

Rev. Shaun Arndt
Sunday, August 18, 2024
John 6:35-51

“Our School is Out of this World!”

O Taste and see that the LORD is good. Amen.

Dear Friends in Christ,

Usually, when we say something is ‘out of this world’ we mean it is the best, it is outstanding, exceptional.

That works when I say **Our School is Out of this World**. Our Lutheran Elementary School and Early Childhood Center are truly blessed in outstanding ways – wonderful facilities, faithful faculty and staff, a family like environment, and a quality education.

But when I say **Our School is Out of this World**, I mean that what matters most about our school is indeed *out of* – as in from *outside* of this sin stained, broken world. You see, the message, the purpose, the power of Peace School is **Out of this World** for it comes from **above!**

The foundation and heart of our school is the One who says: **“I am the Bread of Life. I have come down from heaven... to do the will of him who sent me. The bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.”**

Our School is Out of this World because we teach and proclaim Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God who came from the Father and who with the Father and the Holy Spirit is the One True God.

Jesus says ***I am the Bread of Life***. This is one of His many famous ‘I AM’ statements that show us Jesus is true God. For in Exodus 3, God told Moses: **I AM WHO I AM. Say to the Israelites: I AM has sent me to you** (14).

Jesus is **the living bread...** Throughout the Bible, the One True God is called **The Living God** (Mt 16:16), because He is real and because He is the source of life.

And that’s the point Jesus makes when He says He is **The Bread of Life**. Because bread of one kind or another has been such a common, staple food, many languages use their word for bread to describe food in general. As food gives our bodies life, so Jesus alone gives us life with God.

Our School is also Out of this Word because in teaching Jesus, it points children and adults to the life greater than anything in this world: **“The one who comes to me will never be**

hungry, and the one who believes in me will never be thirsty... For this is the will of my Father: that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him may have eternal life. And I will raise him up on the Last Day.”

Those who trust in Jesus have life with God, the only life that is able to satisfy our longing. This life Jesus gives will never disappoint, because it will outlast the disappointments and sorrows of this world. The life Jesus gives continues on and grows far greater and brighter even when our bodies die.

And yet there’s more to this **eternal life**. Jesus says: **I will raise him up on the Last Day**. When he comes again in glory, Jesus will **raise** our real, actual bodies up from the grave, just He Himself rose bodily from the dead on Easter morning. Then with bodies like Jesus’ own glorious body, we will never get sick, never have joint pain, depression, anxiety, never grow weak or worn out, but live with Him in unimaginable but entirely real eternal bliss!

Yes, our school exists to provide a good education and prepare our children for life, but above all its purpose is that that our students would know Jesus and the **eternal life** that He gives us that is utterly beyond this dying world.

Those who **come to Christ** and **believe in Him** have **eternal life!** And yet, the power to come to Jesus is not in us, but comes from **out of this world**. Jesus says that so clearly in today’s Gospel!

Jesus *does not* say: you can work your way to me, by your good deeds. Jesus *does not* say: you can make a decision to follow me. Jesus *does not* say you have free will to ask me into your heart. (Indeed, the Bible never uses the words ‘free will’ in that way ever, that is a pure man-made fancy pulled from human reason and not Scripture.)

What Jesus *does* say is **Everyone the Father gives me will come to me**. *Gives* – as in faith in Jesus is a gift, just like Paul says in Ephesians: **it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast** (2:8-9).

What Jesus *does* say is this: **No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him**. “**No one**” means **No one**. There is no coming to Jesus by our own ability or power. Our natural, sinful condition when we enter the world is to run away from God including when we fool ourselves and buy into the devil’s lie that we can do something to earn God’s favor. Indeed, God’s Word describes our natural spiritual condition as ‘**dead**’ (Eph 2).

And so, it takes a miracle from the Triune God to bring us to faith. That’s why Jesus said, **You did not choose me, but I chose you** (Jn 15:16) and why 1 Corinthians says: **No one can say Jesus is Lord, except by the Holy Spirit** (12:3).

So only if the Father **draws**, pulls, drags a person to Jesus; only if Christ has chosen a person; only if the Holy Spirit creates faith can anyone believe in Jesus and have eternal life.

But how does God give this faith? Our lesson shows us: **It is written in the Prophets, ‘They will all be taught by God.’ Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from him comes to me.** The Father does not draw a person to Jesus out of thin air, but He uses the message of the **prophets** of the Old Testament and the fulfillment of those **prophetic** writings: the books of the New Testament given through Jesus Apostles.

See how this tells us the whole Bible is about Jesus! And when you listen to the Bible, Jesus says you are **taught by God!**

That is another way **Our School is Truly Out of this World**, because our faculty includes the Lord God Himself teaches through His Word, used in our classrooms - not only in chapel, devotions, and religion, but as the truths of God take captive everything we teach.

Now admittedly there is a mystery beyond our understanding when it comes to faith. Scripture is clear – if anyone believes and so is saved – it is all God’s doing and not ours. But at the same time His Word makes it clear that if anyone does not believe and is lost, it is their own fault.

In our sinful nature, we have the horrible and terrifying power to even now reject the Savior and perish in eternal ruin. Indeed, our natural setting of our heart is to grumble against Jesus’ Word and reject him in unbelief, just like some of the people in the crowd in our Gospel lesson or just like what we hear in John chapter 1: **(Christ) was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not recognize him (John 1:10).**

And that is troubling, because while the message we proclaim through Peace’s ministries is **Out of this World** – and from the God who is **Out of this World**, yet you and I have too much in common with this sinful world.

The sin inside of us and around us, wants to draw us away from Jesus in one way or another.

Maybe it is guilt that makes us think there is no way God could forgive; I’ve strayed too far and too long.

Maybe it is sinful pride and self-righteousness that defies God’s truth that we cannot even help to save ourselves.

Maybe it’s sinful desire and temptation that wants to use what God forbids to push Jesus and His message out of our lives.

Maybe it's **grumbling** against God and His Word, because we are upset at Him about something, rather than searching the Scriptures for peace and understanding.

Maybe it is sinful apathy and distraction in the things of life that we hardly pay attention to His Word and are bored with it, even though it is God himself teaching us in the Word!!!!

All of our sin, any of our sin means this amazing God who is so out of this world when it comes to holiness and perfection should have nothing to do with us!

And that is why the message that is at the heart of our school is truly **out of this world** – for it speaks of a love of God beyond and unlike all else – the love of the Father that He was willing to give His Son not for good people, not for friends, but for us who were sinners and enemies by nature!

The love of the Son who came down from heaven to patiently preach to and die for all people!

The love of the Triune God who knows all our flaws and yet He wants us to be His people!

And so, in amazing love this God draws us to Himself! He draws us and calls us to repent – and then through His Word works repentance in us – to confess our sins and cling to Christ who **gave His flesh** for the sin of the **world** – and the world includes your sin and mine – paid for, forgiven, removed, covered by Jesus' obedience and sacrifice.

Have no doubt that you are loved and saved by this God. After all, right now, this very day, **the Father draws** you to Jesus **whom He sent** through the promises of His Word.

You see, the message we share in our church and school is **out of this world**, but it is also *down to earth* as the Lord comes to you in a touchable and undeniable way.

The Father draws you through words you can hear with your ears and see on the pages of the Bible. This gracious God has touched you with water and promise Word of baptism to claim you as His own forgiven child, so that you may know what Jesus did, He did for you. Yes, He even feeds you the **Bread of Life** as Jesus gives us His true body and blood along with the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper – all to bring us forgiveness and life everlasting!

Oh, it may look simple to our eyes, as simple as something like a teacher in an ordinary classroom, but speaking the Word about Jesus.

But that is exactly how the Lord gives us **eternal life** in **Christ**, that is truly **out of this world**. Amen.

O give thanks to the Lord, for His mercy endures forever. Amen.