

TEXT: John 6:35-40

THEME: I SHALL RAISE THEM UP AT THE LAST DAY

**Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty. But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe. All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day." (John 6:35-40). NIV84**

Dear Lydia, family, and friends of our dear departed brother, Al:

Jesus had just miraculously fed the 5,000 men plus women and children with only 5 small loaves of bread and 2 small fish. They wanted to make him their "Bread King" who would continually give them food without their working for it. But they had missed the point. So, Jesus tells them point blank, **"I am the bread of life."** With this statement, Jesus offers himself to human beings as God, as Yahweh, who gives life much as bread gives life. But Jesus gives eternal life.

Jesus goes on to explain, **"He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty."** In Jesus, all spiritual hunger and thirst is satisfied. We have that blessing from Jesus as long as we believe in him. That is an important point. Jesus really said, "Whoever continues to believe in me." Some of the people who followed Jesus believed at first. But they had a weak faith. In some cases they stopped believing and lost the blessings Jesus gave them. Some of the things Jesus said upset them so they left him. But Jesus was saying again and again, in many different ways, "Believe in me and live."

People who do not believe in Jesus as the Messiah, as their one and only Savior from sin, sent from the Father do not receive Jesus' blessings. That lack of faith is a fatal flaw and marks them as outside God's family.

But what a promise Jesus gives to us believers, **"All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away."** The heavenly Father reaches his chosen ones by the means of grace, the gospel in the Word and Sacraments, and the Holy Spirit works faith in them. Those with faith come to Jesus and Jesus receives them. He will not throw aside, he will not destroy, anyone who comes to faith in him and continues to believe in him.

Then comes this most comforting promise of Jesus for us today, **"And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."**

Everyone who looks to the Son—Jesus—and believes in him shall have eternal life and Jesus will raise him up at the Last Day.

Because of that promise, we can rejoice today through our tears. Yes, we mourn our loss of our husband, father, grandfather, friend, and brother in Christ. But we rejoice that Al has and is enjoying right now eternal life with Jesus in heaven.

Certainly it is difficult to say good-bye to a husband of almost 66 years...to a father who provided for his family by working at GM for 39 years right here in Bay City...to a father who helped with the children, especially when they were sick...who played with them on go-carts and snow sleds...who worked hard and taught his children to do the same...who was honest and fair.

It is hard to say good-bye to another WWII vet. Al served in the army for 3 years in the Asian Theater. Every day approximately 492 WWII vets pass away. They gave so much so that we could enjoy the life we have today.

It is hard to say good-bye to a faithful church member who was always so eager to do volunteer work at church and who served as an elder and trustee. Al did not grow up in the church; he joined after he and Lydia were married. But he showed his faith in the way he served his Savior.

Al had to say good-bye to a number of things in his later years as disease took its toll on his body. He had been the top pool-player in the area and often played in bars, but didn't smoke or drink. People came from Detroit just to play him in Bay City. He could no longer bowl or play golf. He enjoyed golf so much he used a putter for a cane. When I was having some knee problems, he suggested that I swap my cane for a putter. And he always wanted my hat. I like to wear hats—need to wear hats since the Lord took away my hair—and Al always liked them. After each visit, he would ask if he could trade something for my hat or he would tell me I could just leave it behind. Al was a bit of a joker, he enjoyed a good time, and even when he was in pain or depressed by his condition, he would find a way to laugh.

But now for Al, there is no more pain, no more sadness, no more debilitating disease. That is all in the past. Sin and its effects are completely gone for Al for all eternity, and so we rejoice for him. At the Last Day, Jesus will raise Al's body, rejoin it with his soul, and glorify it for all eternity. That is our comfort today, because Jesus promised: **For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.**" Amen.