

From the Rector's Study, the Rev. Bryce Sangster
Sunday, October 9th, 2022, Harvest Thanksgiving
Deuteronomy 26:1-11, Psalm 100, Philippians 4:4-9, John 6:25-35

Do not work for food that perishes but for the food that endures for eternal life...

To me this means living out the two parts of Thanksgiving, giving thanks directly to God in worship, and passing the blessings we receive onto others. The question is, can we get beyond the realization of the brokenness and the problems we face in life?

The disciples ask him, "What must we do to perform the works of God?"

He answers: "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent."

This seems to suggest believing in Jesus Christ and be part of the group that does so, and all will be well.

I believe it goes beyond the group. For Jesus says, "For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

This is for the whole world, and not just those who believe. And there is reference to Moses and the bread, the manna given to the people of Israel in the wilderness. Therefore, before Jesus.

So, what does Jesus mean when he says "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty?"

This seems to suggest whoever comes to Jesus and believes will be the ones who will never go without food or drink.

I think this is about hope and faith. Those of us with a relationship to Jesus Christ and have faith will have hope for the future, even in the face of problems and issues. I have said in the past, faith is for the future and giving us strength and courage and hope to move forward.

When Jesus tells us not to work for the food that perishes, he is telling us that even in the face of problems in issues which will cause us to question whether we will find and receive that food, food that perishes, food for the day. Or maybe he's saying don't just work for food that perishes and spend all your time and energy worrying about it. He is talking about looking beyond today and looking beyond our own lives

and what we need. He is calling us to consider our neighbor today and, in the days, to come.

I cannot help thinking of Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

- Which are: Physiological These refer to basic physical needs like drinking when thirsty or eating when hungry. ...
- Safety Once people's physiological requirements are met, the next need that arises is a safe environment. ...
- Love and Belonging According to Maslow, the next need in the hierarchy involves feeling loved and accepted. ...
- Esteem Our esteem needs involve the desire to feel good about ourselves. ...
- Self-Actualization ...and I think of altruism and caring for others family, loved ones and beyond.

The hope is that we move from the first to the last stage in the hierarchy of needs and as we feel that the needs are met, we can move to the next stage.

This doesn't mean once we've moved into a later stage that we never return and concern ourselves with a beginning stage.

We may still concern ourselves with hunger and thirst and safety while concentrating on love and belonging, esteem and altruism. Our faith in God hopefully means we don't forget about altruism because we are so focused on hunger, thirst, and safety.

It is both/and not either/or. We can care for ourselves and for others this Thanksgiving and beyond.

Amen

The Lord bless *you* and watch over *you*,
the Lord make his face shine upon *you*
and be gracious to *you*,
the Lord look kindly on *you*
and give *you* peace;
and the blessing ...

Amen