

Midweek Lenten Vespers #4  
St. John 6:36-51  
March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2026  
Sts. Peter and Paul Ev. Lutheran Church, UAC  
Simpsonville, SC  
Pastor Jerald P. Dulas

## I AM the Living Bread

*In Nomine Iesu!*

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

### **Sermon Text:**

“I AM the living bread which came down out of heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: yea and the bread which I will give is My flesh, for the life of the world.”

### **Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:**

O Lord, send out Thy Light and Thy Truth, let them lead us. O Lord, + open Thou my lips, that my mouth may show forth Thy praise. O Lord, graciously preserve me, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected. Amen.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. Amen.

My dear friends, in the Lord’s Prayer we pray for “daily bread.” The daily bread for which we pray in that prayer refers to everything that we need to support this body and life. In the Small Catechism, there is a long list of things that daily bread means. But although daily bread refers to many different things that support our body and life. Daily bread can also refer to bread itself. Bread in the holy Scriptures is often a symbol of that which gives life. For we cannot continue living if we do not eat. Bread is one of the most basic items of sustenance. It was easily made from grains crushed into flour, and was used as a daily sustenance by many in the holy Scriptures.

This is why our Lord + Jesus in the Gospel reading from the Apostle and Evangelist St. John uses bread as an illustration to teach the Jews something about the Kingdom of Heaven. He uses an earthly substance to teach a heavenly reality. Bread is eaten to sustain life. The people of Israel ate manna in the wilderness during their forty years of wandering. Our Lord tells them that they called this manna, “the bread of heaven.” It certainly came down from heaven; it certainly came from the Lord God; it was a food that the Lord God gave them to keep them alive in a wilderness where food was hard to come by. But this manna was only given to the Jews, to the people of Israel. This is why the Lord + Jesus says that this manna was not the true “bread of heaven.” For the true bread of heaven does not just sustain the life of a few people, it does not just sustain the life of one nation. The true bread of heaven gives life to the whole world.

Furthermore, the true bread of heaven does not just sustain a person’s life for as long as they are in this world, and eating this bread. The true bread of heaven feeds a person for all of eternity. This is why daily bread, or any other food, cannot be the true bread of heaven. The Jews in the Gospel reading are coming to the Lord + Jesus having just recently been fed with a few loaves and some fishes in the wilderness. They recognized the connection between this feeding of five thousand men and the feeding done for forty years by the Lord God in the wilderness. They saw the connection between the loaves and fishes and the manna the Lord God gave. This is why they seek out the Lord + Jesus, they want Him to give them more of this bread—this bread that does not run out. How great that would be!

They would never have to labor to make bread again. They would not have to spend money to buy bread anymore.

The same was the reaction of the woman by the well who had asked the Lord + Jesus to give to her the water of life that He was teaching her about. She wanted that water that would not run out, so that she did not have to come to the well to draw water anymore. But as was the case with her, so it is now, the Lord + Jesus is not talking about physical bread or water. He is not talking about the bread that we eat daily, nor the water which we drink often. He is talking about an eternal bread, and an eternal water. In short, He is talking about Himself.

He is the living bread! He is the living water! Everyone who eats this bread and drinks this water will never die. We eat and drink the Lord + Jesus through faith. Indeed, when we come to this altar to receive our Lord + Jesus in bread and wine, we eat and drink His flesh and blood, and through faith we are granted the remission of all our sins. For His Body is life, and His Blood is life. It gives eternal life to all those who eat and drink it. But our Lord is not just talking about His Supper in this passage from St. John. He is talking about Himself being the life of the whole world. Those who ate the manna in the wilderness, still died. Those who eat bread and drink water every day of their lives, still die. But the Lord + Jesus, the Christ, is the living bread come down out of heaven. He gives eternal life to all those who cling to Him in faith.

Our Lord + Jesus was even born in Bethlehem, which is translated as “House of Bread.” He Who is the living bread of heaven, was born in the house of bread. This is why our Lord + Jesus is the true “daily bread.” He is the bread which we need for every day of our lives. He is the One Who supplies not just our needs for each day—all that we need to support this body and life—but He supplies the bread that we need to inherit an eternal life in heaven. He gives us Himself! He gives us the One Who perfectly fulfilled the whole will and Law of the Lord God, and the One Who having taken upon Himself our flesh, suffers our punishment upon the tree of the holy cross. By His stripes we are healed. By the eating of the living bread of heaven, we are healed of all our transgressions.

This is why He is the true bread of heaven, for all those who cling to Him in faith, will never see death. All those who have the Lord + Jesus as their Savior will never taste of death. He is the bread of which we can eat not just for a day, not just for forty years, but we can have Him as our eternal Savior forever and ever. This is the One Whom the heavenly Father wishes to teach us poor, miserable sinners about. For in Him alone is life and salvation. In Him alone are we sustained not just for this life, but for all eternity.

Therefore, my dear friends, let us sate our hunger and thirst for righteousness in our Lord + Jesus alone. For He alone is righteous and holy. Through faith in Him we put on His righteousness; we put on His holiness, so that the devil, the world, and our sinful flesh no longer have a cause to accuse us of being miserable sinners. For in the Christ, our sins are covered over. They are no longer credited to us. And our Lord + Jesus, the Living Bread sent down from heaven, pleads on our behalf to the heavenly Father for us.

This is why the heavenly Father sent the Son, to redeem us back from sin and death. He came to give us life and give it to us abundantly. For in Him is life everlasting. Let us then cling in faith to Him, for in His promises are found salvation. He has promised to save and deliver us from sin and death. Indeed, He has done it by offering up His life as an once and for all time sacrifice for us upon the tree of the holy cross. As we continue in this transitional week of Lent where we move from focusing upon our breaking of the Law of God, and our unworthiness on account of any good thing in us, to our Lord’s sacrifice for us to pay for our transgressions, let us turn our eyes upon our Lord and Savior. Let us fix our eyes upon our Lord + Jesus. For He is the true and living bread sent down from heaven. Let us feast upon our Lord + Jesus. Let us eat this living bread through faith. For through faith, we are justified

and declared righteous in the sight of our heavenly Father. May the true and living bread, our Lord + Jesus, prove to be an eternal sustenance upon Whom we may feast for all eternity with the whole company of heaven. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus, the Christ. Amen.

**Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:**

Almighty God, be pleased to accompany Thy Word with Thy Holy Spirit and grant that Thy Word would increase faith in us; bring into the Way of Truth all such as have erred; turn the hearts of the unrepentant; and for sake of Thy Name grant succor to all heavy hearts and those who are heavy-laden, that they may through the mercy of the Lord + Jesus Christ be relieved and preserved so that they succumb not to the temptation of despair but rather that they gain the victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil; through the same + Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with the Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever One God, world without end. Amen.

**The Votum:**

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ + Jesus. Amen.

*Soli Deo Gloria!*