

## Could He Feed Your Exhaustion?

by Pastor Kurt Hoover

### Could He be Litany based on Psalm 43

Leader: I sought the Lord, and he answered me

**All: and delivered me from all my fears.**

Leader: Those who look to him are radiant,

**All: and their faces shall never be ashamed.**

Leader: This poor child cried, and the Lord heard me

**All: and saved me out of all my troubles.**

Leader: The angel of the Lord encamps

**All: around those who fear him, and delivers them.**

Leader: Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good!

**All: Blessed is the child who takes refuge in him!**

**Deuteronomy 8:1-3** “The whole commandment that I command you today you shall be careful to do, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land that the Lord swore to give to your fathers. <sup>2</sup> And you shall remember the whole way that the Lord your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, that he might humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not. <sup>3</sup> And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.

**2 Corinthians 9:10-15** <sup>10</sup> He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. <sup>11</sup> You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God. <sup>12</sup> For the ministry of this service is not only supplying the needs of the saints but is also overflowing in many thanksgivings to God. <sup>13</sup> By their approval of this service, they will glorify God because of your submission that comes from your confession of the gospel of Christ, and the generosity of your contribution for them and for all others, <sup>14</sup> while they long for you and pray for you, because of the surpassing grace of God upon you. <sup>15</sup> Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift! *[lot of context here]*

**John 6:22-35** <sup>22</sup> On the next day the crowd that remained on the other side of the sea saw that there had been only one boat there, and that Jesus had not entered the boat with his disciples, but that his disciples had gone away alone. <sup>23</sup> Other boats from Tiberias came near the place where they had eaten the bread after the Lord had given thanks. <sup>24</sup> So when the crowd saw that Jesus was not there, nor his disciples, they themselves got into the boats and went to Capernaum, seeking Jesus.

<sup>25</sup> When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, “Rabbi, when did you come here?” <sup>26</sup> Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. <sup>27</sup> Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal.” <sup>28</sup> Then they said to him, “What must we do, to be doing the works of God?” <sup>29</sup> Jesus answered them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.” <sup>30</sup> So they said to him, “Then what sign do you do, that we may see and believe you? What work do you perform? <sup>31</sup> Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’” <sup>32</sup> Jesus then said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. <sup>33</sup> For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” <sup>34</sup> They said to him, “Sir, give us this bread always.”

<sup>35</sup> Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.

**Work. Raise your hand if you have ever been exhausted from Work.**

**Hunger. Raise you hand if you have ever been so hungry you were (or are) to weak, to exhausted... to work.**

**Bread. Ok this is an easy one. Raise your hand if you like bread.**

**Jesus is here now in His Word and Sacrament. Today He will be your bread of Life!**

**John tells us, in *his* chapter 6, what stood out to him as he and Mark and the other disciples remember this miraculous feeding on the shores of Galilee. They both remember being exhausted... The real miracle here was that - the work just kept on coming at them and in the midst of Jesus and the disciple's exhaustion, the limits of the human body, somehow, they had all that they needed to feed the crowd. They had enough food yes, but more important they had energy and compassion in the midst of exhaustion. Life was not a burden, there was something else giving them life.**

**The cycle of work, and exhaustion, and bread is metaphor upon metaphor. The miracle had nothing to do with people 'getting their fill' of actual bread. Jesus is saying very clearly to them and us today. The reason we follow Jesus, obey his commands, seek his will, live our lives in and through Him... the reason we 'work' for Jesus is because He has given us, will give us and is right now giving us our fill of His supernatural power and perspective. In fact it has been him at 'work' through you the whole time.**

**There is a hunger inside of us that can not be feed by bread alone. And even when we are physically exhausted by the demands of the world this Spiritual presence of Christ is all that we need.**

**This is the promise John remembers Jesus speaking:**

*<sup>33</sup> For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." <sup>34</sup> They said to him, "Sir, give us this bread always."*

*<sup>35</sup> Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst. (John 6)*

**This is metaphor upon metaphor, but the text is also plain. Jesus saying to us (and them) who He is and what He does. He**

**gives Life to the world. He is a type of sustenance that has been giving you all the joys and fulfillment of life this whole time. The joys and fulfillment of child rearing, falling in love, a good days work, hearing a story... all that it means to truly live ... He has been the source of that this whole time. And there is nothing he would rather do!**

**And yet... we are so hungry. We are so exhausted... all of us. Trying to get this bread of life on our own and God has been providing it the whole time. And we are not the first ... we can relate directly to the questions of the crowd about ‘work.’**

*<sup>27</sup> [Jesus says] Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal.” <sup>28</sup> Then they said to him, “What must we do, to be doing the works of God?” <sup>29</sup> Jesus answered them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.” (John 6)*

**And yet we are so hungry. We are so exhausted... all of us. Trying to ‘work’ on our own to get something other than what God has been providing the whole time.**

**Jesus has come to put an end to the exhausting pursuit of earning God’s bread. The bread of Life. It has come down to you, It has been with you, you have been eating it the whole time. There is more than enough for you, and all you love. It is freely given, despite your constant striving and WORK to try and feed yourself by putting your trust in yourself and what you can attain.**

*... “This is the work of God, that you believe [Trust!] in him whom he has sent.” (John 6:29)*

**Life trusting in this higher power can only come from that power if it is that power in which we trust. Life given to you in the joy and the laughter and the stories of others... God’s**

**promises and forgiveness given to you by another without your effort.**

**And yet we, like the original crowd ask:**

*“What must we do, to be doing the works of God?” (John 6:28)*

**We ask this same question all the time. It is the motivation behind our every action... What work must I do? When will this work finally be accomplished, when will the exhaustion come to an end?**

**Jesus says, The thing that is most getting in the way of you having life – Is the idea that you must contribute some fo the work. Life is simply a reflection of God’s light you are experiencing in any given moment. You can’t produce life. You experience life. Life is always a gift. A gift given by God, through the words of others given by him.**

**The crowd is experiencing the same thing in that moment. They are being awakened to the very real and constant presence of God that has been with them the whole time... The Holy Spirit, the power of the spoken word...**

*...man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord. (Deut 8:3)*

**It is Words that give life, and most especially those heart felt words called out of us by the need of another ... it is WORDS that give life, not bread.**

**Let me approach this a different way.**

**Let me present you with a couple of different options that you have right here and right now in today’s world to have life.**



**A couple of different tables that you might right now be eating from, being fed at. These are the tables that you have somehow found yourself at, maybe purposely chosen, but often an accident of all the uncontrollable influences on our lives. Thanks be to God that he is in control of those circumstances, and they do not happen all by simple accident, BUT all this to say - we have very little will or choice in what table we end up eating from.**

**So let me present you with the table of Dionysus, the table of the presence in the tabernacle and the temple, and the table of Holy Communion.**

**The opening ceremonies of the Olympics got some attention for many and various reasons. A real clash of cultures. As is the intention of the Olympic games... let's not fight actual culture wars ... lets prove which country is doing life right by the prowess of their athletes... (I may be a little bias, having never broken any athletic records, but I think that is an honest interpretation of the Spirit behind the Olympics)**

**At the center of the controversy was not the French cultural idea of a 'Ménage à trois' from the scene before, but the catwalk or drag show scene. Many athletes, reporters, and 1 or 2 celebrities were upset because it seemed as if the producers of the games were trying to replace the Lord's table with a table of drag queens.**

**It turns out there are other table scenes in the history of the world. This depiction was actually of a Roman (ie Olympic) tradition that the Christian has indeed replaced. The Greco-Roman myth that depicted the many different feasts of the God's. Perhaps the wedding feast of Zeus and Hera. With the god of fertility, wine and pleasure - Bacchus Dionysius.**

**These tables and what they have to offer us and what ‘work’ is required of man to eat at them has been a cultural battle since the beginning of time. Jesus making himself the bread of life was not nearly so insulting to the Roman empire, who eventually accepted that table as far superior to the cult of gods they previously worshipped.**

**The biggest cultural moment was actually when Jesus replaced the table for the bread of the Presence found in the holiest part of the temple.**

**Let me give you a quick but I think historically faithful comparison of these tables. The oldest table would be Moses table of the presence dating back to shortly after the exodus. What ‘work’ would you have to do to access the life God offers. - You had to be male, a priest, chosen by a roll of the dice... you brought with you a sacrificial animal, distracting smell of incense, and hoped that these symbols might cover the little blemishes in the life of what was the most righteous person from your village or tribe. Interesting that God desired to replace that as the source of life.**

**Then there is the table of Bacchus. What ‘work’ would you have to do to access the life this god offers. And to be sure even if we can chalk it up to myth, for millions of people this was the only God they knew and worshipped. What ‘work’ – well how do I give you the PG version?? It was the belief of the ancient Roman culture before Christianity that if God gave you a desire, then it must have been for you to fulfill it. In order to find life at this table you have to be young, fertile, perhaps drunk, willing to be exploited, or provide the wine of exploitation... Thankfully this to is something God desired to replace.**

**So what did God replace it with. The Lord's Supper, Holy Communion, the bread of life which comes down from heaven to give life to the world. The very reality that we can not live by bread alone but need the hope of God's promises, His presence. What 'work' do you have to do to access the life God feeds you at His table. Nothing. As John heard Jesus promise and recorded in verse 29. *"This is the work of God, [creating] belief in him whom he has sent."***

**Here is the good news... God is Almighty, God is in control and he has brought you to His table.**

**Jesus is here now in His Word and Sacrament. Today He is your bread of Life!**

