, looking for something that will sustain and nourish life, that will feed and energise, and something that will fill and satisfy.

**Jesus is saying to us this morning come to me I will quench your thirst I will satisfy your hunger.**

Many of us live, or rather exist, without the food of hope. We suffer from all kind of sicknesses (terminal//chronic//depression// Covid 19 infections). There are some of us who lives in poverty and who don't know where our next meal will be coming from or how we are going to pay the bills //there are those of us who are still mourning a loved one,//those who are lonely , those who are experiencing injustice, and abuse especially our women and our children

*My dear friends what do you feel right now? Do you feel right now anger, hopelessness, shame and maybe rejections? (What need//hunger must be satisfied? //what thirst must be quenched)*

Jesus can satisfy that hunger that need. Not by demanding anything from us, but by giving himself completely to us and for us, to fill up what is empty inside of our own souls. That's what Jesus means when he says: “The work of God is this: to believe in the one He has sent.” Jesus doesn't come on the scene to satisfy our demands. He has come to meet your deepest need. He has come to heal our deepest wounds, through the wounds he suffered for us

## CONCLUSION

So my friends whatever our longings and cravings may be, God understands our innermost needs and desires. God will satisfy the deepest desire of our souls.

Jesus is inviting us this morning to Come and believe that he is the Bread of Life.

Because when we eat of the bread of life, we gain hope, purpose and direction when we go through difficult times. When we eat of the bread of life we grow in peace, justice and wisdom. When we eat of the bread of life, we experience comfort in distress. When we eat the bread of life, we follow the example of Christ to reach out to the poor and, the underprivileged in our communities.

In a few minutes we will be sharing in the Holy Communion meal, and we will receive the Bread of Life that we missed so much because of the lockdown It will fill us, nourish us strengthen us during this difficult time.

***I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry and he who believes in me will never go thirsty.***