

Coop's Scoops # 226: Sunday worship, August 1, 2021

*We do not live by bread alone, but my every word
that comes from the mouth of God. Matthew 4:4*



Readings:

2 Samuel 11: 26-12:13

²⁶ When the wife of Uriah heard that her husband was dead, she made lamentation for him. ²⁷ When the mourning was over, David sent and brought her to his house, and she became his wife and bore him a son.

But the thing that David had done displeased the LORD, **12** ¹ and the LORD sent Nathan to David. He came to him, and said to him, "There were two men in a certain city, the one rich and the other poor. ² The rich man had very many flocks and herds; ³ but the poor man had nothing but one little ewe lamb, which he had bought. He brought it up, and it grew up with him and with his children; it used to eat of his meager fare, and drink from his cup, and lie in his bosom, and it was like a daughter to him. ⁴ Now there came a traveler to the rich man, and he was loath to take one of his own flock or herd to prepare for the wayfarer who had come to him, but he took the poor man's lamb, and prepared that for the guest who had come to him." ⁵ Then David's anger was greatly kindled against the man. He said to Nathan, "As the LORD lives, the man who has done this deserves to die; ⁶ he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity."

⁷ Nathan said to David, “You are the man! Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: I anointed you king over Israel, and I rescued you from the hand of Saul; ⁸ I gave you your master’s house, and your master’s wives into your bosom, and gave you the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would have added as much more. ⁹ Why have you despised the word of the LORD, to do what is evil in his sight? You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and have taken his wife to be your wife, and have killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. ¹⁰ Now therefore the sword shall never depart from your house, for you have despised me, and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife. ¹¹ Thus says the LORD: I will raise up trouble against you from within your own house; and I will take your wives before your eyes, and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this very sun. ¹² For you did it secretly; but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun.” ¹³ David said to Nathan, “I have sinned against the LORD.” Nathan said to David, “Now the LORD has put away your sin; you shall not die.

The Epistle: Ephesians 4: 1-16

⁴ I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, ² with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, ³ making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. ⁴ There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all. ⁷ But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ’s gift. ⁸ Therefore it is said, “When he ascended on high he made captivity itself a captive; he gave gifts to his people.”

¹¹ The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, ¹² to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, ¹³ until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ. ¹⁴ We must no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by people’s trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming. ¹⁵ But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, ¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body’s growth in building itself up in love.

THE HOLY GOSPEL: John 8: 24-35

²⁴ So when the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they themselves got into the boats and went to Capernaum looking for Jesus.

²⁵ When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, “Rabbi, when did you come here?” ²⁶ Jesus answered them, “Very truly, I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. ²⁷ Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For it is on him that God the Father has set his seal.” ²⁸ Then they said to him, “What must we do to perform the works of God?” ²⁹ Jesus answered them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.” ³⁰ So they said to him, “What sign are you going to give us then, so that we may see it and believe you? What work are you performing? ³¹ Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’” ³² Then Jesus said to them, “Very truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. ³³ For the bread of God is that which^[a] comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” ³⁴ They said to him, “Sir, give us this bread always.”

³⁵ 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.

SERMON: Our three Lessons this morning are so important that any preacher could spend a whole month of Sundays trying to apply them to real life in the here and now. But this one preacher only gets one Sunday! I encourage you all to study them more throughout this week!

In the simplest terms possible, I believe these readings are grouped to teach us three life lessons:

- * Sin does not go unnoticed, and sin has consequences...and there is redemption!
- * Sinners become saints by God’s grace, and as saints they are equipped to do the work of ministry

* The work of saints, the work of God, is to BELIEVE in the One whom God sent.

We begin with David. He sinned mightily when he arranged for the slaying of Uriah the Hittite in order to cover David's own sin with Uriah's wife Bathsheba. A prophet sent by God named Nathan confronted David with words that pierced his heart. Words about a rich man with many lambs and a poor man with one; words about taking the poor man's one lamb for his own use. David, not getting it....that's a space we all occupy at times... says that the awful person who did such a thing should have to restore four lambs, and also should die for the sin of having no pity. And then Nathan, with the biggest rebuke punch line of all time says "YOU ARE THE MAN WHO DID THIS". And God is not pleased. There will be consequences for David, including the sword of division in your own household. In despising Uriah, the Lord God said that David despised Him. Then David "got it" and said, and meant, and grieved because he had "Sinned against the Lord". Psalm 51 is David's prayer to God for forgiveness and mercy and cleansing, and renewal...David knows he needs and asks for a clean heart and a right Spirit. That is always the needed response when we sin, as well. And lest we despair, we must remember the words of Jesus "He who comes to Me, I will in no wise, not ever, no matter what, despise or turn away".

Paul, writing to the Ephesians, talks about sinners, like David, and me and you becoming saints. Does that mean that David or you or I become people who never sin again? People who are always holy? Not at all. It means that we become people who share the love of Christ with others. Like the little child who was asked by his Sunday school teacher to describe a saint. He went up to a stained glass window featuring Saint Peter and said "Saints are people the Light shines through". Paul teaches that God Himself gives gifts to those who believe in Him....so that they can all, individually, live the lives to which they have been

called and so that together as one Body, they can all do the work of ministry. To some people, God gives the gifts needed to be apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers...Why? So that those people can EQUIP THE SAINTS (all of us) FOR THEIR WORK OF MINISTRY, FOR THEIR WORK OF BUILDING UP THE BODY OF CHRIST IN LOVE. My work as your Priest is to equip all of you to worship together within the Church, and to offer ministry to those outside of the church, all the while being equal members of the body of Christ which IS the Church. The Light is to shine through us; and that light is the Light of Christ. We will still cast shadows; we will “cloud up” from time to time, but as we grow in love and faith, the Light shining through us will also grow. As saints, we are to be reflected light in a world that needs it desperately.

Jesus tells us that the work of the saints is not in the details of how we share, or how we keep or break the commandments, or how we apply love and mercy to others....our work is to **believe in the One whom God** sent. That work is enough to challenge and occupy our every day our whole lives through. And that work is the only work which will fully satisfy our longings. Christians are called to believe in Jesus, in ALL of Jesus. All of His teachings, all of His acts of love and mercy, all of His desire to bring glory to the Father. Such belief transforms our minds. There is often a dispute between folks that goes like this: What you do is far more important than what you believe! If you just do mercy and love justice and work for a better world then that’s all that really matters. Then there are those who say that no matter what you do, or how good you are, you will still fall of the glory of God That what you do does not “save” you! Then there is St. James who says “Faith without works is dead”. Jesus is telling those bread-seekers so long ago that works and believing cannot be separated....that the work of God is to believe in the One whom He sent. He is telling them that real bread is not composed of wheat

but that He Himself is the Bread of Life. Bread from an oven will nurture and sustain life, but He is the Bread of LIFE itself. Without Him, there is no life in the Spirit.

It's so easy for us to understand those foot-runners racing after Jesus to see another miracle, get something more for themselves, focus on the "bread and fish" instead of the "sign" which they provided. The "sign" was given, the miracle was done, in order that they would come to **believe** who Jesus IS. That believing will change them. Because Jesus is the Bread of Life, creating new life that is for the now and for the eternal.

Jesus sums it up. Life means everything. If you have life, you don't have to thirst for life, you don't have to be hungry for life....it is yours. Those who come to Jesus, who believe in the One whom God sent, will never hunger for life, or thirst for life. Goodness knows many Christians around the world hunger for edible bread and clean water.....we must needs change that.....but Christians do not have to hunger and thirst for true life. John also penned these words in John 14: 6 "Jesus said: 'I am the Way, the Truth and the Life; no one comes to the Father except through Me' ". May the Spirit faithfully remind us always that the work of God is to believe in the One whom He sent....Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayers:

Gathered in the name of Jesus, united by the power of the Holy Spirit, let us pray saying: O Lord, Bread of Life, have mercy upon us.

You are the Bread of life, O God. You feed us with manna and you satisfy our needs with your word. For the food that never perishes we thank you. Gather us up with all your needy people, that none may be lost.

You call us, O God to be renewed, to put on a new nature to conform our lives to your will. Form the church into a source of life which feeds a needy world.

In a hungry world, O God, we do not know yet how to feed one another. Hear the cries of the poor. Dry the tears of those who mourn, remembering especially John M and John B, care for the children, especially remembering Hudson and Stella Mary Ann soon to be baptized, and those who are sick or in need of our prayers this morning, including Marg, Lil, Joanne, Catherine and John.

We trust in you Lord Jesus Christ, we believe You are the One whom God sent to redeem the world and to be the Bread of eternal life. We honour and bless your Holy Name, Amen.

Blessing:

The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make His face to shine upon you, the Lord lift up His countenance upon you and be to you the Bread of Life!

-Judie+