

Tenth Sunday after Pentecost

NON-PROPHET ORG.

John 6:24-35

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Analysis by Mark Marius

24So when the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they themselves got into the boats and went to Capernaum looking for Jesus.

25When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, "Rabbi, when did you come here?" 26Jesus answered them, "Very truly, I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. 27Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For it is on him that God the Father has set his seal." 28Then they said to him, "What must we do to perform the works of God?" 29Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent." 30So they said to him, "What sign are you going to give us then, so that we may see it and believe you? What work are you performing? 31Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'" 32Then Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. 33For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." 34They said to him, "Sir, give us this bread always."

35Jesus 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.

DIAGNOSIS: Unprofitable

Step 1: Initial Diagnosis (External Problem) : *Looking for Prophets*

The crowds were convinced that Jesus was a prophet sent from God (6:14), maybe even channeling Moses since he was able to feed such a large, helpless crowd. He certainly was worth following in order to sort all of this out. There was a great a deal to profit if this indeed was the prophet. Could the earthly kingdom be restored (6:15)? We certainly want to reap the rewards God is giving us, so we don't want to miss out on the signs. However, when we don't trust what God gives us (himself) to be enough, we miss out. We follow what we want, pursuing our own interests, chasing after God to get them (6:24).

Step 2: Advanced Diagnosis (Internal Problem) : *Will Work for Food (Power)*

What must we do to perform the works of God? (6:28). We are not opposed to working for something we want, something we need. Jesus tells us point blank that we all need the food that endures for eternal life (6:27). But he also says that he will give that to us, he will provide it for us. But that doesn't sit well with us. The Law has conditioned our work ethic. Unfortunately for us we can get so wrapped up in our work that we get possessive of it and use it for our selfish wants. If we are working then we are in control. Which leads to our work replacing the work of God. And our work does nothing to earn God's seal of approval.

Step 3: Final Diagnosis (Eternal Problem) : *Unemployed*

If we are to do the work then where does that leave God and Jesus—unemployed? If we think can we put God out of business,

can we really profit? What kind of retirement can we give ourselves? Only one that leads to death, not life. We die trying to assure our future. Because if we want to do the work then we are always dependent on ourselves to find food and quench our thirst. We can never stop even if what we are doing and filling ourselves with is unsatisfying. And when we leave it to ourselves we never get completely satisfied so we never stop searching for relief. Inevitably, after a while, we get burned out.

PROGNOSIS: Charitable Donation

Step 4: Initial Prognosis (Eternal Solution) : *Operating at a Loss*

But Jesus does provide relief –Eternal relief. Jesus ensures that the world is fed by offering his body and blood up as sacrifice. It is something we get to receive simply by believing. There is no work involved. Jesus did all of that through his death and resurrection. Something no prophet could accomplish. His loss equals our profit. It's not the bread and wine that is filling us it is Jesus (I AM) that satisfies (6:20, 35, 41, 48, 51).

Step 5: Advanced Prognosis: (Internal Solution) : *The Gift That Keeps on Giving*

It is just a matter of believing or trusting that Jesus was sent from the Father above.

Now that trusting may sound like work. But even it comes from the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit working in, through, and under our lives that truly causes change to happen. It is receiving Christ's body and blood given in Holy Communion that satisfies our hunger and quenches our thirst (6:35). The truth is embedded in us through our baptism, and replanted in Holy Communion, and it allows us to trust and receive without even lifting a finger.

Step 6: Final Prognosis: (External Solution) : *Getting the Word Out*

But we do lift our fingers. And move our feet. We do God's work. But it's not in order to receive, because we already have. We have our fill of God's body and blood so we are strengthened for service. We are strong and bold and seek to share this heavenly food for all who are hungry. All who eat and yet can never be fully satisfied. All who are constantly chasing things that eventually leave you empty. We give them Christ. We give them Christ's body and blood. and let them know they can always have it. And once you have it and believe it, it is eternal. It seals the deal.