

## The Cost of Bread

by Mike Tucker \*

Nobel laureate Milton is perhaps best known for popularizing the saying "There's no such thing as a free lunch," which is now a common English dictum.

We understand that anything billed "free of charge" still has a bill attached. Whatever goods and services are provided, someone must pay the cost. Therefore, we suspect that every kind gesture or free gift has a hidden motive, cost, or expectation attached.

This may be why it is so difficult for many of us to take communion and not be suspicious of the hidden costs. Is this really a free meal? Jesus invitation to the table implies a free lunch: "Everything that the Father gives me will come to me, and anyone who comes to me I will never drive away" (John 6:37). And yet, even as we are called to freely come forward, we are asked simply to empty ourselves before the one who calls! Is there a cost to partake of the Bread of Life?

Christ tells us openly that the way of the Cross is costly, but it does not involve the kind of transaction we have come to expect. The cost is His, not ours. He is both the Bread of Life and the one who paid the cost that it might nourish us.

We see this more clearly when we think of the connection between our food and the one who made it possible. Take strawberries, for example. Strawberries are too delicate to be picked by machine. The perfectly ripe ones even bruise at too heavy a human touch. Every strawberry you have ever eaten was hand picked by someone sweating profusely with an aching back.

As we hold the bread of the Lord's Supper in our hands, we are indeed faced with a costly meal. "And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me'" (Luke 22:19).

When we take the bread from that table we are not doing so in order to stockpile food for some future date. Nor are we benefitting from a "buy one and get two free" scheme. Jesus declares: "Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them" (6:56). It is impossible to consume this meal with the same disconnectedness with which we eat countless meals. Every broken piece of bread represents nothing less than a Person who was broken for us. And he calls us to come willing to empty ourselves as completely as he did on the Cross.

Christ is unlike anything else we can consume in this world. For all who are hungry, the Bread of Heaven has come down.

Adapted from A Slice of Infinity blog by Jill Carattini

With Love,  
Mike

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