

# The True Bread From Heaven

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Preacher: Rev. David McCaig

[0:00] To be with you in God's house on this, his day. I bring blessings and best wishes from the church family at Peterhead Baptist Church, our home fellowship.! And may I express my thanks for the warm welcome that you have extended to Ruth and I this morning.

! Later in the service I'll be opening God's Word, and Ruth will be bringing an update on the work of Wycliffe Bible Translators this evening, God willing. But in all of that, we are ultimately here today to worship God.

We read in Daniel chapter 2 from verse 20 these words, Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, to whom belong wisdom and might. He changes times and seasons. He removes kings. He sets up kings.

He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding. He reveals deep and hidden things. He knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with him.

To you, O God of our fathers, we give thanks and praise. We're going to begin our service this morning by offering praise. We're going to sing Psalm number 122.

[1:00] Psalm number 131.

Psalm number 131.

Psalm number 131.

O they are To Israel's Testament Be there To God's In fact With me For the thrones of God And in the thrones Forgiveness as mercy Viva Jerusalem Behalf

Viva Jerusalem Viva Jerusalem Viva Jerusalem Viva Jerusalem I wish I was young and I  
wish I was young and I wish I was young and I wish I was young and I wish I was young  
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and I wish I was young and I wish I was young and I When I was gleaming and ever meet  
my promises.

[ 4 : 37 ]      prosperity repeating no quite and a worthy worthy and worthy and worthy and Deeply in thee I'll sing And for the life of God the Lord I'll sing very good your way And I can invite Ruth to come and bring a word to the children.

I'm going to stand here. Can you all hear me?

I do have quite a big pleasure doing that friend. Sorry. Thank you very much for having me as a church. We have been supporting with us for a number of years.

And I used to be a teacher. So I want to start with a quiz. There's two of you at the front but there are a lot of adults in the back who can also participate.

And the quiz is about words. It's just true or false. So you've got a 50% chance of getting it right. Okay? Some good. Okay, the first question is this.

[ 6 : 28 ] There are more English speakers in China than in the USA. Do you think that's true or do you think that's false?

So go false or true? We've got a false over here. False as well. The answer is true. Because China is so big that there are more people who speak English in China than in the USA.

Next one. 8.3. So more than 8 words, 8.3 new English words are created every single day.

True or false? So there are 8.3 new English words created every day. You looking at the word imprint? False over here. What do you reckon? Go for don't know.

So it is actually false. Well done. It hits 14.7 new words every single day. That's a lot of news. Next question. The average person speaks 15,699 words every single day. Every single day. Every single day you speak English. No.

[ 7 : 30 ] No. No. No. No. No. No. No. No. No. No. No.

No. No. No. No. No. No. No. Yours is more than 15,000 words. True or false? True?

False? Well done. It is true. Fourth one. The most annoying word in English language. It may be.

Yours can all be thinking of your answers in your head by a minute. Yours can all have to just be sitting there. So it may be the most annoying English word. True over here. Yours can all be thinking of your answers in your head by a minute.

Yours can all be sitting there. Not sure? Unsure. So this is the unsure one. The answer is false. The most annoying English word is whatever. That is the most annoying English word.

[ 8 : 33 ] And then the last question. This is a tricky one. The opposite of sparkle is darkle. Have you ever thought what would be the opposite of sparkle? Well the answer is it's darkle apparently. You're going for false. Do you think darkle is a word? False as well.

Has the words, you can now use this word at school this week, and it's not so symbolic. You can now say darkle as a word. The opposite of sparkle is darkle. You know the words are so so powerful. Words can build it up, words can bring life, but words can also destroy.

I don't know if you've ever had someone say something really positive to you, something really good, that's lifted your spirits, that's made you feel good about yourself, and this is to all of you. And I remember when I was at high school, my teacher told me, and he said to me, Richard have you ever thought about using sport, and I love sport, have you ever thought about using sport to share, tell people about Jesus?

And I had never thought about that before. I was 16 at the time. But he says, look you can use this, because it's your love, your true passions, you can use them together. That changed my life, and it was a positive thing. And the next 20 years, I've been involved in sports ministry. But have you ever had someone say something quite mean to you?

And that's to all of you. Something that's maybe stuck with you, something that maybe a teacher said to you when you were really young, that you've carried for a number of years, or maybe a family member. Well, last year, someone in my church said something really mean to me. And it really, really hurt. She told me something about the holiday clubs that I eat, and that really damaged me.

[ 10 : 17 ] And so for the next 12 months, all I could think about was, maybe what she said was right, maybe I'm not very good at that, maybe I'm rubbish. Her words really hurt me. They really damaged me, they tore me down, they destroyed me. And yet my pre-teacher's words have given me life, they have lifted me up.

And that's what words have the power to do. And yet, if that's our words, think how much bigger are God's words? If our words can bring life into the shore, how much more powerful are God's words? And how much more can they bring life?

I have a verse that I would love somebody to live up. Can you live up, please? I don't want to do it, so it's John 20, 31. If you find that for me, that would be amazing.

John 20, 31. You're taking quite well, I think you're on my list. I've got me a bit. Why not? Yes, can you find it in my Bible, please? Not your Bible. It's not there.

Can you look at that hard, please? We're struggling here. Okay, I'll let you listen to your Bible. John 20, 31.

[ 11 : 39 ] What is it? I don't know. But these are written that you might believe that Jesus was the Son of God, and that believing you might have led to the Son of God. Thank you so much. Can you show, can you just laugh about your Bible for everyone? My Bible, not your Bible.

Your Bible looks like a normal Bible, but it's so bad, people. So my Bible is blank. But that is the reality for so many people, for 1.5 billion people in the world, that their Bible has absolutely no words in it.

And yet what you read in your Bible, it does have words, is that God's word brings life. Because it tells us all about who Jesus is, how he died on the cross for us, and how he rose again and promised us new life.

God's word brings life, and yet that Bible has absolutely no words. And so with us Bible translators, that's what we're trying to correct, that injustice.

So that the 1.5 billion people across the world do get access to God's word. So that their Bible is not blank, like the one that I gave you. Because that's not fair. That's not right.

[ 12 : 46 ] And it's not just, I know that sometimes we do things, and we say, why is that that they're getting that, and I'm not getting this. And our parents will often say, life's not fair. Get over it.

But actually, it's not fair that 1.5 billion people don't have God's word. And we shouldn't just go over it. We should fix that injustice. And I've just got one quick story for you.

Because I think that all of us have a verse that means something really powerful to us. Maybe a verse that helps us come to know Jesus. Well, there was a man called Ibu. And Ibu was a Muslim. And Ibu was at mosque one night.

And after mosque, him and his friends went and they burned down the local church. Because Ibu had been taught all of us that Christians are bad, that Christians shouldn't be in his country, and they should be friends with any Christians. So him and his friends went and burned down the local church.

And that's awful. Ibu does not sound like a great guy. After the tensions came down in the local village, the Muslims said to this Christian community, you can build a new church. And so they went and hired some people to build this new church.

[ 14 : 02 ] Do you know who they hired to build a new church? Ibu. Ibu came to rebuild the church. It was paid to rebuild the church that he himself had burned down. And one day, these Christians were gathering to worship. And in the building, as Ibu was seeing work, and he heard them say, they were looking at the book of Acts, and then they wrote a mathematics.

And they were saying, Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? That was the verse that they were looking at. And Ibu heard that. That was the verse that Ibu thought, I have been persecuting these Christians all of my life.

Why do I persecute them? And that verse drew Ibu in to the church. He listened. He was taught. And then Ibu came to know Jesus. And he was persecuted when he became a Christian.

But isn't that amazing that I persecuted you all probably never thought of. Paul, Saul, Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? And yet for Ibu, that was the verse that drew him to Jesus.

That was the verse that started his journey into life. Because God's word has power to bring life when we trust in Jesus. And we don't want people to have an empty Bible. We want people to have God's words.

[ 15 : 16 ] So thank you so much for your support of the work of Wicca through the years. And make it possible so that people get access to God's life by the words. Thank you. Thank you, Ruth. We're going to sing the Lord's praise again.

We're going to sing from Psalm number 51, verses 7 to 12. Let's worship the Lord together. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. That all these very holes which I have broken in the eyes.

For my iniquities protect thy things from my sin.

[ 17 : 18 ] Be it, God, clean our Lord, when you arise with me within.

Cast me not from thy side nor gay, thy holy sin away.

Restore me thy salvation's joy, when thy peace is made.

Let's join our hearts in prayer. Let's stand to pray. Amen. Lord Jesus, we thank you this morning for your love for us.

And we thank you for the reminder of the excellence that exists in knowing you, which is greater than all other knowledge in this world. There is nothing more pleasing and comfortable, nothing more animating and enlivening.

[ 18 : 44 ] For you are the sun and centre of all divine truth. You alone are the whole of our happiness. The sun to enlighten us, the physician who heals us, the wall of fire who defends us, the friend who comforts us, the pearl who enriches us, and the ark who supports us.

You are the rock who sustains us under the heaviest of pressures, our hiding place from the wind and the tempest. You are as rivers of water in dry places, and as the shadow in a weary land.

You alone are the ladder between earth and heaven. You are the mediator between God and man. All other things are vanities, but you, Lord, are real, solid, substantial, excellent, and glorious.

All other things are temporary, but you, Lord, are enduring and eternal. All other things are thorns and trouble our spirits, but you are full of joy and comfort and are altogether lovely.

And so we turn away from our sins in pursuit of the riches of your grace and the fullness of joy that is found in you. We turn away from corrupting company, seeking fellowship with you and your Father.

[ 19 : 52 ] We abandon notions of our own righteousness as we seek your perfect righteousness. Who would fill their coffers with pebbles, Lord, when they could instead have gold and silver?

And yet, Lord Jesus, you turned away from heaven for us. Worthy is your holy name, and deserving of all our praise, for all you have done, for all you have given.

Lord, as we turn to your word this morning, we recognise your generosity, the benevolence that does not keep your people in the dark about the mind and the heart of the God that we worship.

We thank you for your word today, Father, for all you have revealed to us within these pages about your character and your will. And we pray that you will speed the task to deliver that word in every language of our world, to every person on this planet, so that you may be known, so that all may know the reality of sin, the penalty of sin, and the salvation from it through faith in your Son.

As we turn to your scripture shortly, Lord, we ask that you would prepare our ears to hear your voice, that you would prepare our hearts to receive your message, and that you would motivate us to carry out your will.

[ 21 : 03 ] Minister to us by your Holy Spirit, we pray, as we ask, as with all of our petitions, in the precious name of Jesus Christ. Amen. Just before we do turn to God's word together, we're going to sing another psalm, psalm number 119, from verses 105 to 112.

Let's praise the Lord. I am overwhelmed by this word of sin, I am overwhelmed by this word of sin.

I am overwhelmed by this word of sin. I am overwhelmed by this word of sin. I am with soul affliction, in overwhelm, O Lord.

In mercy written, waken me according to Thy Word.

The thing where all things of my life accept I freely see.

[ 23 : 01 ] And unto me I share my Lord, Thy judgment clear indeed.

Though still my soul be in my hand, Thy loss I will not forget.

I err not from that law for me, The wicked spirit can say.

By all I testimonies of the love of all things rejoice.

To be my heaven is glory, For they my heart rejoice.

[ 24 : 31 ] I care for Thee in Thy new town, My heart still to attend.

That I Thy statutes may perform Always unto the end.

Well, let's turn to the Word of God together and open our Bibles at John chapter 6. Let's hope your Bibles all are full of words. And as we turn to John chapter 6, we're going to pick up the narrative here.

Where Jesus' disciples have just met Him, literally on the Sea of Galilee. Following the feeding of the 5,000. And now all of them have landed on the north-west on shore of the lake. As the Lord journeys toward the synagogue in Capernaum.

And the Lord makes this wonderful statement. That He is the bread of life. It's quite a long reading this morning, but rest assured. It is the most authoritative and perfect part of our service. When we read from God's Word.

[ 25 : 48 ] And so I invite you to join me in reading along with these verses. John chapter 6. We're beginning at verse 22. And this is the Word of God. On the next day, the crowd that remained on the other side of the sea saw that there had been only one boat there.

And that Jesus had not entered the boat with His disciples. But that His disciples had gone away alone. Other boats from Tiberias came near the place where they had eaten the bread after the Lord had given thanks.

So when the crowd saw that Jesus was not there, nor His disciples, they themselves got into the boats and went to Capernaum seeking Jesus. When they found Him on the other side of the sea, they said to Him, Rabbi, when did you come here?

Jesus answered them, Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking Me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you.

For on Him God the Father has set His seal. Then when they said to Him, What must we do to be doing the works of God? Jesus answered them, This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent.

[ 26 : 58 ] So they said to Him, Then what sign do you do that we may see and believe you? What work do you perform? Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness. As it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat.

Jesus then said to them, Truly, truly, I say to you, It was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to this world.

They said to Him, Sir, give us this bread always. Jesus said to them, I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to Me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in Me shall never thirst.

For I said to you that you have seen Me, and yet you do not believe. All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and whoever comes to Me, I will never cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.

And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that I should lose nothing of all that He has given Me, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in Him should have eternal life.

[ 28 : 03 ] And I will raise Him up on the last day. So the Jews grumbled about Him, because He said, I am the bread that came down from heaven. They said, Is not this Jesus the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?

How does He now say, I have come down from heaven? Jesus answered them, Do not grumble among yourselves. No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him, and I will raise Him up on the last day.

It is written in the prophets, and they will all be taught by God. Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me. Not that anyone has seen the Father, except he who is from God.

He has seen the Father. Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna and the wilderness, and they died.

This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever, and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is My flesh.

[ 29 : 06 ] The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat? So Jesus said to them, Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you.

Whoever feeds of My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise Him up on the last day. For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink. Whoever feeds on My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in Him.

As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever feeds on Me, he also will live because of Me. This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like the bread the fathers ate and died.

Whoever feeds on this bread will live forever. Jesus said these things in the synagogue as He taught at Capernaum. For many of His disciples heard that they said, This is a hard saying, who can listen to it?

But Jesus, knowing in Himself that His disciples were grumbling about this, said to them, Do you take offense at this? Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where He was before? It is the Spirit who gives life.

[ 30 : 11 ] The flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are Spirit and life. But there are some of you who do not believe. For Jesus knew from the beginning who those were who did not believe and who it was who would betray Him.

And He said, This is why I told you that no one can come to Me unless it is granted him by the Father. After this, many of His disciples turned back and no longer walked with Him. So Jesus said to the twelve, Do you want to go away as well?

Simon Peter answered Him, Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. And we have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God.

Jesus answered them, Did I not choose you, the twelve? And yet one of you is a devil. He spoke of Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the twelve, was going to betray Him.

Amen. May God add His blessing to this reading from His Word. A short prayer before we look at these verses in a little more detail. Heavenly Father, we thank You for the gift of Your Word and for every encouragement and challenge that we find in these pages.

[ 31 : 17 ] And we ask this morning for the ministry of Your Holy Spirit as we consider these verses together. Speak powerfully to us, we pray. Comfort us in the knowledge of Your love and provision. Motivate us in our service to You, for without Your involvement, however earnest our work, it will achieve nothing for Your kingdom.

May the words from this humble servant's mouth and the meditations of all our hearts be acceptable in Your sight. For our blessing and for Your glory, we prove. In Jesus' name.

Amen. I'm a man of simple pleasures. When I'm in the supermarket on payday filling my trolley with a month's supplies, I will sometimes spoil myself and buy a Mother's Pride plain loaf.

Is that a local thing? Do you get a Mother's Pride plain loaf here? You do? Nodding, that's good. Ruth and my children, Phoebe and Judah, like Warburton's Toasty, and so the majority of the time we buy Warburton's Toasty.

But for me, nothing beats a fresh plain loaf. Where the bread is soft, and the crusts are hard, and with a few rashers of bacon laid on there, well, that to me is a bit as close to perfection as is possible to reach in this fallen and sinful world.

[ 32 : 26 ] But what of the bread of life? For me, bread is either the mundane contents of a kid's packed lunchbox or it's a payday treat, but for the Jewish community in Jesus' time, their understanding of bread gave it a much more significant place in their religious history and teaching.

In Proverbs 9 and verse 5, we read of the divine wisdom of God saying, Come, eat my food, and drink the wine I have mixed. And that word food, when literally translated from Hebrew, means bread.

And the religious leaders of the time connected that wisdom that is personified in Proverbs 9 with the Torah, the book of Moses, the first five books of our Old Testament. And as a result, they referred to the Torah metaphorically as bread.

But as much a part of Jewish teaching as this was, it was superseded by another. One which the crowd that have followed the Lord in these verses we've just read this morning would have been even more conscious of than normal when we take into account the statement of verse 4 of this chapter back up the page.

It tells us there that the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand. The entire Jewish community were preparing to celebrate their rescue from slavery in Egypt, rejoicing in their leading to the promised land and commemorating the supernatural nourishment that they received between those two events.

[ 33 : 45 ] Nourishment which came in the shape of manna from heaven. Jewish understanding was of a storehouse of this divine food in heaven which had to be opened to feed the Israelites as they were led through the desert.

And which would be opened once again one day in the future when the promised Messiah would come to them. Just as Moses, the first redeemer, called down this bread, so too would the latter redeemer, the holy and anointed Christ of God.

Jesus has just fed over 5,000 people with two fish and five small barley loaves. A multitude of followers have crossed the Sea of Galilee to catch up with him because they have seen the parallels between this miraculous feeding in the wilderness in the book of Exodus and the miraculous feeding of the 5,000.

But the motive behind their pursuit is all wrong. And so Jesus challenges them on it as we see in verse 26. He says, Jesus answered them, Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking me not because you saw signs but because you ate your fill of the loaves.

These people are tactless and grasping. Their emphasis is on their own material gain. The important factor for them is a physical meal which satisfies the pines of hunger in their stomachs for a short while.

[ 35 : 03 ] They have observed Jesus' miraculous provision that opening section from verses 22 to 25 suggests that they have also picked up on a miraculous crossing of the lake from Jesus and they have witnessed then the wonders of his creative power and his authority over the created world.

But they do not see what all of this means. So the Lord leads them. He exhorts them to turn their eyes away from the fleeting benefits of a free meal and on to the lasting proceeds of a right relationship with him.

Beginning at verse 27, he says, Do not work for the food that perishes but for the food that endures to eternal life which the Son of Man will give to you.

Then they said to him, What must we do to be doing the works of God? Notice how their response misses the point that the Lord is making. They are focused on that Torah understanding of bread.

They want to know what they have to do. What work they need to accomplish that will err in God's pleasure and the eternal life that comes with it. They miss what Jesus said in verse 27 about the gift that comes with the Son of Man.

[ 36 : 12 ] So he has to sweep that misconception away and he does so in the next verse when he tells them, This is the work of God that you believe in him who he has sent. And now the penny drops.

Now the connection is made. Now they start to join together what they observed the day before with what Jesus is saying now. And what they do, or when they do, the picnic of yesterday and the proclamation of today make more sense as two parts of one statement.

A statement in which this Rabbi, Jesus, makes his claim to be the Son of Man and applies this title which combines humanity and humility with Old Testament prophecies about rule and authority to himself.

Jesus is claiming to be the Messiah, the anointed and holy one of God. He has opened the heavenly storehouse. He has fed the crowd with bread that he took from it, demonstrating in word and in deed who it is that they walk with along the road to Capernaum.

And contrary to what they expect, the only effort, the only energy they need to expend in order to take hold of every blessing and benefit of a relationship with him is to believe.

[ 37 : 25 ] There are no works. There are no merits that will build up heavenly will. There is only one thing that they need. The currency of life and salvation is faith.



Not that this makes much of an impression on this audience, for what is their immediate response to this magnificent revelation? They are not amazed. They are not humbled. They are not even starstruck. They ask Jesus for a miracle, for a sign.

They ask him to perform for them. On the face of it, it looks as though some people are never happy. But feeding 5,000 with half a packed lunch just isn't good enough for some folk.

Well, let's remember the context for those people at this point. The anointed one of God, promised by God the Father himself, and foretold through the prophecies of the Old Testament, would be a figure even greater than that of Moses.

So if Moses was able to get that heavenly bread bin open and feed the whole nation of Israelite in the desert for a full 40-year period, then surely the Messiah would be capable of even more.

[ 38 : 29 ] Feeding 5,000 men and their wives and their children is impressive. For it's a one-off. And everybody tasted barley bread when they chewed through his provision. It will take more for them to accept such a bold claim as he is making.

It will take manna. This is what first century Judaism expected of the Messiah. They expected the renewal of this particular miracle at his hands.

They expected a permanent supply of bread. But those expectations are tragically worldly. And so they miss the spiritual significance of what Jesus is trying to say.

Now, these people are Jews. They have a religious history and they have heard the metaphors and analogies of their spiritual leaders relating to the Torah and the manna. And when they think of bread in a religious context, it is the wisdom, nourishment, life-sustaining and life-affirming presence of God that come to mind.

But what they don't realise is that the one they are listening to is the true bread from heaven. They are listening to the bread of God who brings all of these same things.

[ 39 : 30 ] He is the Messiah, the last redeemer, the ultimate revealer, whatever name from a whole bundle they choose to use for the anointed one of the Lord. This is who they are in the presence of and this is who is instructing them.

Here is the personification of wisdom. Here is the sustaining presence of God. He is right there. And he is also right here. Verse 35, Jesus says to them, I am the bread of life.

Whoever comes to me shall not hunger and whoever believes in me shall never thirst. Manna from heaven withered and perished.

The people who it sustained also perished. The ceremonial and sacrificial elements of the law of Moses were for a finite time. But the one who all of these things point to will never perish.

And why? Because he is God. This is the first of seven statements that Jesus will make in this gospel account that explicitly reveal aspects of his divine character and personality.

[ 40 : 37 ] All of which incorporate the name that God shared with Moses from the burning bush. You remember Exodus 3 verse 14. God said, I am who I am.

And he said, Say this to the people of Israel. I am has sent me to you. And using these same words to identify himself as the true bread of God, Jesus reveals at the same time that he is God.

The longing of this crowd who don't appreciate the weight and significance of the situation they find themselves in try to twist the messianic mission and compress it down to a fantasy of what he will do for them.

But the bread of life is so much more than they think. So Jesus doesn't give them the sign that they demand. He doesn't indulge them by dancing to their tune because what they want is an experience.

They want something fleeting that is going to impact on their financial or their political situation or both in the here and now. The crowd have been running after Jesus because they want to appoint him as king so that he will overthrow the Romans and abolish their oppressive taxation policies.

- [ 41 : 41 ] Now they want him to provide them with food that will never run out so that they will no longer need to work to feed their families. Their longing for Jesus is because he can satisfy their desires all of which are greedy and selfish and of this earth.

Their curiosity about Jesus is all about what they want. But with this majestic statement Jesus is more concerned about the provision of what they need. the true bread that will nourish their spiritual lives.

The true bread that will bestow life itself. Coming to him satisfies our hunger and our thirst. Not our bodily request for food but our need for God.

Look again at what Jesus says in verse 35. Whoever comes to me shall not hunger and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.

Now this doesn't mean that we only need one nibble and we don't need to think about the Lord ever again. It doesn't mean that we don't have to be feeding from this bread for the rest of our lives both here on earth and beyond.

- [ 42 : 46 ] But what it does mean is that the yawning emptiness of our souls that we carried to him in the first encounter we had with him is filled. Our spiritual hunger is met when we come to Jesus in a way that it never needs to be met again because we will never be so empty again because we have the bread of life that satisfies us.

The 1981 film Excalibur chronicling the saga of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table contains a scene that I often refer to in my own testimony. The scene where an aging and apathetic Arthur is presented with the Holy Grail and after he reluctantly drinks from that chalice he immediately turns to Sir Percival and says I did not know how empty was my soul until it was filled.

For me it's the quote of the film because it refers so perfectly to the approach of everyone and anyone to Jesus. Made aware of our hunger made aware of our thirst made aware of our emptiness for the first time we come and the Lord satisfies us.

Have you come to the Lord or are you hungry this morning? Do you thirst for the grace and forgiveness that only Jesus has for you? Do you have a longing for a relationship with God that the Holy Spirit has awakened within you?

Are you even aware that you have that need today? The answer to any of these is yes then know that Jesus Christ the bread of life satisfies us. Without Jesus the sins we have committed are our own to bear.

- [ 44 : 22 ] The punishment of all of our rebellion against God will land on our heads and we cannot bear that punishment for it is eternal spiritual death. But when we come to Jesus Christ and confess him as Lord and Saviour then we do not bear the penalty of all the things we have done to displease God anymore.

We are washed clean we are sinless in the eyes of the Father because our punishment has been served by Jesus on a cross of wood at Calvary. Revelation 7 and verse 16 describes that multitude of those who have given their lives to Jesus once they are in heaven once their robes have been washed and purified in the blood of the Lamb and what does that verse tell us about them?

They shall hunger no more neither thirst anymore and all because Jesus is the answer to spiritual starvation and to emptiness of the soul Jesus is the bread of life.

Let's think for a few moments on the origin of this bread and who gives it to us and as to this question we again find the misunderstanding of the crowd dreadfully apparent in this passage for in the moment when they demand the next sign from the Lord their own confusion over the origin of the manna means that they missed a point as to where Jesus has come from and ultimately who it is that sends him to us because they attribute the miraculous provision of food in the exodus to the power of Moses himself.

Verse 30 So they said to him what sign do you do that we may see and believe you? What work do you perform? Our fathers ate manna in the wilderness as it is written he gave them bread from heaven to eat.

[ 46 : 06 ] Doesn't it annoy you when people give credit to the wrong person? I must confess that it used to rub me up the wrong way when people in the media would go on and on and on about how Ivan Lendl was the difference between Andy Murray being a Grand Slam tennis champion and just another also that.

Yes, tactics are important yes, preparation is essential but a coach can only do so much. Every time we saw Andy scampering forward to pick up a drop shot or chasing down what seemed like a lost cause into the corners of the court and picking up vital points in the process that wasn't the work of his coach that was the player.

Andy Murray's three major wins are his own achievements nor his coaches. After all, doesn't the Wimbledon men's trophy say on it All England lawn tennis club single handed championship of the world?

Jesus is no different here although his exasperation is a little more righteous than mine as he doesn't want to see the credit for the miraculous feeding of the Israelites in the wilderness going to the wrong person. He says in verse 32 Truly, truly I say to you it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven.

Jesus starts with that strong forceful opening to the sentence truly, truly I say to you just in order to grab their attention. It's like saying hey enough enough with the Moses worship the bread of heaven that your forefathers ate in the desert came from God just as every good and perfect gift comes from God so did this man.

[ 47 : 35 ] And if they knew their scriptures as well as they thought they did they would be aware of Exodus 16 in verse 4 Then the Lord said to Moses Behold, I am about to rain bread from heaven for you.

If they feasted in the Torah with the same energy that they're pursuing another free meal here they would know that Moses didn't aim to take the credit for himself either because when he addresses the multitude four verses later he says The Lord gives you in the evening meat to eat and in the morning bread to the full.

God is the provider God is the source and the donor of the manna God is the origin of the bread that the Israelites ate and that bread was only a foretaste of the true bread of heaven.

Back to John 6 and continuing verse 32 Jesus says My Father gives you the true bread from heaven for the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world just like manna the origin of the true bread is above and the person who gives it to us is God the Father and he gives it to us for a reason the purpose of this supernaturally given bread is the same as the manna that he gives by supernatural means it is given so that we may live because without him we would be lost and without hope we would be spiritually dead because without faith in the Lord Jesus Christ we're not heading for eternity in God's presence without believing that he is God come on the flesh we are headed for destruction Jesus has been sent to give those who would follow him life and the same book of the Bible tells us the motive behind that gift chapter 3 and verse 16 for God so loved the world that he gave his only son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life we have the bread of life because God loves us enough to give it to us not because we deserve it not because we can never earn it but because he loves us and because his love is greater than our wrongdoing through his grace and his mercy and his love comes our life life that we can be confident in our possession of it's a privilege to be with you this morning brothers and sisters but as I stand here

I don't know your circumstances or your struggles I don't know what you're facing or working through right now but if there are any of you this morning who feel lacking in value or are feeling worthless or insignificant or empty then I implore you to be encouraged by these words and this truth I pray that you will see just how special and appreciated and precious that you really are in the eyes of the one who made you the one who knows everything about you and the one who sent his son to die for you for God so loved the world that he sent the bread of life who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world and who is this bread for the use of the word world there might lead us to think that everyone comes under this banner and that everyone will be saved by Christ's sacrifice but that's not an accurate understanding the use of world in John's conversation with the Jews indicates that Jesus' mission applies to others outside of their race that means they cannot count on their one special position as God's own people to save them anymore the lost are the lost whether they're of Jewish heritage or Gentile heritage there will be no distinction and whoever turns to Jesus regardless of background will have the life that he promises the result is that there will be men and women of

[ 51 : 10 ] Israelite ethnicity who will not have eternal life in heaven and there will be others with no knowledge or experience of the synagogue who will come to faith and will be raised to life by the Lord so salvation is open to all backgrounds but is it open to all people what do we read from verse 37 all the father gives me will come to me and whoever comes to me I will never cast out for I have come down from heaven not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me and this is the will of him who sent me that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me but raise it up on the last day and then verse 44 no one can come to me unless the father who sent me draws him and I will raise him up on the last day concept of election can be a controversial doctrine of Christian theology the idea that it's God who chooses in advance who will become Christians and the idea that we don't really have the freedom to choose is the sticking point for many people who shun

Calvinism and we don't have to look too far to find committed and Bible rooted brothers and sisters who believe that such a system is unfair and misrepresents God's love of course if we want to go down the route of fairness then we can always ask who does deserve a place in heaven and their own merit and the answer is that none of us do so if God agrees to apply a system of real fairness for humankind then heaven would be empty of human souls but he doesn't he applies a system of mercy and of grace and Jesus tells us here how it works God draws souls to Christ the Holy Spirit penetrates the darkness of our sinful hearts and awakens our ability to see who Jesus is and then when we experience the truth then our lives are given to him can't really work any other way because outside of Christ we are content in our sin coming to God is never an independently good idea in the hearts and minds of fallen people when we are dead in our transgressions we are like any other lifeless organism incapable of doing anything toward our own rescue and so it must be God who takes the initiative and those that the Father has given to the

Son he will not let go he will keep us and he will protect us and nothing will separate us from his grip truth that inspired the words of the song in Christ alone which affirms that no power of hell and no scheme of man can ever pluck us from his hand and as sure as night follows day he will then raise us up at the last and we will have life everlasting through him this is where our confidence in eternal life comes from not our ability to cling to the scriptures not through our vigour and praise and in prayer but in the strength of the Son of God to keep us in his hand that phrase in verse 37 whoever comes to me I will never cast out emphasises this truth some commentators have recommended an alternative translation of that sentence to say whoever comes to me I will certainly preserve which crystallises this understanding those whom the father has set aside those whom the father has drawn will never be separated from his son and to emphasise the point already made if you're here this morning and you know the Lord then how precious and special does that make you feel because every child of God who has ever been and every child of

God who is yet to come is already known to him but they're not known to us and for this reason we cannot be lackadaisical in our approach to evangelism we can't take these verses as an excuse to sit back and relax and let God draw the elect to his side by supernatural means without making use of the human beings that he has called into partnership for the work of his kingdom that's you and me yes he says here that the father draws those who will believe but he doesn't say that he will do it independently of his church after all did Jesus not also tell us to go and to make disciples of all nations and to teach them to obey everything that he commanded us our role in obedience to God is to bring the good news to those who are lost to present the word of God unblemished to those who need to hear it those who need to hear the words of life whether each individual we speak will come to faith or not is irrelevant to our commission it's not the results that we are judged on it's the activity it's the obedience and how amazing is it to think that God could be using even us to move one of his chosen children closer to the point where they confessed their faith in

Jesus maybe there are some of you here this morning who are not Christians or who have never come to faith in the Lord how does this make you feel do you do you feel excluded because you don't consider yourself to be one of the elect one of God's chosen children could the fact that you're sitting in church today be an indicator that you are being drawn by the Father could the Holy Spirit in fact be working in your heart right now and you maybe don't even know it well what will you do with this bread Jesus says in verse 54 whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life and I will raise him up on the last day and in verse 56 he says whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me and I in him so it seems pretty clear cut what we all must do we have to eat his flesh and we have to drink his blood now before this makes us a little bit squeamish and before we fall into the same trap of the Jews listening to what Jesus is saying let's be clear this is a metaphorical statement for one thing the drinking of blood was forbidden in the Old

[ 56 : 57 ] Testament law and so if Jesus is perfectly adhering to his father's commands then he can't be encouraging vampirism in his followers what the Lord is telling his audience is that they must take Christ to their inmost being to take hold of this gift of everlasting life and glory the word we have translated as feed in these verses is most often used in the context of noisily feeding maybe a modern day equivalent would be munch or chomp but it conveys the sense of eating with enjoyment we did a day of prayer and fasting in the church a while ago and we brought our abstinence to an end together with communion followed by bacon rolls on the second morning and there's nothing quite like the enjoyment of that first bite when you're ravenous it would have been better if it was mother's pride plain bread that the bacon was on but even so there was an awful lot of chomping and munching going on that moment as we ate with enjoyment and delight and satisfied the emptiness as it had grown over the previous day well how do we do this with the

Lord well let's remember what he said in verse 35 where he sets the metaphor in that great I am statement he said whoever comes to me shall not hunger and whoever believes in me shall never thirst Jesus is telling us that our hunger is taken away by coming to him that our thirst is taken away by believing in him this is how we eat until our spiritual hunger is satisfied and how we drink until our spiritual thirst is quenched this is how what we've been called to do with the bread of life to come to him and believe the challenge is now clear for anyone this morning who does not know the Lord what will you do with this bread maybe you're not a Christian but you're being drawn to Christ's side by the Father through the work of the Holy Spirit maybe you're feeling the pull of the Lord maybe coming along Sunday by Sunday is something that you do but you're holding something back and not freely eating of this bread what will you do two responses to this challenge are found towards the end of the passage for there is a crowd who say this is a hard saying who could listen to it and they walk away from Jesus and there is an apostle who says to the Lord you have the words of eternal life which group will you take your place in well for the

Christians among us this morning you have come you have believed you have eaten and you have drunk and you have everlasting life because he will not let you go and if we know these things to be true if we have believed that Jesus is the Holy One of God and whom are the words of eternal life and if we benefited from his accomplishments of the cross and if the Holy Spirit has begun his work in transforming us into the likeness of Jesus then the next step is assuredly to share the words that have been used to such powerful effect in us with others so that those who are trapped in a well of helplessness and hopelessness may experience the liberation from fear and despair and death and hell that can only be found in the Lord Jesus Christ our lives and the mission of our churches locally nationally and globally must be active and deliberate in our intention to see others come to life by making Christ known by making his words known by ensuring that the word of God is available and accessible to as many people as we can so that everyone can hear about

Jesus so that there are no obstacles to preventing souls taking Christ into their inmost being to take hold of the gift of everlasting life and glory so that they may feed on the bread of life sad reality is that for one and a half billion people twenty percent of the world's population they cannot read or hear the word of God in their own language it should break our hearts to know what they are missing the words of eternal life and that should motivate us to act you'll hear more about that this evening when Ruth shares her update well let's consider our response to these challenges this Lord's day and let us act in accordance with what he lays on our hearts amen let's pray together heavenly father we thank you for the grace and the mercy and the love that you have for each one of us and we thank you for your son the bread of life for through him we are cleansed and made perfect in your sight through him our sins are paid for and we look forward to taking our place by your side in heaven because of his atoning sacrifice

Lord all of this was possible like the manna in the wilderness you sent to us that we would no longer be spiritually dead but would have life everlasting father we ask that you would use us to bring this bread to those who even now you're drawing to your side show us how we can contribute to the unlocking of the gift that is your word and the heart languages of the one and a half billion people around the world who cannot yet possess it and we pray these things for the blessing of many and for your grace and glory and the precious name of your son amen we're going to close our service by singing our final psalm psalm number 87 let's worship the lord take this this this nation says god

[ 62 : 43 ] God more than Jacob dwellings all, He lights inside of the gate.

Things glorious are said of Thee, their city of the Lord.

We have a name of Thy dear those that know me well, we are.

Behold in Thy love, and within the land of the sky.

And like my city, O the earth, this man was born then.

[ 63 : 58 ] A little sky of the sky resettled, but not my man.

Was born and he at his old time in such a savage time.

When God of heaven was still found that this man born was there.

There be the tanger, lay and all my whispers in the eye.

Amen. Let's stand to close in prayer. Praise the Lord, all nations. Extol him, all peoples.

[ 65 : 15 ] For greatness is steadfast love toward us, and the faithfulness of the Lord endures forever. And now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, our Heavenly Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us this day and forevermore.

Amen. Amen.