

Bread, bread, bread. Last time I was with you we were just starting the Bread of Life discourse from the Gospel of John. This Sunday is now the last Sunday featuring John's words of Jesus about the importance of the metaphor of bread. Since John's Gospel does not have a Last Supper scene as do the three other Gospels, John goes about giving us the importance of sharing bread and wine in a different way. He recalls the words of Jesus as he taught in synagogues, in fields, and presumably everywhere he went.

Here at the end of the discourse and the chapter devoted to Jesus as the True Bread, we hear that Jesus' words were not well received by everyone. He tells the disciples who are complaining about this teaching, which is difficult, that Spirit and Life are the things that last.

Jesus tells these men and women that he will not be around forever, but that God's Spirit and Life will be. Eating the bread here at the altar reminds us that Jesus is with us. It's a simple element that is necessary for survival that becomes the symbol of Jesus who is also necessary for our survival. Simple tasks also give us opportunities to remember what is ultimately important for us all; sharing our Spirit with God and with each other.

Yesterday, four Trinity Glen guys, and four of us from Trinity Lime Rock helped out at This n That in Canaan. Many of you probably know that This n That is the collection of buildings that Habitat for Humanity runs as a store selling furniture and household goods. And six years ago we were there as well painting another building with and for them. Five of their board members were there too to help painting yesterday.

It was a great day, and we got a lot accomplished. We painted the outside of a whole building (the one to the right as you face the place from the street.) Have a look if you happen to drive by.

As we painted we had conversations – no surprise. And I talked to one of the guys who told me a little about his story – what it was like, what happened, and where he is now. As we say in AA, he shared his experience, strength and hope with me. And he also told me about his struggles. As we painted away he said, "You know, I feel like it's important that I give back."

This phrase, "I've got to give back," is one we say a lot in AA. And it's the same for everyone here at Trinity Church who gives their time, talent and treasure to the church. It's important to "give back." We're giving back to God who has given us life, and we're giving back to others who have helped us, supported us, and shared what they have with us.

I think that sharing tasks and treasures are a way of sharing bread. And in that sharing of tasks we share our spirit with God's Spirit in a way that will last.

So, my friend and I were painting side by side. The squeaking of the paint roller on an extension stick, and the swishing of my brush doing the corners were the sounds that accompanied our thoughts. "Where are you from," I asked. "Bridgeport," he responded. And then he continued, "I'd like to help out Habitat when I get back home."

"Oh, I was involved with Habitat in Bridgeport when I worked at Trinity Southport" I told him. "They're a great group and I know you'd be very well received."

Here's a guy who has lost a lot in his life. He knows he needs to start all over again finding a place to live and a job, and yet, he's also thinking about how he can help others. He's thinking about finding a community of recovery, and a community of giving to those less fortunate. He wants to give back. And perhaps he's thinking that if he gets back on his feet and does the next right thing in his life maybe he can also get a Habitat for Humanity house.

Painting this building for This n That was the reason we got together. But that building has deteriorated quite a lot over the years. And it will continue to deteriorate. Things come and go. What *will* last in my life, and in the life of the fellow I was talking to, is the Spirit and the Life that gives hope.

Like Solomon said at the dedication of the Temple. God cannot be contained in a house. Even heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you, O God. The Temple was a place and a symbol of God's presence on earth and it did not last. God's Spirit does last through everything.

Jesus is the true bread that came down from heaven to give us Life, and Hope, and the notion that all of us, no matter what our circumstances, and what are our abilities, need to give back to God, and to our fellow humans. That puts a difficult teaching about Spirit in the form of bread, something we can all understand.

Let us all partake of the bread of life through eating bread this morning at the altar so that we remember that Jesus abides in us and we in him.