

John 6: 24 – 35

'Jesus the bread of life'

Prayer

Picture yourself in the Supermarket and around the Bakery ...

So many different kinds of bread ... shapes, colours, sliced or not, wheat, rye, seeded or unseeded etc etc.

This is a far cry from the times of the first century – and what those who heard Jesus' words would be picturing.

In her beautiful meditation on Jesus as bread, theologian and Episcopal priest, Lauren Winner writes:

"In calling himself 'the bread of life' – and not, say, crème caramel or caviar – Jesus is identifying with basic food, with sustenance, with the food that, for centuries afterward, would figure in the protest efforts of poor and marginalized people. No one holds caviar riots; people riot for bread. So to speak of God as bread is to speak of God's most elemental provision for us."

Jesus never ignores physical needs – and both in his earthly time and ours – bread as a basic foodstuff for the hungry is recognised and needs to be provided.

But in describing himself as the bread of life and as able to satisfy all hungers – Jesus is inviting those first hearers and us – now – to look to him to satisfy our deeper hungers too.

What are those hungers?

They could be a hunger for security and belonging?

A longing for connection, communion, intimacy, and love?

A hunger for delight, for joy?

A craving for the healing of old wounds?

Maybe other hungers are real for you at the moment?

Jesus' words invite us to know and experience that he can satisfy these needs – we could look elsewhere – confused by the abundance of things put in front of us as alternative answers – rather like the myriad of types of bread in the supermarket ...

But as we receive the bread of communion this morning – I invite each of us to truly "eat" Jesus – to take him into ourselves – and continue to do this day after day after day, through whatever spiritual practices work best for us ...

Prayer? Meditation? Song? The bread of heaven is ours for the tasting.

May its nourishment permeate us through and through until we, like Jesus, become life-saving bread for the whole world.

(Some material adapted from Debie Thomas: Journey with Jesus – Current Essay)