

### Pastor Roy's Sermon from March 19, 2017 (Lent 3)

How important is it to eat and drink? The only other thing that comes close is shelter. We don't leave these things up to chance. We plan for them. Think about a vacation, or travelling a day's journey, or just a day trip. Before you even leave the driveway, you usually have a good idea exactly where you are going, where you are going to eat, and where you will be, come nightfall. Even if that's just pulling off the road at a rest stop, locking the doors, and resting for several hours. It's a priority and we plan for it. On common days, we usually have a game plan for how and what we are going to eat. We have persistent habits for eating and drinking and acquiring food and drink. Today let us think about hunger and thirst and how these can point us toward God.

The Israelites in the desert/wilderness are thirsty. They've moved beyond grumpy and are ready to riot. Moses takes action, and grace prevails. But before long they'll be hungry or thirsty again, yet disaster has been averted for the time being.

Moving forward in time. Jesus and the Samaritan woman are thirsty. Jesus asks for water from the Samaritan woman who has a bucket for drawing water from the deep well. Quickly he moves from a simple request for water to a teaching moment. He offers *her* water for the life which never ends. She is confused by his offer. She wants to be freed from having to carry water in the heat of the day. And perhaps she seeks freedom from the scornful looks of the townsfolk as she passes by.

His questions push her beyond the daily need for water. . . For what else does she thirst?

On to the disciples. . . It's midday. They have gone into town for food because it's time to eat.

When they return with food, Jesus tells them he has food of which they know nothing. They ask themselves, "Where did this food come from? What could satisfy besides food from town since they aren't carrying provisions?" Did young John run back without our missing him with a burger and fries?

No, Jesus is satisfied by doing the will of God. He has consecrated himself to God in times of trouble, and otherwise communes with God, cares for God's children, and is basking in the beauty of creation. That is the best food and drink. Hmm. Is this living water. . . unto eternal life? Consecration, service in love, communion with God, the joy of creation. Living water.

Jesus teaches the woman, and the Samaritan town folk who believe because of the woman's testimony and all the more now because they have heard Jesus themselves and believe this new teaching which is open to Samaritans too(!). They are learning about the food and drink of obedience and consecration.

The Samaritans are learning. What about the disciples?

The disciples sit close by, licking their lips, filled with the tasty delight of home-made food on an empty stomach. And what is Jesus talking about anyway? They watch the dialogue, a bit taken aback that Jesus finds it so easy to talk to Samaritans; but their full bellies distract them from thinking about spiritual food and drink. They know about Jesus' teachings. They travel with Jesus. They live with Jesus. Jesus lives with them.

And that is how the disciples could be so close, yet so far away from Jesus—until he is snatched away by soldiers, suffering, and death. Then they will have no choice but to stop and think and process. **Then** they will *meet* Jesus and *hear* Jesus in a new way. And as it turns out, **then**, they will consecrate themselves in their suffering, commune with God, care for God's children, and enjoy God's beautiful creation. Spiritual food and drink.

Another way of putting it is: **then**, they will find true food and true drink in the life of Jesus who lived in their midst but made no sense to them. **Then**, they will eat the bread and drink the cup of his life. Indeed.

Spiritual hunger, spiritual thirst. The Spirit of Christ is inviting us to be hungry and thirsty. For friendship and communion. To love and be loved. And with Jesus, when we suffer, to consecrate our suffering to God and God's grace.

Let us follow all of our hungers and thirsts back, full circle, to the mercies of God. Holy Food. Holy Drink.

Children: How important is eating and drinking? What's your favorite breakfast? What's your favorite drink? What's your favorite snack?