

**St. Luke Ev. Lutheran Church-  
WELS**

**Sermon by Pastor Anthony E.  
Schultz**

**13<sup>th</sup> Sunday After Pentecost  
August 26, 2012 John 6:51-58**



**<sup>51</sup> I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.” <sup>52</sup> Then the Jews began to argue sharply among themselves, “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?”<sup>53</sup> Jesus said to them, “Very truly I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. <sup>54</sup> Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day. <sup>55</sup> For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. <sup>56</sup> Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in them. <sup>57</sup> Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me. <sup>58</sup> This is the bread that came down from heaven. Your ancestors ate manna and died, but whoever feeds on this bread will live forever.”**

People of God – rescued from the flaming lake of fire in hell by the innocent blood of the very Lamb of God:

It was about 20 minutes before midnight – in the dark – almost midnight – when someone heard a baby crying in the grass behind an apartment building in New York. It was the sound of a little baby – a newborn! Do you know what a newborn baby sounds like when they cry? I do! If you heard a baby crying – what would you do? Would you call the cops? I think I would tell Nancy to call 911 and I would go outside as fast as I could with my Mag-light/flash light – and I would look for that baby! And as soon as I found her – a little baby girl – wrapped in a towel and a sheet – just 1 or 2 days old – I would pick that baby up and hold her tight and try to calm her. I would tell her, “Don’t be scared! Jesus loves you! Jesus loves you!” That’s what I would do! By nature you and I are more helpless than that little baby – born dead in trespasses and sins. Jesus died and rose again to wash away all our sins. Jesus died and rose again so that

we might live our faith – giving all glory to Him and Him alone. Today God’s Word is again law and gospel as we continue to read through the discourse about the Bread of Life! In Jesus we have nourishment for our faith and for our life! Today God’s Word reminds us:

### **Jesus Is Living Bread!**

#### **I. This makes no sense to unbelievers**

#### **II. But Jesus gives believers eternal life!**

This is the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in a row – we have been reading from the Gospel of John – chapter 6. Do you remember August 5<sup>th</sup>? **Jesus crossed to the far shore of the Sea of Galilee (that is, the Sea of Tiberias)**, John is the only Gospel to call the Sea of Galilee the Sea of Tiberias. Tiberias Caesar was the Emperor of Rome. They renamed the Lake after him and even built a city near there – named for the Emperor, too. **And a great crowd of people followed him because they saw the miraculous signs he had performed on the sick.** That’s pretty understandable, too. No matter what was wrong with you, Jesus could make you better – better than new! I have visited lots and lots of people in lots of hospitals. When the paramedics come racing to your home or the scene of the accident – they put a sphygmomanometer on your arm – that’s a blood pressure cuff. They will put on their stethoscope and listen to your heart. They will take their little flash light – and shine it in your eyes and out – in and out. They might hook up oxygen. They might start an IV. When you get to the hospital they will do all these things all over again. They may order x-rays or an MRI or an EKG. They will ask you if you are on any medication or if you have abused drugs or alcohol. They will visit in small clumps and bunches. And then – if they are confident they know what’s wrong with you – they will do everything possible to make you better. If they don’t know for sure what’s wrong – they will very aggressively treat your symptoms. Jesus just made people better. Sometimes he said the word and they were better. Sometimes he touched them and they were better. Sometimes they just

touched him – just touched the hem of his garment and they were healed – perfectly healed – completely whole – all better! **Then Jesus went up on a mountainside and sat down with his disciples. The Jewish Passover Feast was near.** It's about a year before the last Passover Jesus will celebrate with his disciples in Jerusalem before he dies on the cross to redeem us.

Literally thousands of people came near to Jesus. He taught them about the Kingdom of God. Not a place but the power of the gospel working in their hearts and changing their lives! After teaching the people – Jesus wanted them to have something to eat. Jesus tested Philip. **“Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?” He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do. Philip answered him, “Eight months’ wages would buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!”** Another of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, spoke up, **“Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?”** Beginning with that little boy’s brown bag lunch – Jesus fed 5,000 men plus women and children. It was such a wondrous miracle and meal – they wanted to make Jesus their Bread King. But that wasn’t why Jesus came. Jesus didn’t come to make Heaven on earth. Jesus came to take us from earth to Heaven – by washing away all our sins. Jesus came to create and to feed our faith – with himself – the Bread of Life!

When the people caught up with Jesus again in Capernaum – they wanted more earthly bread from one they hoped would drive out the accursed Romans and all their taxes! They were sure to be disappointed. Jesus tried to teach the people – you need to stop thinking about earthly bread – earthly concerns – but rather spiritual bread – spiritual concerns! Jesus said, **“I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.”** To live forever! I am a little over 60 years old. That means I have lived a little over 21,900 days. Again – that sounds like a lot! That’s almost 22,000 breakfasts. That’s a lot of OJ and

milk and Cap'n Crunch and oatmeal and I think 2 times *steak and eggs* – once in Rockford, IL and once at Pinecones. 22,000 lunches and 22,000 suppers. That's a lot of spaghetti and a lot of pizza. I have lived in LaCrosse and Onalaska, Roanoke, IL in the country and in town – in West Chicago, again in the country and in town, Watertown for college, Mequon for the Seminary, Waukesha and then Brown Deer, Rockford, IL then Dundee, WI and now almost 22 years in Watertown – by Church and now by the Hospital. 22,000 days – most of them as Colonel Potter said--painfully ordinary and incredibly average. Some days incredible – the day your firstborn son is born – or the day you have twins. Some days incredible--like holding a lamb in the hills outside of Bethlehem – to stand on the Mount of Olives and look down on 3,000 year old Jerusalem – to take a boat ride across the Sea of Galilee. Earthly stuff doesn't really matter. How fancy your house is – how shiny your car is – how perfect your lawn is. None of these things really matter. How much Jesus loves you matters. Learning God's Word matters. Spending each day close to Jesus matters. Being ready to die matters. Tuesday night at midnight sirens were wailing and someone was on their way to the hospital. Eternal life is what matters more than anything!

**<sup>52</sup> Then the Jews began to argue sharply among themselves, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?"** Jesus' enemies didn't get it. Jesus' enemies didn't understand. Again they were thinking literally – Jesus was speaking figuratively! We are nourished – our faith is fed with the Gospel! To the unbeliever this makes no sense at all. Why would you come here – Sunday after Sunday when you could sleep late – put on your play clothes – go to McDonald's for hotcakes and sausage – or just stay home and have a jammie day. Or you could go to a Packer's game – tail gate – go to the game – then go to Brett Favre's steak house and have supper! Why would you come here – when you already have a pretty good idea what you are going to hear. You are going to hear that you are a sinner – falling fatally short of what Jesus requires of you. We fail to fear love and trust in God above all things. We fail to love our neighbor like our self! To the

unbeliever – the atheist we seem like hopeless hypocrites. We come to Church – to pray, praise and give thanks. And then come Monday morning we are painfully similar to our neighbor – frustrated, impatient, selfish, self-seeking and self-serving. We eat too much, drink too much, complain about our supervisors and complain even more bitterly about our customers. And the answer to all our problems is supposed to be this Carpenter from Nazareth to lived some 33 years then was put to death – literally crucified some 2,000 years ago – and that means when we die we get to go some place where there’s dry ice smoke – white gowns and harps? Many of our neighbors will take their chances. If there is a God – a day of final reckoning – they will just have to hope that the good they have done in this world – recycling all their cardboard and using cloth bags when they go to the grocery store – and giving money to homeless people – will somehow make up for all the things they did when they were young and selfish and reckless! After all – they have enough troubles pay check to pay check – who has time to worry about what happens after you die?! I’m not dead yet! Jesus is the answer to all their troubles? They are not convinced! By the grace of God – we know that Jesus is our only Savior from sin. Jesus died and rose again to forgive us. The Holy Spirit in our hearts has worked saving faith in our heart so that we believe in Jesus without doubt or fear!

**“Whoever feeds on this bread will live forever.”** Jesus watches out for his lambs and his sheep. I read the other day – that being a shepherd in Europe isn’t what it used to be. Apparently this idea that you need to be with your sheep – watching out for wolves – especially with the wolf population growing – isn’t essential. Apparently having sheep dogs to watch out for the sheep isn’t cost efficient, either. So what to do? They are testing this kind of heart monitor – high tech equipment some long distance runners use. You fasten this monitor to a collar around the sheep’s neck. Then when the wolf comes – the sheep’s heart rate goes from around 80 beats per minute to 225 beats per minute. The idea is – when this alarm goes off – the shepherd comes running? No – they are thinking they can

make some wolf repellent that will go off – driving the wolves away!  
Really? Whatever happened to the concept I am the Good Shepherd – I lay down my life for the sheep? Jesus loves his sheep. His amazing grace isn't something he literally or figuratively phones in! Jesus laid down his life for his sheep. And Jesus nourishes his sheep – with the bread that will make us live forever by grace alone. Amen!

To God alone all glory!

**Rev. Anthony E. Schultz**