

JESUS IS THE TRUE BREAD
(John 6:22-35)

²²The day following, when the people which stood on the other side of the sea saw that there was none other boat there, save that one whereinto his disciples were entered, and that Jesus went not with his disciples into the boat, but *that* his disciples were gone away alone; ²³ (Howbeit there came other boats from Tiberias nigh unto the place where they did eat bread, after that the Lord had given thanks:) ²⁴ When the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, neither his disciples, they also took shipping, and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus. ²⁵ And when they had found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither? ²⁶ Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. ²⁷ Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed. ²⁸ Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? ²⁹ Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent. ³⁰ They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work? ³¹ Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat. ³² Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. ³³ For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. ³⁴ Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. ³⁵ And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

John 6:22-35

Our text says that these things happened on “The day following.” So, they happened the day after Jesus fed the multitude. You remember that Jesus preached to the people and healed their sick all day long. And then, when evening was come, he had them sit down on the lush grass and he fed them all. Every last one of them he fed. The disciples came by with the baskets full of bread and fish and they told the people, “Take all you want.” And the people ate until they were full.

And then, when some of the people camped out that night so they could follow Jesus the next day, Jesus got up in the fourth watch. That is, he got up around 3:00 a.m. and walked out on the Sea of Galilee. Now when I say he walked out on the Sea of Galilee, I don’t mean he took a stroll out on the beach. I mean he walked on the Sea. And he found the disciples about to perish in the storm and he boarded their ship and the wind ceased and the ship was immediately in Capernaum.

Such is the power of Christ. Gravity had no sway on Him. He could turn it on or off as He pleased. The wind and the waves obey him. Time and space are nothing but play toys to Him. If he desires the ship to be in Capernaum, then immediately it is in Capernaum.

And the events in our text this morning happened the day after all of that. You would think Jesus would be worn out. And the poor disciples, I don’t know when they slept. Maybe they slept a little on the ship before the storm hit.

You will notice that things are happening fast now in the life of Jesus. Every day he is performing the miraculous. Everywhere he goes thousands of people are following him. And there are thousands of people needing healing. Whenever he sees a lame person he heals him. Whenever he sees someone who cannot see or hear, he heals him. The streets are lined with the sick and when he comes by he makes them well. A nobleman begs him to heal his son and Jesus says, “Go thy way, thy son liveth!” People touch the hem of his garment and they are healed. From sunup to sundown now it is crushing work and there is very little time even to eat.

And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat.

Mark 6:31

The Confusion of the People

Now Jesus sent most of the people away after he fed them. (Matthew 14:23) However, it appears that many of them did not go home that night. They were so well fed that they stayed right there and waited for the sun to come up the next morning. Now they saw the disciples leave in the ship, but they knew that Jesus did not leave. So, they stayed right there.

The day following, when the people which stood on the other side of the sea saw that there was none other boat there, save that one whereinto his disciples were entered, and that Jesus went not with his disciples into the boat, but that the disciples were gone away alone.

John 6:22

So, you notice here that the crowd that remained watched Jesus carefully and they knew that the disciples left in a boat, but Jesus did not go with them. So they bedded down there where Jesus was and when the sun came up the next morning they couldn't find him.

Now you notice in verse 23 that some other boats had come from Tiberias. They probably came because they heard that thousands of people would need a ferry ride back across the lake. And sure enough, when the people saw that Jesus was gone, they boarded these other boats and came to Capernaum looking for Jesus. And they found him. And they asked him, "When did you come here?" (v.25)

Jesus' life was now like a Hollywood movie star being stalked by the Papparazi and it was even more so for Jesus. It seems that they were monitoring every step that he made. They knew he didn't leave on ship with the disciples. And they knew somehow that he didn't leave on any other ship. And apparently it was not possible to walk secretly at night to Capernaum. And so, it is clear here that the people are confused as to when (and how) Jesus came to Capernaum. They had no idea that Jesus was out walking on the Sea of Galilee early in the morning before sunrise!

Isn't this true of all of us? We have no real understanding of the goings and comings of God. We try to fit Him into the tiny parameters of our understanding and we can't fit Him in. He is too big and too great for us. He is beyond understanding. He cannot be explained. His workings are supernatural. They are beyond the scope of science. They are mysterious and wondrous. And just like these people, we often ask, "Lord, whence camest thou hither?" But the Lord moves in the dark recesses of the night when we are fast asleep. And we don't know whither he cometh or wheresoever he goeth.

One of the great mistakes that we make is thinking that we must understand every move that God makes. We think that we can comprehend God in the vast recesses of our mind when in fact, He is too great to be fully comprehended. The finiteness of our mind makes the doings of our infinite God beyond our reach. And so, while we are sleeping, God is yet working. While we lay on our beds he is walking on the Sea.

So, when they found Jesus, they asked him, "When did you come here." Now let's take a look at the answer of Jesus. And note that he doesn't answer their curious question, but he addresses a more pertinent issue and that is the motive of their hearts.

The Answer of Jesus

Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.

John 6:26

You will notice that the first thing Jesus did was to reveal their improper motives. They were seeking Jesus in order to have their bellies filled. We already saw that it was an improper motive to come to Jesus just because of his miracles. And we see now that it also an improper motive to come to him only to have physical needs met.

By far, the most important thing we need from Jesus is spiritual healing. And this is the principle reason why he came into the world. He came into the world to give us spiritual life. He didn't come primarily to heal us from the flu or to heal our eyes or our ears. Those are merely temporary disorders. But he came to resurrect our souls from spiritual death. And nothing is more critical than that. A man may suffer for 60 or 70 years with a physical disease, but he will suffer in hell for all eternity with a dead soul. We cannot be sidetracked by undo concern for our bellies or our bodies. But we must be vitally concerned about our souls. The importance of eternal things far exceeds the importance of temporal things. And Jesus told them, "You seek me because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled."

Example: If you find a man lying on the pavement after an auto accident and he is dying from his injuries and his papers are scattered and blowing in the wind, do you chase his papers or do you attend to the man himself?

And Jesus came to attend to the more important matter and that is the condition of the soul. He was more than anxious to take care of the physical needs, but he wants them to know that the weightier matter is the eternal state of the soul. How satisfying it would have been for Jesus if someone would have come to him and said, "Whether or not I have bread and fish to eat I care not, but I must have bread for my soul!" This was what Jesus was looking for, but it is not what he found in this Jewish multitude. What he found was a people who sought him for the physical benefits only with no regard for the spiritual.

And this condition is also found in the heart of man today. Men want God for the material benefits. Men are not too interested in doing away with their sin, but they would like to do away with their cancers and their tumors and their other illnesses. And furthermore, they are not too interested in spiritual riches like love, joy, peace and gentleness but they are very interested in a new house, a new car and a larger bank account. And that is just the wicked way of the human heart.

And that's why the health and wealth gospel is a favorite gospel these days. It's all about what you can have in this world if you will just trust Jesus. This prosperity gospel as it is called, plays on the worldliness and the greed of the human heart. And it is a false gospel. It is a gospel that teaches that God wants you to be rich and God wants you to be healthy and all you have to do is believe it and give your tithe and God will give you the pleasures of this world.

The fact of the matter is that God is far more concerned with your eternal welfare than with your temporal welfare. And your eternal welfare is far more important than the temporary health of your mortal body. God allowed Job to suffer the loss of all things and allowed him to suffer great physical affliction. Poor Job suffered boils from the bottom of his feet to the top of his head. And he suffered these things by the will of God. God gave Paul a thorn in the flesh and would not take it away. God allowed most of the disciples to suffer great bodily harm and to suffer a painful death. It is clear that God is vastly more interested in the eternal condition of your soul than in the temporary condition of your body. Sometimes the body must suffer so that the soul may flourish. And if there is suffering in the body, it will multiply the glory in the age to come.

For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

Romans 8:18

Look what Jesus told them:

Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.

John 6:27

Now Jesus is not advising them to quit their jobs. It is necessary and good to provide for our temporal needs.

But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.

I Timothy 5:8

For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.

II Thessalonians 3:10

But what Jesus is doing is comparing the relative value of your effort. You work very hard and put a lot of thought and energy into obtaining food which perishes. That is, it is an earthly thing. It will pass away. If you eat the food you will be hungry again very soon. If you don't eat it, it will rot on your shelves. Your very bodies which eat the food will finally pass away in a very short time. So put relatively more thought and energy into those things that endure unto eternal life. Listen to the words of Jesus.

Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body more than raiment?

Matthew 6:25

The Response of the Jews

I. What shall we do?

Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?

John 6:28

They wanted to know what to do. Is this not the universal response of man? What shall I do? This shows great ignorance of the way of God, for appropriation of eternal life is by grace. It is not of works lest any man should boast. But they want to know what to do. Men everywhere want to know what to do. Religions around the world have whole systems of doings. And this shows the spiritual ignorance of man.

Did you know that God wants to save by grace? He does not want a man to climb to heaven by his own efforts. God wants to demonstrate how gracious He is. He wants a man to walk into heaven "to the praise of the glory of his grace!" (Ephesians 1:6) God has no interest in the feeble works of man. But He has interest in his own grace. Nothing pleases Him more than freely forgiving a sinner. And nothing is more distasteful to him than a sinner who says "I will not have your grace, I will come to heaven by my own works."

Man has proven a million times over that he cannot and will not work the works of the Law. He simply cannot do so. The Law is the holy standard of God and fallen man cannot attain to it. You might as

well stand a man at the edge of the ocean and tell him to broad jump over it. And yet, a man will flex his knees and try to jump. A man always wants to know what he can do. What can he do to inherit eternal life? And this is what they asked, "What shall we do?" Oh how utterly confused they were about the things of God!

You see, the work of salvation has already been done. Perfect obedience has already been rendered. We can do nothing more and there is nothing more to be done. And so, it is a matter of ignorance and a matter of pride and arrogance to suggest that you can do something to gain eternal life. Jesus has won the victory. He has fulfilled the law. He has suffered the penalty of the law and the great work which gets a man to heaven is fully done.

They asked, "What must we do?" And, look at the answer of Jesus.

Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

John 6:29

Here is the doctrine of Romans and Galatians flowing out of the mouth of Jesus himself. It is justification by faith. It is by faith and not by works. It is by grace and not by the Law. The Law says do, but grace says done. The Law says work, but grace says believe. Do you want to do the works of God? Then believe on Jesus. That is the only work that God accepts from a sinful man.

Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us . . .
Titus 3:5

The Jews however, were not willing to accept salvation by faith. They forever wanted to know what they must do. And Jesus said, "Believe."

So you see that the first question was, "What must we do?" (v.28) And the next question was,

II. What sign will you give us? (John 6:30)

Here the Jews demonstrate their unbelief even more fully. They will not to believe unless they are given a sign. "Let us see a sign, and then we will believe," they say.

Here is the universal truth. Men are willing to do works for salvation, but they are not willing to believe. They must see it before they will believe it. And this is not faith. With faith, a man believes and then he sees. With unbelief, a man sees and then believes.

And they said show us a sign. This shows that they were full of unbelief and they didn't trust Jesus at all.

Remember, these people had just witnessed a great sign. Jesus fed them with five loaves and two fishes. They had undoubtedly seen other signs and miracles of Jesus. This is why they were following him in the first place. Would they believe if they had another sign? And the answer is no.

But these Jews persisted in their request for a sign. They reminded Jesus that in olden days, God gave the fathers a sign: manna was sent from heaven.

Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat.
John 6:31

Now the people here are persisting in their desire to see another sign. And they are appealing to the pride of Jesus. Essentially they are saying, "Moses was able to give us manna from heaven, what can you do?" They are trying to provoke Jesus to action.

Of course, what does the Scripture say?

Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.
Luke 4:12

Of course, they did not perceive Jesus as their God. They perceived him as a miracle worker; another Moses, but not God. And so they tempted him.

The Answer of Jesus

Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.
John 6:32

First of all, Jesus corrected them. They were giving credit to Moses for sending the manna. But Jesus informed them that it was not Moses at all who sent the manna. Moses was merely the agent. It was the Father in heaven that sent the manna.

And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, It is manna: for they wist not what it was. And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat.
Exodus 16:15

And furthermore, that manna which the Israelites received under Moses was only typical bread. It was a type of that greater bread. It was only a shadow of good things to come. Whereas God gave them typical bread, Jesus said, "My Father gives you the true bread."

Let's take a brief look at this bread that Jesus is talking about.

1. It is a gift.

Jesus told them, "My Father gives you this bread." This bread is the greatest gift ever known to man. It is not deserved in any way. It is an unspeakable gift that is not earned. You cannot work for it. You cannot do anything to get it. It is a gift pure and simple. You cannot have it unless you receive it as a gift. You have it by grace and only by grace. How many times must the Scriptures tell us it is by grace before we will believe it?

2. It is a gift of the Father.

The Father gives the bread. It is none other than the great God of the universe who offers you this gift. It is the Ancient of Days who holds out his hand and offers bread to a hungry world. It is the same God who is fierce and angry with sinners who nevertheless holds out his gracious hand and offers bread.

3. It is true bread.

It is not merely a barley loaf that the Father offers us. It is not merely grain that sustains us for one day. It is not that typical bread offered to Israel, but it is that true bread. It is the real thing. It is the fulfillment of all that was typical and shadowy in the Old Testament. It is the substance behind the types.

4. It is the true bread.

You will notice the definite article here. It is the bread. It is the only bread. God will never send any other bread. There is no other bread. You must eat this bread or die. There is not a variety of bread, this bread is the true bread.

5. It is a person.

For the bread of God is he . . .
John 6:33

The bread of God is a "he." It is not a wafer that falls from heaven. But it is a person who cometh down from heaven. I could take a thousand more sermons and tell you about this blessed person who came down from heaven. He is the Creator of the universe. He is the Lord of Glory. He was with God in the beginning and he was God. And the Father sent him down from heaven as a gift of salvation to helpless sinners. It says in verse 33 that he was sent to give life.

The life that we live as unforgiven sinners is a walking death. We are dead in trespasses and sins. We are dead men walking. And we are headed to an eternal destruction. But God sent his Son from heaven and his Son gives life.

And he gives it to the world. This bread is not limited to a few Israelites in the wilderness. But it is given to the world of fallen men. It is given for Jews and Gentiles. It is given to men and women, boys and girls, rich and poor from everywhere in the world. Look at verse 33. He comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.

This bread is a gift. It is a gift from the Father. It is true bread. It is the bread. And, this bread is a person.

6. This bread is eternally sufficient.

Now the Israelites had to go out every morning and gather in bread for the day. And it only sustained them for one day. This is because their bread was only typical bread. But notice the effect of the true bread.

He that cometh to me shall never hunger.
John 6:35

Partake of Christ one time, and you will never hunger again. Christ is all sufficient for the sinner. He does not satisfy for one day only, but he satisfies for all eternity. The sinner will never lack again. Oh, he may get hungry for a burger, but he will never starve spiritually. When you partake of this bread, this bread takes up residence in your soul and he nourishes you from within on a daily basis.

Remember, Jesus told the woman at the well, "It will be a well of water springing up inside of you." And now Jesus tells them, "He that cometh to me shall never hunger."

How do you eat this bread?

Jesus said "I am the bread of life." And using this figure, we must ask ourselves, "How do we eat this bread? And Jesus told them,

He that cometh to me shall never hunger.
John 6:35

We must come to him. Of course that is a little vague as well, isn't it? Some people suppose that this means they must physically get out of their pew and walk down an aisle as though Jesus is over there and they must come to Him. Many people think when it says you must come that it means you must do something. But coming is a figure of speech here. It is not a physical coming, but a spiritual coming.

We are going to see in a few verses that Jesus says,

Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life.
John 6:54

Obviously these are figures of speech. The sinner must come to Him. The sinner must eat his flesh and drink his blood. But what does this mean?

And Jesus explains in verse 35.

I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

John 6:35

You come to Christ by believing on Him. You eat his flesh and drink his blood by believing. It is a matter of appropriation. When it comes to the food on our dinner table, we eat it by opening our mouth and taking it inside of us. And we eat the true bread by opening our spiritual mouth and receiving a person by faith.

What must I do to be saved? I must cast all my trust in Him. I must trust my eternal destiny to his care. I must believe in who he was and what he did. He was God and he died for me. And I must trust him to the extent that I give my life for him. He gave his life for me and now I must give my life for him. This is faith. This is saving faith in the true bread.