**The Enduring Food**

 **The day after Jesus fed five thousand people, some of the people didn’t go home right away. These people were waiting for Jesus and his disciples to appear once again. I can visualize this group looking all over that mountain top and asking each other, “Did you find Jesus and his disciples?” Finally, the crowd realized Jesus and his disciples were no longer there. They went to their boats and headed for where they thought the disciples and Jesus might have gone. They sailed to Capernaum. To me the crowd acts as if they’ve lost their rational minds; they just want to find Jesus. We know, through many stories in the Bible, that a crowd of people can easily turn into a senseless mob.**

**One person can yell out with authority, “Jesus has gone to Capernaum”, and somehow in some way the people become a mob jumping into their boats and heading for Capernaum. Off the mob went to find Jesus, the person who had fed them so well just the day before. When this newly formed mob found Jesus, they asked him, “Rabbi, why did you come here?” Jesus answered them in his astute way of knowing exactly what these people wanted from him. He said to them, “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.” Jesus’ answer tells us he saw this mob only wanted him to give them another meal. Unfortunately, even today some people might see Jesus as sort of Santa Claus figure. A figure who comes down from heaven just to let us know everything we want; we only need to ask him for anything and everything. But this is simply a preposterous notion.**

**There are people who still treat Jesus as a Santa Claus figure. When they don’t get what they order from Jesus, they get angry, turn their backs on Jesus and walk away from him. Isn’t it much more reasonable for us to ask Jesus questions such as, “How can I help bring the Kingdom of God into clearer focus for all the people I meet and greet?”**

**I have an image in my mind of what the Bible calls the New Jerusalem. For me the New Jerusalem could come now, not simply when we go to heaven. I will not give up my hope on the idea that someday we as a people will help one another in more ways than we help each other now. We will also help the animals who share this earth with us and help the earth itself in more ways than we do now. There is a humiliating amount of help needed by so many people, and animals and the earth in all the myriad ways any of us can help. When we do spend more time helping each other, we could create a semblance of a New Jerusalem right here on earth. Surely a New Jerusalem could shine out and show us a preview of heaven whenever we do good for the earth and for all of us who share the earth.**

**Remember this group of people, who followed Jesus to Capernaum, were some of the five thousand people Jesus miraculously fed with only five loaves of bread and two fish. Yet this miracle was not enough for these folks. When they found Jesus in Capernaum, 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?” It’s unimaginable how so many people could ask Jesus for more proof, more miracles, because apparently, they only see him as a Rabbi. \ Perhaps some of them think of him as also a healer. Yet even after taking part in his miraculous gift of bread and fish for five thousand people, they did not think of him as anything more than a Rabbi. These people gathered around Jesus, the day after such a miracle, wanting him to do more miracles. They demand more signs and ask for a performance.**

**At this point, I had to stop writing my sermon to look up the word “performance,” and what the meaning was in ancient Greek of this word. I thought it might mean something different than we think of the word “performance” in our time. But it does not have a different meaning; in fact the Greek meaning seems even worse than the word “performance.” Because the Greek meaning of this word “performance”, tossed at Jesus by the crowd around him, means spectacle. This crowd, this mob want a spectacular performance by Jesus. They want more signs before they will believe in Jesus. Too bad the obtuse crowd couldn’t have seen him walk on water. But I fear they would still have wanted more performances, and bigger and better miracles.**

 **Are we that way today? Do we need more and more miracles done just for us? Or for a group we consider just like us. I believe many of us do want more proof, more signs that Jesus is the Son of God? Could this be the reason mega churches crop up? Sporting bigger and bigger bands, large screens, and auditoriums more like basketball stadiums. I wonder sometimes where Jesus abides in these churches. For some people I’m sure he does; for others it might only be a spectacle, a place to ask for bigger and bigger shows.**

 **I believe Christianity is a discipline, that takes daily devotion to Jesus. To follow him no matter what is happening to us or around us. I think we are here at a difficult time in our country and in our world. Yet our faith in Jesus can carry us through the hard times as well as the good times. Every one of us has known hard times as well as good times. Yet the one thing we can always count on, no matter of the good times and bad times, is the love of Jesus.**

###  Jesus gave us this morning this thought. He said, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.” Does this mean we will never know hunger or thirst? No, because Jesus is telling the story of the mystical bread and wine he gave to all of us when he instituted the Eucharist at the Last Supper. Listen to the words he spoke for each of us to hear. He said to those listening to him so long ago and to us today, “Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.” If we turn to Jesus, we will always find the comfort we need, and his love will pour down on us. When we partake of the mystical body and blood of our savior Jesus Christ, we will know the blessing of being loved unconditionally. Amen