

TITLE: "Someday You Will Harvest What You Plant Today"

TEXT: Luke 14:7-24 (NT p. 77)

<sup>12</sup>[Jesus] said also to the one who had invited him, "When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, in case they may invite you in return, and you would be repaid. <sup>13</sup>But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. <sup>14</sup>And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."

<sup>15</sup>One of the dinner guests, on hearing this, said to him, "Blessed is anyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!" <sup>16</sup>Then Jesus said to him, "Someone gave a great dinner and invited many. <sup>17</sup>At the time for the dinner he sent his slave to say to those who had been invited, 'Come; for everything is ready now.' <sup>18</sup>But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a piece of land, and I must go out and see it; please accept my regrets.' <sup>19</sup>Another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to try them out; please accept my regrets.' <sup>20</sup>Another said, 'I have just been married, and therefore I cannot come.' <sup>21</sup>So the slave returned and reported this to his master.

Then the owner of the house became angry and said to his slave, 'Go out at once into the streets and lanes of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame.' <sup>22</sup>And the slave said, 'Sir, what you ordered has been done, and there is still room.' <sup>23</sup>Then the master said to the slave, 'Go out into the roads and lanes, and compel people to come in, so that my house may be filled. <sup>24</sup>For I tell you, none of those who were invited will taste my dinner.'"

#### Introduction – Two kinds of food

Old Bert had been feeling a wee might tisicky so he went to see his doctor. After checking him out from stem to stern, he said, "Bert, for a man 80 years old, you are in fine shape. Your heart is just as strong as a 40 year old man. How old was your father when he died?"

"I didn't say my father was dead."

"How old is he?"

"He just turned 99. Went turkey huntin' with him last week."

"Well, how old was you grandfather when he died?"

"Didn't say he was dead."

“You mean to say that you are 80 and your father and grandfather are both alive?”

“Ayup.”

“How old is he?”

He’ll be 117 on his next birthday. Matter of fact, my grandfather’s getting married next month.”

“Why on earth would a 117 year old man want to get married?”

“Didn’t say he WANTED to.”

This morning’s parable is all about food. There are TWO kinds of food and your life depends upon eating BOTH kinds. One is tangible food like cereal, bread, milk and meat. We all know that we have to eat tangible food in order to survive.

However, there is another kind of food. This food is spiritual. Spiritual food is FAR more important than tangible food. Why? Because if you eat tangible food, it may keep you alive for 117 years. If you eat SPIRITUAL food, it will keep you alive and well forever and ever.

What is spiritual food? ...Jesus says: “I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever” (John 6:51).

In a few moments you will have the opportunity to ingest BOTH kinds of food. You can eat the tangible bread and drink the tangible juice when it comes around and, small as they are, they will nourish your body and help you to live a little longer.

You can also eat the Living Bread that came down from heaven, which is Jesus Christ. ...How do you do this? Jesus says, “Whenever two or more are gathered in my name, there I am in your midst.” Jesus is here, right now. Be AWARE of Jesus’ love for you and ask Jesus to come into your heart.

What will happen if you eat the Living Bread, if you invite Jesus to live in your heart?

You will find 3 amazing things will begin to happen:

1. God will call you by name
2. God will give you opportunities to help the poor
3. God will bring to you those who need Jesus, the Living Bread

## 1. God will call you by name

Soon after I was called to this church in 1986, there was a definite move of God's Spirit. From 1988 to 1992 our congregation grew very quickly. At that time we had around 100 children in Sunday school and we had to expand our facility. We also renovated our buildings and expanded our Kitchen Cupboard.

Now God's Spirit is starting to move again. This is exciting! When 18 kids got up early enough to meet at Dunkin' Donuts a couple weeks ago and 16 showed up for Sunday school last week, God is moving! ...EAT the Living Bread! Get on the Plane that Jesus is flying! I don't know WHERE Jesus is going to take us, but I know the trip will be filled with love, joy, peace and adventure.

Some of you may think you are too OLD to get caught up something new. Bologna! Abraham was a hundred when his son Isaac was born and his wife Sarah could not have been much younger. After all, Sarah herself lived to be a hundred and twenty-seven. There's still time for you retired folks to provide children for our nursery! If you are not quite ready for that, bring your GRANDchildren. Offer to take them out to lunch afterward. They'll come.

Some of you may think you are too young to get caught up in what God is doing. Bologna! Samuel was just a boy working for old Eli the prophet. One night God called, "Samuel! Samuel!" The boy Samuel said to God, "Speak, for your servant is listening." God told the boy he was going to be the spiritual leader of the whole nation of Israel. And Samuel was God's prophet for Israel as long as he lived.

Right now, God is calling and asking people to get on the plane Jesus is flying.

Start PRAYING--God will show you some AMAZING things!

Start reading the Bible--God will give you TREMENDOUS strength!

Start coming to church and Sunday school and Youth Group and God will fill you LOVE, JOY and PEACE like you have never felt before.

Ponder anew, what the Almighty can do if you will say, "Here I am, Lord. Is it I Lord? I heard you calling in the night and I will follow you!"

## 2. God will give you opportunities to help the poor.

God has a much different perspective on human life than most humans do. According to God, one of the worst attitudes a person can have is this: “I’ll take care of me and mine and let everyone else take care of them and theirs.” Although many people live by this rule, that is NOT what Jesus teaches. Jesus says:

“When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, in case they may invite you in return, and you would be repaid. <sup>13</sup>But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. <sup>14</sup>And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.”

When you start eating the Living Bread, you start wanting to help people who cannot possibly pay you back. You may have the compulsion to open your wallets and check books when you hear about poor people in Pakistan who watched as what little they had was washed away in a flood leaving them without food, shelter or dry clothing.

When you start eating the Living Bread, you may also develop an overwhelming compulsion to go out buy children’s underwear and socks. ...Yes, our second Undie Sunday is coming to your pew soon ...like next week. On October 10<sup>th</sup>, the Youth Group will be sponsoring our second ...Undie Sunday! The purpose of this mission outreach is to provide for children in primary school who do not have extra pairs of socks and underwear to put on when they get wet out on the playground.

The way it works is this: Next week you take a drawing of a pair of underwear or socks off the clothesline set up in the fellowship hall. Then you go out and buy a package of socks or underwear in the size printed on the drawing. Then bring them back here to church over the following couple weeks.

## 3. God will bring to you those who need Jesus, the Living Bread

In Jesus’ parable, God invites all people to the great banquet to enjoy the Living Bread of Jesus Christ. Who are the people who give excuses? Those who are too busy trying to make more money and those who are so tied up with their families that they don’t have time for God. Last week in the parable of the sower, Jesus said that seeds of God’s word get choked when they are only young plants because the people get distracted by the “cares and riches and pleasures of life.”

This is what is happening today in so many lives. People are so concerned with their FINANCIAL security that they are failing to provide themselves and their families with ETERNAL security. People are so concerned with where they will be next month, next year or when they retire that they have lost sight of what they will be doing in a thousand or a million years.

The only people who seem to be aware of their need for the Living Bread are those who are needy. And the needy are the ones who come to God's banquet in the parable. The rich self sufficient people are too wrapped up in their pursuit of financial security. Those who come to the banquet are the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame, those were at the bottom of the social and economic ladders of that society.

If you eat the Living Bread, don't be surprised when God starts bringing needy people into your life. God will, you know. Then it is up to you, and me, to TELL them about the Living Bread. Tell them about Jesus. Tell them that no one can make it without the Lord. Invite them to church and youth group. Others may be too busy, but the needy will come.

Let me tell you a story that came in my email this week:

"Good morning", said a woman as she walked up to Old Jack who was sitting on the sidewalk with his back leaning against a building. The man slowly looked up. This was a woman clearly accustomed to the finer things of life. Her coat was new... She looked like she had never missed a meal in her life. His first thought was that she wanted to make fun of him, like so many others had done before. "Leave me alone," he growled....

To his amazement, the woman just smiled -- her even white teeth displayed in dazzling rows. "See that cafeteria over there?" the lady asked. "I'm going to get you something to eat and get you out of the cold for awhile."

"Are you crazy, lady?" the homeless man resisted. "I don't want to go in there!"

But finally, and with some difficulty, the woman got Jack into the cafeteria and sat him at a table in a remote corner and then she sat down at the table across from her amazed dinner guest. She stared at him intently. "Jack, do you remember me?"

Old Jack searched her face with his old, rheumy eyes. "You do look familiar."

"Years ago, I was just out of college. I had come to the city looking for a job, but I couldn't find anything. Finally I was down to my last few cents and had been kicked out of my apartment. I walked the streets for days. It was February and I was cold and nearly starving. I saw this place and walked in on the off chance that I could get something to eat."

Jack lit up with a smile. "Now I remember," he said. "I was behind the serving counter. You came up and asked me if you could work for something to eat. I said that it was against company policy."

"I know," the woman continued. "Then you made me the biggest roast beef sandwich that I had ever seen, gave me a cup of coffee, and told me to go over to a corner table and enjoy it. I was afraid that you would get into trouble... Then, when I looked over and saw you put the price of my food in the cash register, I knew then that everything would be all right."

"I got a job that very afternoon. I worked my way up. Eventually I started my own business that, with the help of God, prospered. I'm now CEO of Eddy and Associates, the banking firm down the street." She opened her purse and pulled out a business card. "When you are finished here, I want you to pay a visit to a Mr. Lyons...He's the personnel director of my company. I'll go talk to him now and I'm certain he'll find something for you to do around the office." She smiled. "I think he might even find the funds to give you a little advance so that you can buy some clothes and get a place to live until you get on your feet... If you ever need anything, my door is always opened to you, Jack"

There were tears in the old man's eyes. "How can I ever thank you?" he said.

"Don't thank me," the woman answered. "To God goes the glory. Thank Jesus..... He led me to you."

#### Conclusion – The eternal banquet

If you eat the Living Bread this morning. If you say YES when God calls your name.  
 If you help people who cannot pay you back.  
 If you share your Living Bread with the needy.  
 Our church will become a great banquet where hundreds will be fed.  
 And someday, when Jesus comes again, you will join the Great Banquet in heaven that  
 will go on forever and ever and ever. ...Amen.