

YOU CAN'T COME TO JESUS.....BUT

John 6:35-51

Did you notice how often Jesus spoke of the need for his listeners to "**come** to Him?"

John 6:35(ESV) Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever **comes** to me shall not hunger

John 6:37(ESV) All that the Father gives me will **come** to me, and whoever **comes** to me I will never cast out.

John 6:44(ESV) No one can **come** to me unless the Father who sent me draws him.

John 6:45(ESV) Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father **comes** to me—

You remember the setting from last Sunday? Jesus had fed 5000 men plus women and children with only 5 loaves of bread and 2 fish and when everyone had eaten until they couldn't eat any more Jesus' disciples pick up 12 baskets of leftovers.

Then Jesus rushes his disciples into a boat and sends them to the other side of Lake Galilee while he goes up on a mountain to pray. After praying most of the night Jesus sees his disciples struggling against a head wind are caught in the middle of the lake so he walks out to them on top of the water. It holds him up because He is it's maker.

When Jesus gets into the boat it suddenly arrives at the beach of the city of Capernaum. That city is Jesus' home base on the North West shore of the lake.

When the people who had eaten better than their usual meals saw that the disciples had set out in the boat, they hurried by land back to Capernaum hoping to get more free meals out of Jesus.

Jesus recognizes they are not interested in Him for who he is - God come to earth. They are only interested in getting him to keep on providing them ongoing free bread. Bread that doesn't satisfy for more than a couple of hours until they get hungry again. Bread that one day will not keep even one of that vast crowd from death.

That brings us to today's Gospel lesson from John's Gospel where Jesus says that unlike the bread that can't keep you satisfied and can't keep you alive forever, He is the Bread of Life that satisfies humanity's deepest hunger forever -- the hunger to live in God's favor, and peace, and love, and joy forever. It is our hunger for utopia, our hunger for heaven!

Jesus invited the people to believe He had come from heaven to rescue them. Five times he used the word "come." It means let go of all that means the most to you and trust that I will provide everything you really need in this life and the next. Come to me! Come to me! Come to me! Come to me! Come to me!

They didn't want to come to Jesus and digest Him because they

Didn't think they needed to believe in Him as God come down to them.

They thought they were good enough to please God without Jesus' help.

In the Ephesians lesson today St. Paul calls on followers of Jesus to put off the old self that lives like non-Christians alienated from the life of God and put on the new-self that gratefully strives to love God and serve the people in our lives.

Our old sinful God-rejecting selves were put to death in our baptisms but they are like our dead bodies bound to us wherever we go. They are always dragging us down and making us tired of living for Jesus. Every day by confessing our old self's control to Jesus and meditating on some of His Word, we fall into the arms of Jesus, and He restores our new-self and throws off the old-self's control. He restores our supply of faith.

Your **new-self** knows you need Jesus because of your old self's prideful rejection of God.

Your **old-self** doesn't think you need Jesus' help from heaven because **you can** satisfy yourself day by day with bread that **you** pay for by **your** own work and savings. If you wonder how those free bread seeking people could reject Jesus' invitation to **come** and trust in him after all that they had seen Him do, FIRST consider these ways that you too reject Him and refuse to come to Him:

When you eat without thanking Jesus for giving you every meal, - You are rejecting Him.

When you eat without realizing Jesus is keeping you alive another day by feeding you. -

You are refusing to come to Him.

When you sleep or work or play on Sundays instead of gladly hearing and learning God's word in church, - you are refusing to come to Him.

You are refusing to come to Jesus, when you skip daily reading God's word and applying it to yourself by looking for your sin and your Savior in it. (You skip it to get physical rest, or earn money, or enjoy leisure time).

You reject Jesus and refuse to come to him when you are bitter about something someone you care about did to you. In bitterness you are so upset with this person or that one that you slander them and engage in repeated corrupt talk about them to all who will listen. (Ephesians 4:17)

You also refuse to come to Jesus when you sympathize with someone who is engaging in corrupt talk about someone else, instead of encouraging your friend to either let go of the bitterness, or go with you to talk with the offending person.

You reject Jesus when you refuse to be tenderhearted and forgiving toward those who hurt you - your actions are very unlike the tenderheartedness and forgiveness Jesus **lavished** on you at the cross, and **brings to you** in His Word and body and blood **today**.

You reject and refuse to come to Jesus at times because like Elijah you gave your best effort in the family or in the church or on the job and it all turned sour and failed. Like Elijah, you run away, give up, lay down and hope to die.

BUT THE REAL TRUTH IS YOUR SINFUL NATURE CAN'T COME TO JESUS!! John 6:44(ESV)

No one **can** come to me unless the Father who sent me **draws** him. And I will raise him up on the last day.

This is how the Father **draws** you to believe and trust in Jesus as your source of security, and hope that goes on forever eternally:

He comes to you and reminds you through a Scripture teaching which you may remember from catechism classes or past sermons or the witness of other believers:

A Scripture teaching like 1 John 1:8-9. I'll put it in my own words, "If you tell yourself that you have no sin [of daily rejecting Jesus] you deceive yourself and the truth is not in you. [You need to put away that false hood according to Ephesians 4:25].

The Father reminds you in Ephesians 4:20 that you have **not** learned to know a Christ who lets you **get away** with thinking you don't need Him. You **have learned** that even though you **CAN'T** come to him in your old-self. **He** has come down to **you** to be your life-giving bread.

Three times Jesus uses the word "**come**" to **assure** you that although you can't come to him. **He** comes to you! Verse 38: For I have **come** down from heaven, ...that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. Verse 50 : This is the bread that **comes** down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. Verse 51: I am the living bread that **came** down from heaven. If anyone eats this bread, he will live forever.

The bread of life that He gives you and all the world is his flesh.

God came to this world in human flesh and blood so he could substitute for **you** by facing all of the temptations of life that **you** face, and by taking all the rejection of His Father that **you** deserve!

In his small catechism, Dr. Luther described how the Father **draws you** to him this way: I **cannot** believe in Jesus Christ or come to him, but the **Holy Spirit** has called me through the Gospel [through the message of Christ's self-sacrificing pardoning [given to you personally in your baptism into Him, and in your mouth in Holy Communion with Him.]

You **can't** come to Jesus, but He has come to you to give you a new heart, a new self by means of this Word and His very real body and blood today! Jesus is your bread of life today!

When Elijah lost his faith that God would protect him and his people from death and belief in the false god of queen Jezebel, **he** didn't come to **God**. **He** ran away, and threw himself on the ground to die, but **Jesus** -the Angel of God - **CAME TO HIM** as He is doing with **you** today and gave him **food** to sustain him. He did it twice and the **food** was so powerful it **sustained Him for forty days and forty nights** as he traveled to the mountain of God.

Jesus comes you **today** in word and sacrament as the **powerful food** that will sustain **you** until He raises you up on the last day!