

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.

⁴¹Then the Jews began to complain about him because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven."⁴²They were saying, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, 'I have come down from heaven'?"⁴³Jesus answered them, "Do not complain among yourselves.⁴⁴No one can come to me unless drawn by the Father who sent me; and I will raise that person up on the last day.

⁴⁵It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me.⁴⁶Not that anyone has seen the Father except the one who is from God; he has seen the Father.⁴⁷Very truly, I tell you, whoever believes has eternal life.⁴⁸I am the bread of life.⁴⁹Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died.⁵⁰This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die.⁵¹I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh."

John 6:35, 41-51, 2015

I would like you to remember one of the little boys in your neighborhood who might have grown up with your own kids, or a student you taught in school,

one of those ordinary kids you watch grow up for a time, or maybe he was a little rascal, who finally went off to start a life of his own.

Imagine for a moment it is one of our children here in church. Some of you who have been here long enough you could watch some of our kids grow up here in this church.

Some have left home and gone off to live their life, work in their vocation, start their own family.

And imagine you don't see them for a while and when they are about 30 years old they come back and they say to you,

"I am the bread of life...I am the bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh."

He is saying:

I not only have, but I **am** the solution to all the problems, not just in your life but for the world.

Now, for most of us there is a kid who we knew had the potential to grow up and do great things to change the world.

But to come back and make this claim, you can only laugh, or get angry, and say, “Yeah, right kid. I remember when.”

This is essentially what happened between Jesus and the crowd that was following him, and they got upset and began to complain about him.

This story raises a couple of themes that are intertwined with the question of who is this Jesus, really?

Isn't he the one we watched grow up with his brothers and sisters and the rest of the kids in the neighborhood?

How can he say these things?

Isn't he just like the rest of us mortals, a common everyday kid like all the rest from down the street who finally grew up?

How could Jesus presume to be the bread that came down from heaven

as they remember the Exodus story of the manna that God send down from heaven to feed His people when there was nothing else in the middle of the desert?

What use could God have for him?

They acknowledge that he is a teacher and has been called Rabbi. They have followed him because of all the miracles and the way he teaches.

But savior of the world? That is a huge stretch!

Who ever heard of God having anything to do with the common, ordinary, day-to-day, mundane, things of this world?

Gods are greater than that aren't they?

Gods are made for greatness and they reside in the heavens not down here with us commoners suffering our pains and problems, embarrassments and indecencies.

You need a God who transcends the life that causes you so much difficulty to give you relief from you pain and suffering, to lead you and give you peace.

You know your own flaws and shortcomings, faithlessness and failures, doubts and fears, betrayals and broken promises, petty grudges and foolish prejudices, shame, disappointment and regrets.

You know all that stuff about yourself and the rest of humanity.

So, if Jesus is really a mortal human like you, what makes Him so special, and from where is your help to come?

How can you be saved?

How can the readers of our scripture lessons and preachers of our sermons, even preachers who are much better than me make a difference?

They are common, ordinary people just like you aren't they?

Don't we need someone much more eloquent to speak God's word?

What about the bread and wine we use for communion. The bread is a little weird but it is bread.

The wine is from the same grocery store where you buy your weekly groceries. There is nothing extraordinary about it.

And, what about the water we use for baptism? Isn't that common water? We are going to have a baptism here today.

Don't we need some special water to baptize Kyle with?

Do you know where this water comes from?

It comes from the tap at the sink in the library fed by the same water system that delivers water to your home that you use to cook with, to bathe and brush your teeth.

It isn't special water we have delivered from the Jordan River or anything.

Readers, preachers, bread, wine, water, all common ordinary elements of this world hardly worthy of God's attention or use.

And yet, we are bold enough, and maybe foolish enough to confess that God uses these ordinary things to achieve his will, fulfill his purpose, to bring salvation to the world, to each one of you.

How can we make that claim and why would we?

Because this Jesus, a common ordinary mortal like you and me, who was also the uncommon, divine, immortal Son of God

makes the claim that upset and offended the crowd of his day and perhaps the world today;

that He is the bread that came down from heaven to give life to the world.

The human presence of God in the flesh and blood of Jesus who does not discount the ordinary but seeks those things out to achieve God's purpose

stands behind the promise that rests in God's word we hear and in the sacraments we receive.

Because God does not discount the bread, wine and water, such ordinary and common things,

you can believe, trust and know that God does not discount you who are also ordinary and common people.

We also find in the sacraments another promise. It is the promise not only to forgive, and to save you,
but just as God uses the common elements of the sacraments He promises to use you and the talents, and skills He has endowed you with to change the world.

What appeared to be a common, ordinary little boy named Jesus finally grew up and claimed to be what everyone who knew him knew he couldn't be,
the bread of life for the world,
savior of the world.

What appeared to be a common ordinary little boy grew up and in his flesh was killed, and he was raised from the dead to accomplish the will and purpose of God,
to give you life.