

SERMON FOR THANKSGIVING 2021

TEXT: PHILLIPIANS 4: 8

THEME: SOUL FOOD

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

In the name of Jesus:

A few weeks ago when Luann and I were in South Carolina we traveled an hour south of where we were staying to visit my son Mark and his wife Abby. We went out to eat at a place called: Rodney Scott's BBQ.. Scott is a world renowned chef in the BBQ world, and a documentary was made on his life. Luann and I watched it before we went out to eat at his establishment. One thing that caught my attention was that Scott and others consider Southern Carolina BBQ soul food. Their reasoning was simple, soul food is food that is good for your soul, you eat it and it makes you feel that all is well with the world. We might call it a comfort food, a food that combines good taste with a feeling of well being. As the four of us ate at Rodney Scott's BBQ we noticed the attention to detail, and as the documentary said, no stone was left underturned to provide a delicious meal. Scott and others goes out to personally cut the wood for the smoker, he hand selected the hogs to be butchered, and he painstakingly takes hours to prepare the meat. Yes, it was

like home cooking, it was not only pleasing to the palate, but it was also a wonderful experience. Rodney Scott has perfected his version of Carolina BBQ, a comfort food, and a food that is good for the soul.

In just a few hours you will probably participate in another home cooked meal. The Thanksgiving Feast sometimes takes days to prepare, from the selection of the bird and its preparation, to the preparation of the side dishes and desserts. No stone is left unreturned by American families to provide an abundant feast on Thanksgiving. It is why some refer to Thanksgiving as Turkey day, as Turkey is the main course, accompanied by whatever fixings is common to your family.

Tonight we each have an opportunity to participate in another feast, a Meal that is good for our souls. Tonight, in the Lord's Supper, a Sacrament also called the Eucharist or the Thanksgiving Meal, we will gather around the altar in thanks to God for sending His Son Jesus into the world to be our Savior. This is His Meal, this is His Feast, where He gives us Himself to eat and drink of His body and blood for the forgiveness of our sins and the strengthening of our faith.

There is an old saying, you are what you eat. Whatever you put in your mouth goes into your body. And if you continue to put a huge amount of food into your body, you can and will get sick. We go to the doctor for checkups

and we get blood work done in order to get a handle on our health. Eat too many sweets and your blood sugar goes up. Eat too many carbs, your triglycerides and cholesterol is out of whack. Eat without exercising, and your weight goes through the roof. We become so cogniscent of this that the weight loss industry is big business. Many resolve to go on a diet after the holidays and get on an exercise regiment. We need to watch what we eat, because if we do not, the result is sickness potentially leading to death.

That is why we come to the Lord's Supper tonight and each and everytime it is offered. We know and confess that we are sin sick sinners. We realize that we are on a slow march to death. None of us will escape it. It is the cost of living, the wages of sin is death.

But God didn't create us to die. He is the One true Living God. He desires not the death of the sinner, but that the sinner has eternal life. To that end, God in love gave His only Son into the world to save sinners from sin, sickness, and death. Christ came to lead sinners from the grave to eternal life, and he did this by means of His perfectly led life, His innocent death on the cross and His victorious resurreciton from the grave.

Jesus says I am the Bread of Life. Jesus is real food for the soul, for all who believe in Him have eternal life. Jesus is the Real Food for sin sick souls. Jesus gives Himself in His Supper, His very body and blood for the forgiveness

of sins. For the strengthening of faith. For everlasting life. Jesus gives forgiveness and eternal life by His death on the cross. His blood covers all of your sins. His death frees you from death and gives eternal life to all who believe. All so that you can leave here satisfied, for you have tasted and seen that the Lord is good and His mercy lasts forever. And when you continually come to Jesus, in this Supper, He never turns you away. He gives you Himself, so that you can depart in peace, knowing that nothing will separate you from His love.

We are what we eat, and when we feed upon Jesus His nourishment comes into our mouth and strengthens our souls. And that my friend is the real soul food, the real comfort food, for when we commune we taste salvation and receive the forgiveness of all of our sins. And this food is the one food that truly sustains and satisfies, to everlasting life.

Amen