

Barre Congregational Church

August 18, 2024: A Pastoral Message by Pastor Margaret Keyser

~ **Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost**~

“Christ, the True Food and Drink”

Our services can be found on our website at www.barrechurch.com and Facebook page.

Scripture Reading: John 6 v 51 -58

I. Introduction:

As human beings we all have basic needs that need to be met for us to feel like life matters and that we can breathe and feel relaxed and good about ourselves. We need to be loved and cared for; we need to be recognized, and acknowledged for who we are, we need and want to succeed; and then there are some basic needs such as the feeling of safety, to have a roof over our heads, food on our tables, a good financial income, and to have people around us who love us, and whom we love and care for. It is not good to not feel loved, to feel isolated from caring people around us, to be hungry with no or little food, to feel unsafe, to be homeless, to not have a job.

II. Christ, the True Food and Drink:

When the Israelites wandered in the desert, God knew they needed food and water. They needed protection as they were traveling in terrain that was unknown to them. We know that God provided for them manna and quails when they were hungry, water from the rock when they were thirsty, and fast forward, Jesus provided bread and fish for the crowds who followed Him. God knew the needs of God’s people. Jesus, who was made man, knew and understood the needs of those who followed Him. He Himself had the same needs His fellow human beings had. When He became flesh, He was immersed into the daily needs and lives of the people He lived with, cared for, ministered to and more.

In our passage Jesus is in conversation with the crowd who followed Him into Capernaum where He had traveled to. Jesus had just fed the five thousand and walked on water, so they experienced the miracles He performed, and benefited from it as well. Their hunger had been satisfied, and they saw the incredible things he had done. When He left, they went looking for

Him, and found Him in Capernaum. To their question when He arrived there, He informed them that they were only looking for Him, because their hunger was satisfied. “You ate your loaves and had your fill”, He said. You follow me, because I gave you food. You follow me, because you want things from Me! But let Me tell you, He said, “Look for food that endures and leads to eternal life...I am the Bread of life...He who comes to Me will never grow hungry...the bread I offer leads to eternal life” But they did not understand that. He then began to discuss what could have been viewed as shocking and scandalous, says Edward Klink in his commentary on John. If they eat His flesh and drink His blood, they will have life in them. This suggestion to eat His flesh and drink His blood made them question Him even more. Who is this guy who grew up in Nazareth, talking like this? He knows we as Jews are not allowed to eat meat with its lifeblood still in it, as it states in Genesis 9 v 4.

But that was not what He meant, of course. He wanted to illustrate Who He truly was, and He offered them a special relationship with Him and with God that will not only provide them with the food they need on this earth, but a relationship, and food that would last to eternal life.

III. Conclusion:

Jesus knows what we need. He knew what His followers needed. He could give it to them any time, because of the power and life in Him. He is with us any time of the day. God is with us at any moment of the day and knows our needs. What I learn from this personally is we do not have to live as if we have no God to lean on. We do not have to work so hard in this life as if we do not have a Living God who knows our needs. This does not mean we should not work hard, but when our focus is solely on what and how we can achieve and meet our needs, with all its disappointments and struggles, He is reminding us that He is offering us something deeper, an intimate relationship with God, with Christ and the Holy Spirit that gives us the inner peace and fulfilment beyond the temporary peace we have, and also provides for us what we need. We as human beings have a lot still to learn about this offer from Christ, because it is always there, and so many times we look around to find what we need, forgetting God is right here with us, to hear our prayers, to see our pain. Christ is the True Food and Drink. May we experience in our daily lives this offer, and how God reveals Himself to us, in everything we need, our basic needs and the fulfilment in this life that only God can give, now and into eternal life. Amen.