**John 6:33,35** PENTECOST 10b 844

Are you living? Or just existing? Are you satisfied with where your life is at the moment, or, are you unsettled, empty, just drifting along?

When John was young he was really into sport – cricket, football, tennis, table tennis, athletics, golf – he’d have a go at the whole lot. In cricket he was good stroke maker and he had success ,too. Then the bad season came. Every time he got an edge it was caught. He was moved down the grades. Then he met a girl and ended up getting married. He had a child and also had a new perspective about what was important. The sport had been very useful. It had taught things like discipline, teamwork and how to be gracious in both losing and winning. But life did not lie in sport.

His sister, Tanya, was into study. She had been a bright student at school and went on to university. There she discovered that the more she knew, the more she realized what she did not know. She couldn’t just be a student forever either. Sooner or later she’d have to make a contribution to society. Knowledge, she thought was useful, but life did not lie in knowledge.

Brother, Liam, had decided already in his teens that happiness would come with the money to buy it. He worked at one job and then two at the same time and did make money. He bought a house and then a better one in a more desirable suburb complete with pool. He had a great car and boat, but felt empty still. There must be more, he thought. It didn’t improve when he realized his children hardly knew him and got worse when his wife left him. The successful man was found hanging from rafters in his garage. Money did buy all sorts of things for him to enjoy. But life was obviously not there. Centuries ago the prophet had said:

*Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread and your labour for that which does not satisfy?*

And Jesus had said:

*A person’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.*

Pauline looked for life in religion. She attached herself to a group of people who were enthusiastic and who took the will of God seriously. She tried ever so hard to be a good Christian avoiding what should be avoided and attempting what should be done. But she felt a failure. Got depressed. Wondered whether she was a Christian at all. She could never be what she ought to be. Religion in itself, particularly if not understood properly, could never be the way to life.

And you? What do you try? What do you think would make you happy? When do you think you’d be content? Fulfilled? Do you live, or, just exist?

In today’s gospel, Jesus makes a stupendous claim:

**I am the bread of life…I am the bread that gives life to the world….Whoever comes to me will never go hungry and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.**

To say any more is almost to spoil it. If we hunger for truth, Jesus is the Truth. If we are thirsty for love, Jesus in his sacrifice on Calvary, lays bare the loving heart of the Father which beats for you. You, he thought, were worth dying for. If you long to be somebody, in Jesus you , too, have become son or daughter of the Father. If you long to know God, in Jesus he is revealed as the God of mercy and forgiveness. .In him the emptiness is filled. Existence stops and life begins – what Jesus called “life in all its fullness,” overflowing now in praise, thanks and service. Don’t feel you don’t deserve such blessing. Its free, a gift from him who is the bread of life. He is the one who came down and gives life to the world. He is more satisfying than the manna or bread from heaven which fell in the desert. He is better than the bread which fed the 4,000. Take it again and again and again and live.

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