



August 11, 2024

*Psalm 130, Psalm 34:1-8, John 6:35, 41-51*

**Deacon Gretchen Peterson (with Sarah James and Rebecca Anderson)**  
**Assistant to the Bishop, Youth and Leadership**

***Psalm 130***

*Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD.*

*Lord, hear my voice! Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications!*

*If you, O LORD, should mark iniquities, Lord, who could stand?*

*But there is forgiveness with you, so that you may be revered.*

*I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in his word I hope;*

*my soul waits for the Lord more than those who watch for the morning, more than those who watch for the morning.*

*O Israel, hope in the LORD! For with the LORD there is steadfast love, and with him is great power to redeem.*

*It is he who will redeem Israel from all its iniquities.*

***Psalm 34:1-8***

*I will bless the LORD at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth.*

*My soul makes its boast in the LORD; let the humble hear and be glad.*

*O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together.*

*I sought the LORD, and he answered me, and delivered me from all my fears.*

*Look to him, and be radiant; so your faces shall never be ashamed.*

*This poor soul cried, and was heard by the LORD, and was saved from every trouble.*

*The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him, and delivers them.*

*O taste and see that the LORD is good; happy are those who take refuge in him.*

***John 6:35, 41-51***

*Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.*

*Then the Jews began to complain about him because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven."*

*They were saying, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, 'I have come down from heaven'?"*

*Jesus answered them, "Do not complain among yourselves.*

*No one can come to me unless drawn by the Father who sent me; and I will raise that person up on the last day.*

*It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me.*

*Not that anyone has seen the Father except the one who is from God; he has seen the Father.*

*Very truly, I tell you, whoever believes has eternal life.*

*I am the bread of life.*

*Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died*

*This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die.*

*I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh."*

~

Today's sermon is a conversation between Deacon Gretchen Peterson, Sarah James and Rebecca Anderson. What follows is a transcript of their conversation.

~

### **1) What words/phrases stuck out for you in these passages?**

**Rebecca:** Between both the Psalm and Gospel, it especially stood out to me this theme of "Taste and See." That there are paths available to us to be closer with God, and with Christ in our lives. Christ is there for us, even in the greatest of challenges. Faith is a mystery, yet in many ways, the way that we engage with one another and in our lives through our churches makes our faith tangible.

**Gretchen:** What stuck out for me is that even when we feel we are in the depths of sadness, we are able to cry out to God. And because we are able to do that, then there is some hope in the midst of what we are going through. The invitation to cry out to God reminds us that we are not alone, that God is present at all times.

### **2) What do these passages move you to do as a follower of Christ?**

**Rebecca:** I feel moved to spend time considering what it feels like to share the gifts Christ offers us with the world. To set aside guilt and fear in hopes of giving back to others, and knowing that we are held by God. It is with these gifts of security, love, and kindness, that we are able to go out into the world and share love, generosity, and compassion with others. On a personal level, seeking God in our day-to-day lives invites us into deeper whole-ness.

**Gretchen:** The passages move me to find a way to be like Christ in the world. Jesus offers hope to the disciples by reminding them that He is the Son of God and that is something

different from just an earthly being. Jesus reminds us that he is the living bread. He reminds us of this through an everyday thing—bread. Christ is not just earthly bread though—Christ is something different. And when we believe, we find a new way of being in the world too, strengthened by Christ’ love and grace for each of us.

### **3) What do you think these passages are urging us as a church to be/do?**

**Rebecca:** I think these passages usher us to reach out, spread our arms wide, and embrace others who may be struggling on their path; to hold all of those around us in the same way Christ as the Bread of Life offers us salvation and peace. We are able to seek refuge in God—this apparent love holds us as we walk together in faith.

**Gretchen:** Many people within and outside of our church walls are struggling. To find a way to help can feel overwhelming. But by grounding ourselves in Christ and Christ's love for all creation, we can find hope to keep working for justice and peace. Reminding ourselves that our hope and life is in Christ is a powerful starting place. From that starting place, there is much we can do for others and for all of God’s creation.

#### ***Reflection by Sarah***

God is always there for us, to support and listen to us, and to forgive us. This message is so important to keep in mind in all aspects of our lives. We can go to God with anything, the good and the not so good. God will always be there for us. As a young person, sometimes my faith can feel slightly disconnected from the rest of my life. It is important to me that I keep in mind that God is always there. Through all our lives, we can always reach out to God, and when I remember and do this, I am reminded to continue to serving God outside of the building we worship in on Sundays.

In Psalm 34, everyone was called to praise together, just as we do on Sundays. Similarly to this, we are called to listen to, support, forgive, and love everyone, just as God does for us.

We can always turn to God, and we should always be able to turn to our community in challenging times. Then, with God and the support of our community, we can overcome the challenges in life. Just as the people in the gospel were confused: John 6:52 “The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, ‘How can this man give us his flesh to eat’” in response to Jesus telling them he is the living bread, it is easy for us to be confused in life. It is easy to question things and make mistakes, but God will still be there for us, always, and we can trust God and turn to God with anything, and we should show this same love to everyone.