



## Message for Pentecost 12

### “Crusts and Heels”

Scriptural Reference: John 6: 51-58

Greetings Saints. It is great to be with you all, both here in the Sanctuary and at home on Facebook Live, and I am grateful for the opportunity to speak with you again on this 12<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Pentecost.

If you have been with us for the last several Sundays, I hope you have noticed a recurring theme in John’s Gospel, “Bread.” John absolutely loves this metaphor for the nourishing and sustaining abilities of a deep relationship with Jesus. John has Jesus repeating often, “I am the Bread of Life.” And, indeed it is a great metaphor for we can get the all nutrition that we need from bread. Full of carbohydrate energy, the wheat in bread transforms easily into the ATP an ADP...adenine triphosphate and adenine di-phosphate that fuels our cells. And with 7-22% protein, bread from wheat can indeed sustain us. Prisoners on a diet of bread and water diet, while definitely lacking variety is in fact, sustainable.

Last week Saints we spoke about making changes to our lives. Remember Wanna Be Fierce, the barrel racing horse that decided to stop running in circles? Last week we also spoke of developing such a profound and intimate relationship with Jesus that we actually “consume” Him and Jesus in turn becomes a part of us in body, mind and spirit. This week, Saints, let’s play with John’s Bread of Life

metaphor some...this Bread of Life image... this consuming of Jesus' teachings and ways in our message today entitled, "Crusts and Heels."

Ever hear the saying Saints, "...the greatest thing since sliced bread." The saying is usually heard around something new, unique or clever. A new invention or product perhaps. So, somehow sliced bread has become a de facto standard for amazing things. And here before you this morning we have that standard...Eddy's Sliced Enriched Bread.

Enriched, sliced bread in fact...choked full of protein, carbohydrates, injected with vitamins and minerals. And it is, as John says, an amazing metaphor for our relationship with Jesus and our Jesus Way Walk. And so, let's have a look and see what qualities in Eddy's Enriched White Bread of Eternal Life are important and necessary.

**First Endurance and Survivability.** If Eddy's Enriched is a symbol of our relationship with Jesus, the first thing that comes to mind is endurance. Jesus has to have relational endurance to be with us because we continue to keep forgetting about our end of the relationship, for hours, days, sometimes weeks or months. We will enjoy a couple of pieces of the loaf, on a Sunday or Christmas and Easter...or when we are distressed or in need, and then tie up the rest of the loaf and put it up in the cabinet for extended and intermittent stays in the dark. Thank goodness Eddy's Enriched is choked full of preservatives, so that even for those long and lonely stays in the cupboard, Jesus' relationship with us doesn't mold, rot or spoil. No thanks to us though. We want bread, if and when we want it...or need it. The rest of the time, up in the cupboard or for extended duration out of right relationship with Jesus...into the freezer.

**Next, cushy bits only please...no crusts or heels.** Do you ever notice out littles, children and grandchildren and often us grownups as well... want the crusts cut off of their sandwiches, and never, never want the "heels" of the bread. Even though they don't get a "full piece" of Eddy's Enriched, they don't "take it all," the piece they do take is nice and

cushy, doesn't take much work to chew it up, always the same...the brown, edgy parts, the hard to chew parts get cut off and cast aside. We just want the filet, the backstraps, the luscious loin of Eddy's Enriched.

So, it is sometimes in our relationship with Jesus, we often only just want the cushy parts, the easy parts of Jesus Way Walk that don't take much mastication on our part. We discard the hard parts, the crusts and the heels, cut them off and just pretend they didn't exist in the first place.

Sunday morning, feeling good, come to church to say a prayer, sing a hymn, drop a fiver in the plate. Then on the way to breakfast flip off the guy who cuts you off in I-5. Tell the homeless guy at the intersection to "get a job;" or berate the waitress because your over-easy eggs are a little to stiff for your liking; or let the call from your daughter go to voicemail. And perhaps engage in some juicy church gossip over your second cup of coffee. Where are the heels and crusts of the Jesus Way? Discarded...thrown away, ignored or put in the "too hard" basket.

And what exactly are these heels and crusts that we all too often cut off our Jesus, our Bread of Life" ...choosing to ignore or discard.

How about the *Love one another* heel of *The Bread of Life*? This is an easy one to remove from the Jesus Bread, but it is one of the heels that holds the whole loaf intact. We just don't get to love those who are like us, or those who we like, who are easy to love, who agree with us, who look or think, or act like us. That's the cushy center of the Eddy's Enriched. The Jesus Way Challenge is loving those who are nothing like us, are polar opposites of us in all things. The troubling and troublesome, on the margins at the "heels." Love one another, all ... none left out...a chewy, tough and crunchy heel...easily discarded.

Love gives the heel of the Bread of Life it's structural integrity. Love holds the Bread of Life together. As we learn from Paul in Corinthians...Love is patient, love is kind, love is not envious or

boastful or arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way. Love is not irritable or resentful. Love does not rejoice in wrongdoing but rejoices in the truth.

As we learned from Paul last week in Ephesians, *Put away false hood – Speak the truth to our neighbors for we are all of one another. Do not let the sun go down on your anger. Work honestly and share something with the needy ones. Let no evil talk come from out of our mouths. Speak what is useful for building up and give grace to those who hear. Put away your bitterness, wrath, anger, wrangling, slander and malice.* And slightly more modern way of putting it is in the enlightening words of Eleanor Roosevelt, “Great minds speak about ideas, average minds speak about events, small minds speak about people.”

At the other end of the loaf is the *we are all made in the image and likeness of our God* heel. The *we are all related* heel. The *respect the dignity of every human being* heel. This is the other tough edge that holds the other side of Jesus’ Bread of Life together. This “heel” challenges us to find that Divine Spark that resides in even our most difficult of relatives, to find the face of Jesus in the most unlikely of faces. It is the heel of common ground, embracing collaboration over competition. It is the heel that caused the soldiers on both the Allied and German side of the trench to lay down their weapons and sing together Silent Night on a Christmas Eve in 1917...the heel embraced if only for one night.

So, Saints is Jesus truly the Bread of Life as John loves to remind us? I believe Jesus is... I think Jesus is indeed Eddy’s Enriched Loaf. Nutritious, sustaining, sturdy and enduring, cushy parts and crunchy parts, easy parts and tough parts. The Bread of Life has everything we need to keep us alive. But we have a decision to make. We have to eat it every day and chew up every piece. As our beloved Jesus reminds us, “Don’t forget to eat your heels and crusts.”

Amen.