

## Festival of Thanksgiving, A ✕ D 2009

**Luke 17:11-19** On the way to Jerusalem he was passing along between Samaria and Galilee. <sup>12</sup> And as he entered a village, he was met by ten lepers, who stood at a distance <sup>13</sup> and lifted up their voices, saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." <sup>14</sup> When he saw them he said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And as they went they were cleansed. <sup>15</sup> Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; <sup>16</sup> and he fell on his face at Jesus' feet, giving him thanks. Now he was a Samaritan. <sup>17</sup> Then Jesus answered, "Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? <sup>18</sup> Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" <sup>19</sup> And he said to him, "Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well."

*In the name of the Father and of the ✕ Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

1 Man does not live by bread alone, but by every Word that comes from the mouth of God. Believe that? Probably not. If you believed that, you would never miss a minute of Bible study or a single Divine Service unless you were in a hospital bed. If you believed that, you would never forego daily prayer, study of the Word of God, and meditation on the Word. If you believed that man does not live on bread alone but on every Word that comes from the mouth of God, you would neither let yourself labor for bread when the Word of God is being offered nor ask anyone to work when he could be receiving the Word of God. Is the Word of God really your source of life? If not, repent.

2 When you make your list tomorrow of all the things for which you're thankful, will it include the Word of God? Maybe. Will it end with the Word of God? What if there were nothing else? Would you be satisfied? If there were no turkeys nor tables, no feasts nor families, no health nor happiness, would you celebrate Thanksgiving?

3 If you do not give thanks for the Word of God today, if you do not receive the Word with thanksgiving, it will be little comfort tomorrow. If you do not hear the Word which calls you to repentance and declares you forgiven today, tomorrow you may hear the final word which will declare you eternally condemned. There is no escaping the Word of God. Either you will receive it today with joy, or you will receive it later with terror.

4 Everything else dies. The Word remains. Everything else satisfies partially or not at all. The Word of God satisfies completely. The Lord's Prayer does not end with the fourth petition, "give us this day our daily bread." Once you have prayed for "everything that has to do with the support and needs of the body, such as food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, home, land, animals, money, goods, a devout husband or wife, devout children, devout workers, devout and faithful rulers, good government, good weather, peace, health, self-control, good reputation, good friends, faithful neighbors, and the like" you pray that God would forgive your trespasses, that He would enable you to forgive others, that He would ward off your enemies the devil, the world, and your sinful flesh which want to lead you through temptation into sin, and that He would deliver you from the evil of a death apart from His gift of faith.

5 Man does not live by bread alone. Bread rots. Money spends. Toys break. Investments depreciate. Houses crumble. Cars break down. Shoes wear out. Clothing goes out of style. Friends abandon. Families die. Food gets eaten. Man does not live by bread alone, but by every Word that comes from the mouth of God.

6 Only the Word endures. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it...The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." But by every Word that comes from the mouth of God, by the very Word of God in the flesh, Jesus Christ.

7 The Word endures, even though He died. Man does not live by bread alone, but by the very Word of God. So that you might have life, the Word became flesh. So that death might not be your end, the Word-became-Flesh died. The Word, the eternal Second Person of the Trinity, without beginning or end, died, met His end, on the cross.

8 Man does not live by bread alone, but by every Word that comes from the mouth of God. Not bread alone, but bread and Word together, is your source of life. Nothing you eat tomorrow will add a day to your life. Nothing you drink tomorrow will make life any different. There is a different bread, a bread that comes down from heaven, so that you may eat of it and not die. Jesus is the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that He gives for the life of the world is His flesh. The highest thanksgiving is to receive the gift offered. So the Lord's Supper is also called the Eucharist, a Greek word for thanksgiving. The Lord's Supper is the Church's thanksgiving, literally bracketed with thanksgiving: "It is truly meet, right, and salutary, that we should in all times and in all places, give thanks to You" and "We give thanks to you almighty God, that you have refreshed us with this salutary gift."

9 Man does not live by bread alone, but by the Word. Here is both. Bread over which the Word of God is spoken, bread which the Word-made-Flesh, Jesus Christ, offers as His true flesh. Here is the Bread of Life, the bread which gives forgiveness of sins and eternal life. This is the Word and the bread from which you live and for which the Church gives thanks.

*In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

*Soli Deo Gloria*  
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