

The Temptation to be Satisfied with Bread 1 Lent 2008

"It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

Introduction: We have begun our forty day fast with our Lord Jesus again this Lent. Hunger can be used to further a deeper walk with God but it also can distract from that deeper walk. We hunger for many things.

Fasting is one outward sign of this season's journey. Fasting before the mass is still a common practice for many. Fasting is meant not to take on a diet for reducing or make us more religious, but to help us focus our soul and experience Jesus journey toward sacrifice. Like him we can be tempted with the obvious – if you're hungry you want to eat! Perhaps when you're not hungry you want to eat!

We can be tempted and satisfied with less than God intends for our souls. And today, there are so many more temptations 'out there' that create 'competing' hungers in our lives. This Lent my prayer is that you and I will go deeper and refuse to be satisfied with just bread.

To help facilitate this I am preparing a series of note-taking homilies this Lent. Why go through the extra effort? Without spiritual formation we worship in ignorance. I would not have you ignorant of the meaning of what we pray every Sunday. I would not have you satisfied with just bread and have you go away thinking, "I have done what is expected, and my hunger should be filled." That's why our Christmas and Easter visitors will go away undernourished.

There are people who are satisfied with bread when they could have God's filet mignon –yet what are they saying to God about the riches of his grace?

Dear God help us see the difference between paring off a twig of the tree of life when we could have the whole branch! Teach us, there is much, much more to the Christian life. Amen

So we begin today with an overview of the topic of worship. What is worship?

- I. Worship – is a response of the created and limited human mind to the unlimited Creator, who is sensed but never fully known. 1
- A. In the Bible the vision of God is one who is unknowable yet can be a personal, intimate friend. Both attributes are true of God, yet this truth remains a mystery. Mystery is at the heart of Christian worship in the Episcopal Church. The proper response to mystery is worship. Who can explain why something or someone is beautiful? The psalmist wrote, “Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness” Psalm 96: 9, BCP pg. 726.
- B. Worship is a response to beauty, to love, to human need, to our deepest fears, and to our greatest joys. Picture a sunset over an ocean beach, a laughing baby, bringing a meal to a neighbor, driving in a storm, snow gently falling through a wooded glen (only shoe height!)
- C. In corporate worship, we unite ourselves with others to acknowledge the holiness of God, to hear God’s Word, to offer prayer, and to celebrate the sacraments. 2
1. Though each of us could worship in solitary fashion, scripture commends us to assemble ourselves regularly, “Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching” Hebrews 10:25 NIV.
 2. Worship invites the best of the human spirit and can be expressed in poetry, music, dance, art, sound and sight, smell and touch and taste.
- D. Where do people worship? It takes place anywhere, whether cathedrals, tiny chapels, a park, a hospital bed, a prison cell or around a kitchen table.
1. “A church is a building designed to allow people to gather around an altar for a common meal.” 3

2. Some churches are in the shape of a cross like Trinity Church to remind people that it is through the cross of Christ that we are saved. Others have their altar at the center and the people are gathered around it. In regard to the place of worship Jesus told the Samaritan woman, “God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth” John 4:24 NRSV.

II. The Prayer Book

(in two weeks)

1. Welcome to the Episcopal Church: an Introduction to its History, Faith and Worship. Christopher Webber. Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse, 1999, pg. 25.
2. Book of Common Prayer, Oxford University Press, New York, 1990. pg. 857.
3. Welcome to the Episcopal Church: an Introduction to its History, Faith and Worship. Christopher Webber. Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse, 1999, pg. 26.