

Christ Lutheran Church

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Get direct access to Jesus - John 6:35-51

by Pastor Dave Goehmann

Will you eat bread today? Maybe you had some toast for breakfast.

Maybe you will have a sandwich with bread for lunch. Or maybe you will just have a plain old piece of buttered bread along with your supper.

Bread is very common in our culture as it is in many cultures around the world. In India they have what is called nan. In almost every country of the world you will find bread.

I used to think that this had always been true throughout history. Every culture always had bread. Then one day I was surprised to find out that it isn't true. Pastor Rich Rudowski wrote a very enlightening article in his newsletter concerning his work for Lutheran Bible Translators in Botswana. The Setswana language uses a word that starts with the letter s to translate the word bread in the Bible. Strangely enough this s word was not a common word in the native language. In fact, most people had no idea what it meant.

This word actually referred to a gritty thick porridge that was dried and hardened so that the people could travel with it and keep it from spoiling. This porridge was and still is a staple among the native people. But the s word substance went out of existence when actual bread was imported into the country after the early 1900's. Although the s word dried porridge went out of existence, the people still kept the translation in their scriptures. The actual bread, is known to everyone now, but not used in the translation of the Bible.

People thought that the s substance was now some type of special holy food that Jesus invented as he broke it and gave it to the disciples. They didn't think it was real bread. So Rich wanted them to change the translation to reflect that Jesus used real bread as he broke it and gave it to the disciples. Oddly enough many people argued to keep the old translation. What was there reasoning? It was that Jesus would have never used regular plain old bread.

But that is exactly the point as Pastor Rich explains in his article. Jesus is using something that is common and easily accessible to people. God uses the common items of bread, wine, and even water as we receive direct access to him. Rich concludes in his article hoping he can change the translation so it can fit the true meaning and so that the people will have a greater understanding of God

who is more real and tangible to the people in the common every day things of life. Well, God help him on this endeavor!

Well thanks, Pastor Rich for giving me a platform for my sermon. It makes you wonder how we see God. Do we see him as a distant, separate, holy being, that we are unable to approach, and unworthy to come in contact with. Sometimes we would rather it be that way, so that we don't have to "get involved" in some type of relationship with God.

It is easier to have someone else do it for us. It would be easier to appoint a leader who can serve as a representative and we don't have to contact God directly. Kings, priests, and pastors can talk and interact with God, and the rest of us don't need to concern ourselves with him. All we need to do is just do what were told and our relationship with God will be just fine right? No, Wrong!

There are basically two kinds of relationships we can have with people. We can have a business relationship, or we can have a friendship. When we work in the business world we function on a separate level. No one is forced to share personal information. All we need to do is do the work necessary and then go home. But what happens if we make a mistake. The only way to resolve it is to make up for it by doing more work, taking a dock in pay, or quitting, or getting fired. In the business world we can't just say I'm sorry and ask for forgiveness.

Now think about the friendship relationship. When we do something wrong against the other person we can try to make it right. We could just do other things like give them gifts, compliments, and try to make up for something we did. But chances are that won't work, and if it does we don't have a very deep friendship. That friendship is very distant and doesn't share what is really on the hearts of the individual. In that shallow friendship there is no apologizing, no forgiveness, and no real resolution to bigger problems. It is merely a business transaction and contract between people as they mutually give and take from one another. FYI this business relationship doesn't work to well in marriage either. Soon enough people say it isn't working out, and the contract ends with divorce.

The good news is, God wants a friendship. He wants you to come forward confessing your sins. He doesn't want you to just make up for it by doing other things for him. He wants a close friendship where he can't be in contact with you directly.

God wants a covenant relationship with you where he can give of himself to you for your forgiveness and life. He set up a friendship that is sealed in his blood and promises. If you are ready, God is ready to make you his friend and you can have this covenant friendship with him where you can actually be close to God rather than far away.

God did everything he could so that we could have easy access to him. He sent his son in the flesh so that he could be someone who was an ordinary man and live and speak with us. He didn't want to be separated from us up in heaven. He wanted to be a close friend.

We have access to the Father through Jesus. Jesus took away the sin that separated us from God on the cross. When we apologize to him, we receive forgiveness. God wanted to make it easy for us by giving us himself in the common things of life. This common man, common bread, and common water.

It is now commonplace for people to be on the internet every day. They check and post on Facebook. They surf the net for information. They live their very lives through the internet. But, every once in a while, they don't have access to it. What happens when there is a power outage. What happens when there is no cell phone service for their data plan. What happens when their hot spot goes cold.

When that happens, they shut down all contact from the outside world. They have no access to information at that moment. They can't google it, and it drives them crazy.

We always have access to God. He has given us access by his presence with us. We can pray to him. We, in most cases can remember what his word says.

And we have the bread. We have the bread that has come from heaven. People in the old testament had the manna and they died. But we have the bread that gives us eternal life. The price has been paid, it is finished, we are forgiven and have eternal life. Our access to him is unlimited and it is forever.

Don't live a distant life away from God. Instead God wants you to make him as common as the bread that you eat every day. He wants you to see him like the common water that cleanses you every day. He wants you to share your everyday struggles and joys with him, even more often than you check your Facebook. To God, it your friendship that really matters. Amen.