

# A PLACE WITH ROOM FOR ALL

Dr. Fred Fourie ~Sunday, September 3, 2006



John 6:35, 41 - 51      **35** Jesus said to them, "I am the **bread** of life. Whoever comes to me will never be **hungry**, and whoever believes in me will never be **thirsty**. Then the Jews began to complain about him because he said, "I am the **bread that came down from heaven.**" They were saying, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? **How can he now say, 'I have come down from heaven'?**" **Jesus answered them, "Do not complain among yourselves. No one can come to me unless drawn by the Father who sent me; and I will raise that person up on the last day. It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.'** Everyone who has heard and learned from the

Father comes to me. Not that anyone has seen the Father except the one who is from God; he has seen the Father. Very truly, I tell you, whoever believes has eternal life. **I am the bread of life.** Your ancestors ate the **manna** in the **wilderness**, and they died. This bread comes down from heaven, **so that one may eat of it and not die.** I am the living bread that came down from heaven. **Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh."**

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The subject of eating and drinking is very much part of all our lives. Later today, many of us will eat together to make this evening's fellowship even better. Amongst the biggest sellers in bookstores are the cookbooks and the diet books. A sad fact is that the cookbooks tell you how to prepare the food to **make it real attractive and delicious**, while the diet books tell you how **not** to eat it. Still, we read them both!

Our faith in Jesus Christ is **intimately connected** to the theme of **eating and drinking**. There is something unique and special about the Lord's Table! When eating and drinking ~ more of our senses come to play. We get involved in a way that words alone can never accomplish. Jesus said to those who followed him, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never be **hungry**; and whoever believes in me will never be **thirsty**"

**How is he bread for our lives?** Could it have something to do with the sacrament of the Lord's Supper? He invites all of us to come to his table which is **place with Room for All** ~all efforts of some churches through the centuries to be selective about whom we allow to the table have failed. That is central to our testimony to the world ~ the **Lord's Table is indeed a place with Room for All!**

In British history ~ at the funeral of Admiral Horatio Nelson, a party of his sailors carried his body high into the cathedral. **His coffin was draped with a magnificent Union Jack.** Later they carried his body to the graveside. With reverence and with efficiency they lowered the body of the world's greatest admiral into its tomb. Soon as they were dismissed, they all seized the Union Jack with which the coffin had been covered and **tore it to fragments**, and each took his souvenir of the illustrious dead." For the rest of their lives **that little bit of colored cloth** would speak to them of the admiral they had loved. **"I've got a piece of him,"** they

said, "and I'll never forget him." In a sense, when we leave here this morning, each of us will take with us the same experience. While eating and drinking, we have reached out and symbolically touched the object of our faith.

The strength and power of living in communion with Jesus Christ goes even deeper than that. When our faith prevails, we learn how to also reach out and touch one another. Have you seen the powerful film called *Places in the Heart*? Set in the South during the depression, it tells about a father of three small children who was shot in a tragic accident. The young black man who shot the father was lynched for it. The widow of the young father is about to lose her home through foreclosure. Valiantly she struggles to keep her home and the crop of cotton on which everything depended. A drifter, an unemployed black man named Moses, helps her harvest her cotton and salvage her farm. Eventually, though, the Klan runs Moses out of town. The cotton mill operator who did not appreciate the shrewd business advice Moses had given the widow instigated this. There is also a couple tragically torn apart. To show how different situations could have and should have developed, in the surprising closing moments of the film there is a magnificent scene depicting the local congregation in worship. There is an imaginary communion - taking place. As the people receive the bread and the cup, it becomes clear that this is no ordinary congregation. The camera zooms in. There is the widow and there is Moses, who had been run out of town. The widow's dead husband is there, as well as the lynched young man who shot him. Also, the banker who was about to foreclose on the mortgage and the cotton gin operator are there. Members of the Klan are there. Also, black tenant farmers. The couple whose marriage had been broken is there, reconciled. All seem to be at peace with one another as they reach for the bread and wine. It is as if to say, here is the one place where there is healing. Not all this would have happened if you only knew the peace that only Christ gives. Here is the one place where there is room for all. Here is the one place where there is food. Here is the one place where there is life! Here is where we are a family. Here is where we can reach out and touch one another.

Maybe that is why the Lord's Supper moves us as it does. No wonder the sacred meal moves us as it does. Truly, he is the bread of life. He touches and satisfies our deepest needs. He allows us to reach out and touch one another. At no other time do we come closer to touching God through Christ than when we eat of the bread and drink from the cup.

Break now the bread of Life, Savior to me  
As you broke the loaves beside the sea;  
Beyond the sacred page, I seek you Lord;  
My Spirit yearns for you, O Living Word

Bless now the truth dear Lord, to me, to me  
As you once blessed the bread by Galilee;  
Then shall all bondage cease, all shackles fall,  
And I shall find my peace, my all in all.

AMEN