

**Mastery and Surrender**    Third Week of Easter    Wednesday, April 13, 2016    8:15 AM  
Acts:8:1b-8;    **Jn 6:35-40**    (All of the events of our lives good and bad are all subsumed into the sacrifice of Jesus, and they all become what we offer to the Father in union with Christ, surrendering the wills we have now gained over ourselves by beginning with desires.)

**“Jesus said to the crowds, ‘I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never hunger, and whoever believes in me will never thirst.’”**

You will recall, of course, the beatitudes. “Blessed are they who hunger for righteousness.” So those who come to the bread of life will never hunger, but **the only people who come to the bread of life are those who hunger for the right thing, the righteousness of God.**

Now there are a lot of hungers in the world, a lot of desires in the world, a lot of wishes and wants. So in order that we hunger for what is really right, **we have to discern among the many hungers** we may have and the many hungers we see all around us in the populace, in the people, **we have to see which ones are really worth wanting. So spirituality is a matter of discerning what is really worth desiring.** And this is something that many people do not bother doing. They just imagine whatever they desire is desirable. Well, it is in a way, but is it the most desirable thing? After all, no one can get everything. We have to pick and choose. **Are we picking and choosing the best?** Are we letting go of desires that really aren't very helpful? **Do we take authority over our desires, or do we let them rule over us?** Perhaps that's almost the key right there because if we believe freedom is doing what we want, but we don't control what we want, then our freedom is really an illusion. It's whatever is controlling what we want that is really running our lives and is really our master.

Now **Jesus** says here that he has “not come to do his own will, but **to do the will of the one who sent him.**” And in this he is speaking as the man, the new Adam, the beginning of the new creation, the firstborn from the dead, the model for all humanity in the coming age, a humanity made in the image of God and now surrendering to God to be what God wants us to be. That's the whole idea of the new creation: **our wills surrendered to the will of God so that we can be what God wants us to be.** And that begins in our own everyday lives by surrendering our desires to the one who knows what we really need as opposed to what we may want. So this path to surrender, maybe oddly so, but **this path to surrender goes through the door of**

**self-mastery.** We cannot surrender to God when we are not in charge of ourselves. **So in order to get ourselves ready to surrender to God, we have the gain mastery over ourselves and we gain mastery over ourselves by mastering our desires.**

So it's not all something that happens in one fell swoop. **Salvation is a process,** and this gospel is about that process. **It's about learning how to desire the most important thing and letting go of other desires, thus gaining some kind of control over what it is I really want, discerning with the help of God what that ought to be, and then really choosing it. Having chosen what is really desirable, we now are given the satisfaction of that desire in the bread of life.** This does not simply refer to the Eucharist; the Eucharist refers to it. **This is the very reality of God who has come to be our food, thus to transform us into the divine, into the godly people we were fashioned to be in the first place, into those who participate in God, the life of the Holy Trinity.** This is what the bread of life is about. And **we anticipate that and signify that in the Holy Eucharist,** so that through the devout reception of Eucharist we do become more what we are eating. And this transformation advances day by day, and day by day we surrender ourselves more fully to the will of the Father, as Jesus did on the cross, well, actually throughout his whole life culminating in the cross, so that **all of the events of our lives, good and bad, are all subsumed into the sacrifice of Jesus, and they all become what we offer to the Father in union with Christ, surrendering the wills we have now gained over ourselves by beginning with desires.**