

JESUS, THE BREAD OF LIFE

John 6:22-71

Key Verse: 6:35

"Then Jesus declared, 'I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never thirsty.'"

In the first part of chapter 6, we studied Jesus' feeding the crowd of 5,000 people with five loaves and two fish (1-15). This miraculous sign shows us that Jesus is the compassionate God, and that he is the supplier of all human need. This miracle, apart from Jesus' death and resurrection, is the only miracle recorded in all four gospels. Jesus' feeding the 5,000 also sets the stage for his testimony that he is the bread of life. Today we learn that Jesus is the bread of life and that he gives us eternal life.

I. Do not work for [food that](#) spoils (22-34)

First, the people who thought only about bread (22-26). Jesus accepted Andrew's five loaves and two fish. With them, Jesus fed the 5,000 people. This miraculous sign was the divine revelation to mankind that Jesus is God and that he is the bread of life which gives men eternal life. But they did not grasp any spiritual meaning in it. Rather, they were eager to make Jesus king of bread even by force (15), so that they would not have to work so hard for bread or future security. Right after Jesus' feeding the 5,000, he suddenly disappeared. After they looked for Jesus all night in the most likely places, they went to Capernaum. They were happy to see Jesus again. When they saw Jesus again, they felt as if they had established a utopia where there would be no bread problem (25).

What did Jesus say to them? "Jesus answered, 'I tell you the truth, you are looking for me, not because you saw miraculous signs but because you ate the loaves and had your fill'" (26). When they came to Jesus first, they came to see the Messiah through miraculous signs. At that time, they had some spiritual desire. But this time, they came only to solve their bread problem. After tasting [God's blessing](#), they did not get better. They degenerated from the spiritual dimension to the material dimension.

Second, work for food that endures to eternal life (27). Look at verse 27. "Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. On him God the Father has placed his seal of approval." Jesus said in verse 27a, "Do not work for food that spoils...." What does it mean? When we think about what bread is, we find that bread is the same as money. Men work hard to [make money](#). Everybody wants to eat bread and live forever in this world; no one wants to die. What civilization has not been carried away with the bread problem?

Historically, most people have thought that if they had enough bread, they would be happy and live forever in the world. As history proves, the time of poverty has always been a time of suffering and sorrow, and the time of material affluence has always been a time of

corruption and amorality. The communist regime was a good example for the poor in making people sorrowful and suffer. England was a good example for the rich who lost their spirit in corruption and amorality. Still, all the people in the world think bread is the most important.

According to Genesis 3:17, a life that is spent only toiling for food that spoils is a cursed life. For God created man to carry out his holy mission (Ge 1:27,28), eating freely what he had provided (Ge 1:29). After the Fall, man lost God's holy mission. When they lost God's holy mission, men were cursed to work hard for three meals a day, toiling day after day for food that spoils (Ge 3:19). When Jesus said, "Do not work for food that spoils," it meant to live no more a cursed man's life. This is the reason Jesus said, "Do not work for food that spoils."

The second part of verse 27 says, "...but for food that endures to eternal life." Here "food that endures to eternal life" is Jesus himself (51). It is also the word of life (54). Jesus is the Creator God. Jesus is man's meaning of life. Jesus is the author of life (Jn 1:1,2). Jesus came to this world to save men from their sins and give eternal life to those who believe in him (3:16). Many people say, "I don't need eternal life; I need one Big Mac." But the time will come when eternal life is the only thing that really matters and the best gift from God for all fallen mankind.

Third, the work of God is to believe in Jesus (28-34). How did the crowd respond to Jesus? In verse 28 they asked, "What must we do to do the works God requires?" They wanted to do anything if only they could solve their bread problem. What did Jesus say? Look at verse 29. Jesus answered, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent." To believe in Jesus is indeed the solution to our life problem. Believing is very simple if we just believe. What was the crowd's response? They did not simply accept Jesus' words. They asked him to show them another miraculous sign so that they could see and believe. Actually, they had seen so many miraculous signs, including Jesus' feeding the 5,000 people. But they asked for another miraculous sign. Their real intention in asking for another miraculous sign was not to believe in him, but to demand Jesus to feed them free of charge, as Moses had fed their forefathers in the desert for 40 years. Jesus told them that it was not Moses who gave them manna, but God.

II. Jesus is the bread from heaven (35-59)

First, Jesus satisfies the hungry (35). Most importantly, Jesus told them that the bread of heaven is Jesus himself, and that he gives eternal life to those who eat the bread of heaven. Jesus kept on saying, "For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world" (33). Jesus also told them that God the Father has placed his seal of approval on him (27). Still they did not believe, because of their fixed idea about bread. They did not listen to Jesus. Instead, they only picked up what they wanted to hear, especially the word "bread," and said, "Sir, from now on give us this bread" (34). They heard the voice of God. But they thought only about physical bread.

Look at verse 35. "Then Jesus declared, 'I am the bread of life. He

who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty.'" Why is Jesus the bread of life? It is because Jesus came down from heaven and he has God's life in him. In verses 31-59 the words "from heaven" are repeated ten times (31,32,32,33,38,41,42,50,51,58). This repetition tells us that Jesus wanted to show them spiritual reality. Jesus really wanted to feed them the bread of life. Jesus really wanted to give them eternal life.

There are many hungry and thirsty souls. Many are hungry for parent's love. Others are hungry for fame and wealth. Some are hungry for a marriage partner. But most are thirsty because they are drained and dehydrated by hard work to support their families. Hunger and thirst represent man's tiredness and weariness. Why are they so tired and weary? The Bible says they are tired and weary because they do not come to Jesus. Matthew 11:28 says, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." Read verse 33. "For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." Jesus can satisfy our hunger and thirst because he is the bread of heaven.

Second, the Father's will (36-40). Jesus told them that he is the bread of life. He who comes to Jesus will never go hungry, and he who believes in Jesus will never be thirsty. But they did not believe because of their fixed idea that bread solves their life problem. Then Jesus told them about God's will so that some how they might come to him. Look at verse 39. "And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day." Here God's will is that he wants to save all men who are perishing because of their sins through his Son Jesus Christ, missing not even one. God is like a shepherd who leaves 99 sheep in the open country to find one lost sheep. God's will is that everyone may have eternal life through his Son. Read verse 40. "For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day." God's will is that everyone may believe in the Son and have eternal life and come back to his glorious kingdom. God wants to save all men from their sins. If they believe his words simply, God's will will be done on earth and they will enjoy the peace of God. Why is this so? Matthew 4:4 explains well. It says, "Jesus answered, 'It is written: "Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" Man believes bread is everything. But according to God's truth, the word of God is absolutely necessary.

Third, God works for unbelieving people (41-47). How did they respond to Jesus' invitation? Still they did not give up their idea that bread solves their life problem, and that if they have enough money they can live in this world forever. They did not want bread from heaven, but bread from the grocery stores. When Jesus talked only about bread from heaven, they began to despise him, saying, "Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, 'I came down from heaven?'" (41,42) Mark 14:22-24 explains excellently that Jesus is the bread of heaven. It says, "While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Take it; this is my body.' Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, and they all drank from it. 'This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many,' he said to them."

After hearing the life-giving message of Jesus, people were grumbling. So Jesus said, "'Stop grumbling among yourselves. No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day'" (43,44). In this situation, Jesus could not but despair. But he did not. Jesus told them that even if they reject the Son, still there are those who come to God. God himself approaches them and moves their hearts and draws them to himself. In this way, God's work continues. Even if the whole world seems to be opposing God's invitation through the Son, God is still willing to invite them. Men cannot reject God's work, as Isaiah prophesied in Isaiah 54:13, "They will all be taught by God." This is our faith, that there are always those who believe in the Son, and that God wants to save the world.

Fourth, "I am the bread of life" (48-59). In this part Jesus declares, "I am the bread of life." Look at verse 51. "I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." In the last part of verse 51 Jesus said, "This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." Without Jesus we have no eternal life.

Again in verse 53 Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you." This verse is the summary of the key points of the gospel. Jesus must die on the cross and shed his precious blood for the sins of the world. After this he must rise again to bring back his people to his glorious kingdom. Those who believe in him will be raised up with him at the last day. "At the last day" is repeated four times (39,40,44,54). This refers to the living hope of the kingdom of God after the second coming of Jesus Christ is consummated.

Look at verse 52. "Then the Jews began to argue sharply among themselves, 'How can this man give us his flesh to eat?'" They saw Jesus as a cannibal and despaired. Still, Jesus urges repeatedly that they must eat his flesh and drink his blood in order to have eternal life. Read verse 53. "Jesus said to them, 'I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.'" Those who eat his flesh and blood can remain in him. Otherwise they will be the children of the devil, not to mention not having eternal life in the Son.

III. "To whom shall we go?" (60-71)

On hearing it, many of his disciples said, "This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?" (60) From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him, saying, "What do I get out of it?" (66) They were unbelieving people. They would not believe even if they saw Jesus' ascension into heaven with their own eyes (62). Jesus was sorry that they were nothing but flesh (Ge 6:3). So he said in verse 63, "The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life." Without spiritual understanding, we cannot accept the word of God. Without spiritual understanding, we cannot accept the love of God. We must believe that the word of God is the word of life. We must believe that Jesus gives

eternal life to those who believe in him. On the other hand, when God saw people, they all became flesh. God was extremely sorry and he destroyed all the people on the earth except Noah's family and his company. Genesis 6:5,6 says, "The Lord saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. The Lord was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain." This is the reason that Jesus emphasizes that flesh is nothing, but spirit is everything. John 6:63 says, "The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life.'"

Jesus was sorry because of the unbelieving crowd. Jesus turned to the Twelve, sensing that they were shaky. So he said, "You do not want to leave too, do you?" Simon Peter answered him in verses 68-69, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God." Simon Peter decided to follow Jesus because he had received the word of life. We also must believe in God by taking our root in the word of God.

May God help us to believe that Jesus is the bread of life and that Jesus gives us eternal life.