

Sermon 2010 Thanksgiving
Text: Deuteronomy 8:1-10
Theme: "Eat and Be Full"
11-25-10

Long before the Puritans ever graced the sands of the New World, the people of God were preparing to enter the Promised Land. Moses addressed his people with a sermon that became the book of Deuteronomy. In the portion of the text we read for today, we hear Moses reminding the people of how faithful God has been to them during their years in the wilderness.

⁴Your clothing did not wear out on you and your foot did not swell these forty years.

But things were about to get even better for them.

⁷For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, flowing out in the valleys and hills, ⁸a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive trees and honey, ⁹a land in which you will eat bread without scarcity, in which you will lack nothing, a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills you can dig copper. ¹⁰And you shall eat and be full, and you shall bless the Lord your God for the good land he has given you.

You shall eat and be full, and you shall bless the Lord your God for the good land he has given you. You know eating and being full are two different things. I think of eating in the school cafeteria on the day before Thanksgiving break. My school would always serve turkey and dressing on that day in some kind of strange pre-Thanksgiving ritual. It seemed strange because first, all of us would have turkey and dressing the next day and their turkey and dressing was just one step below Stouffer's. The turkey was a pressed, gray, tasteless mess made from 100% genuine turkey parts. The dressing was...well let's just say it looked at home in the garbage can. The rolls, however, would get you through until you got home, but it was not something one relished. No one, who ate in my school's cafeteria, ever and

felt content and happy with their meal. They felt like they could get through the day until they got home from school and that was about it.

On the other hand, I think about Thanksgivings growing up and the care my mother would put into that meal. Everything was perfect. She would start sometime on Saturday, cleaning and prepping and baking and it would all culminate in an amazing feast on Thursday and we would eat and be full. Thanksgiving was a particularly happy holiday in my family. It was not horribly expensive, so the financial pressure was usually off, and we never had to deal with extended family who we didn't like because we were on the West Coast and they were all on the East Coast. As a family, we were content at Thanksgiving like no other holiday. We ate year around but Thanksgiving was a time of eating and being full; full of food, full of love, full of togetherness.

That is what today is really about. Although we are thankful for the many material things God provides for us, we are not JUST thankful for the material things. More than just the material stuff, we are thankful for the way he uses those things, like turkey and football and family. He draws us closer together and closer to him. We gather today with friends and family around a table full of food that God has provided for us. But the food is not really the point is it? The food is just the focal point that draws us together today as family. Paul talks about that very same kind of drawing together in the Lord's Supper.

One of the names of the Lord's Supper used in the Church, interestingly enough, is the Great Thanksgiving. Every Sunday we gather together for Thanksgiving Dinner. The food is not the focus – with the wine and bread we use, God help us if the food is the focus! No, the focus is the Lamb upon his throne and each other. There is both a vertical and a horizontal connection that happens at this altar that transcends beyond any

normal meal and we walk away forgiven and content. And our contentment is beyond anything that a material thing brings.

This contentment is the sure and certain knowledge that our Lord has prepared a perfect and holy banquet for us in paradise. This is a banquet that is ours by right because we are the brothers and sisters of the Son. Regardless of the challenges we face today, we can be content, we can be full, because we know where we are headed and we know that the day will come when we are seated with Jesus and our lives are whole and perfect.