

I Am the Bread of Life

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Date: 18 October 2020

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[0 : 00] So where we're at in the story of Jesus, Jesus is talking to a crowd of people. And as we said last Sunday, according to Jesus, they seem more interested in the signs he is doing, like the feeding of the 5,000, than in the realities that the sign points to.

The signs point to a great and wonderful reality that Jesus has been sent into the world by God the Father and that he is the Son of God, the Messiah, the glorious Son of Man that the prophets foretold.

The signs that Jesus is doing, things like the feeding of the 5,000 and healings, they give evidence that he really can give eternal life to those who believe in him.

But the crowd seems more interested in seeing a spectacular show. They seem more interested in being wowed. We're entertained. And so Jesus told them, we heard last week, not to seek after food that doesn't last, but instead to seek after the food that lasts forever and gives them eternal life.

He tells them that he will give them this food, this lasting food. But what they must first do in order to receive this gift is believe in him.

[1 : 22] Let's remember what the crowd last said to Jesus. John 6, verse 28.

They asked him, What must we do to do the works God requires? And Jesus answered, The work of God or the work that God requires is this, to believe in the one he has sent.

You want to know what God wants you to do? He wants you to believe in the one he has sent, which of course is Jesus. Let's continue on with the conversation in verse 30.

So they asked him, What sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness.

As it is written, he gave them bread from heaven to eat. So the people of the crowd are asking Jesus to do yet another sign.

[2 : 32] Let's remember for a second that the people asking this question are the very same people who were there on the other side of the lake, some of them, and had ate the loaves that Jesus made and had their fill at the feeding of the 5,000.

So this is kind of surprising. Like you guys saw a spectacular miracle, a sign that Jesus did. I mean, that wasn't insignificant.

He made bread and fish multiply from just a boy's lunch, enough to feed over 5,000 people out in the middle of nowhere. And you ate as much as you wanted.

And now you're asking for a sign? A reason to believe? At this point, it's becoming obvious that the people do not really believe in Jesus.

Their question kind of gives that away. Give us a sign. Prove it. Prove that what you're saying is true. Prove it.

[3 : 42] Prove it. Prove it. Prove it. Prove it. Prove it. Prove it. Prove it.

Prove it. Prove it. Prove it.

Prove it. Prove it. Prove it. by bringing this up. But do you remember how that story went? Back in Exodus, we read that the Israelites were slaves in Egypt, and they were terribly treated.

And God set them free, and he led them out of Egypt through Moses. Within days of crossing the Red Sea on dry land, the people began to grumble and complain and accuse Moses and even the Lord himself of bringing them all the way out here into the wilderness so that they would die of starvation.

And God, in his mercy, and because he made a promise, in his grace, he gave them food to eat.

[4 : 59] Out in the middle of nowhere, he gave them bread from heaven. Manna appeared on the ground in the morning, and God fed the Israelites, the whole nation, with this manna for 40 years

while they wandered.

That in itself is truly amazing. I mean, can you imagine that? An entire nation of people, men, women, and children, kept alive for 40 years, out in the middle of nowhere as they move here and there by a bread-like substance that appears on the ground six days a week.

But why does the crowd bring this up? It was a truly miraculous thing, but are they telling Jesus that this is the kind of miracle that they expect him to do before they will believe him?

Or perhaps are they saying that feeding 5,000 people one meal, well, that's nothing compared to feeding a whole nation for 40 years.

Let's see that. Are they suggesting that the bread that Jesus made was somehow inferior, earthly bread, compared to this bread from heaven that God gave the Israelites long ago?

[6 : 19] Are they making a comparison between Moses and Jesus? Like, we know that Moses was sent from God because look at the amazing sign, the miracle of bread from heaven that God did to prove it.

Whatever the crowd is thinking, to be honest, I'm not exactly sure, Jesus makes it crystal clear that it wasn't Moses who gave the Israelites the bread from heaven.

Jesus said to them, very truly I tell you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven.

Whether the people were mistaken or perhaps it just had too much focus on Moses, Jesus sets them straight. He makes it clear. Moses didn't do that great work.

of providing for the people with bread from heaven. It's God who deserves the credit. In fact, Jesus is even more specific than that.

[7 : 28] He says, it was my Father. Again, he uses that language. The Lord, the one who did that great miracle in the wilderness long ago, is my Father.

He says, it's my Father. It's my Father. It's my Father. It's my Father. And Jesus goes on to say even more. He doesn't say a lot of words in this statement, but there's so much said here.

Notice the shift in time. He says that it's not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but my Father.

My Father, my Father, back in the past, was the one who gave you the bread from heaven, the manna. But he also shifts things to the present. It is my Father who gives.

Present tense, right now. My Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. That word true says a lot.

[8 : 37] It says that the bread that the Israelites had back in the wilderness was not the fullest way that God has chosen to provide for his people. There's a greater bread from heaven.

A true bread from heaven. If you were here last Sunday, you'll remember Jesus has already been talking in terms of food that spoils. And food that lasts.

And we should keep that in mind here. Do you remember how things worked with the manna back in the Old Testament story? How long did the manna last for? One day.

Not very long. Some people tried to keep it overnight. And they found that in the morning it was full of maggots and it smelled. Except on Saturdays when God miraculously made it last for an extra day so they didn't have to go out and do work on the Sabbath.

It's like Jesus is saying that bread that they received in the wilderness it was bread from heaven. It was bread provided by God, my Father.

[9 : 50] But now, just as he gave you that perishable bread long ago, he is now giving you the true bread from heaven.

Bread which never spoils and lasts forever. He goes on in verse 33, for the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.

There is a special bread of God. A true bread which comes down from heaven and Jesus says, gives life to the world. And so the crowd says this, Sir, they said, always give us this bread.

They outright ask Jesus to give them the bread. But even as they do it, it seems that they don't really understand what Jesus is talking about.

They seem to get that Jesus is talking about better bread than they ate on the other side of the lake. They even seem to get that Jesus is talking about better bread than the Israelites had the manna long ago in the wilderness.

[11 : 10] So, of course, whatever this bread is, it sounds good. We want it. Give us this bread. But it seems as though they're still thinking of literal bread.

Actual bread. Notice the word always. Always give us this bread. If there's better bread, which comes from heaven, then give us this bread from now on.

Always. We want to receive this bread from you, not just once, but again and again, repeatedly. From now on.

And I'm not sure exactly what some of them were thinking, but, you know, almost the sense we get, maybe, is that they're asking Jesus to make the feeding of the 5,000 a daily thing, but with this true and better bread and not with that ordinary stuff that we had yesterday on the other side of the lake. Finally, Jesus looks them in the eye and he makes it crystal clear. No. No. No. You misunderstand. I am the bread of life.

[12:25] Whoever comes to me will never hunger and whoever believes in me will never thirst. I, myself, am the bread of life.

The bread I'm talking about is not like the manna in the wilderness. It's not like the loaves that I made yesterday across the lake. It's not the kind of bread that you eat and then get hungry and then you eat some more and then you get hungry again and then you have to eat some more of.

I, myself, am the bread of life. Death, says Jesus. And whoever comes to me will never hunger. And whoever believes in me will never thirst.

In the original language, there's a, Jesus, you can't see it in English. Will never thirst, ever. Just going to throw that in. Permanent.

I'm the one. I am the true provision of God from heaven and have come down from heaven so that, in a sense, you might not perish in the wilderness as you deserve to, but so that you might live, so that you might receive life, not just for a few more days like you get when you had the bread I made yesterday, but so that you might receive life forever.

[13:57] a permanent end to your hunger, never hunger again and to your thirst. This is not a promise to meet the needs of our stomach and to keep us so well fed that we never feel our stomachs growl again.

This is a promise to meet the deepest needs of our soul and to provide us with eternal life and forgiveness instead of the death and punishment we deserve for the sins we've committed against God.

So what do we do to eat this bread that God has provided? The bread is a person. You can't eat a person or you shouldn't. What do we need to do to receive this good gift of God?

Jesus drops the metaphor for a moment and he just says very plainly what we need to do to receive him as our bread of life. He says whoever comes to me will never go hungry and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.

It's nothing new. It's nothing spectacular. It's very simple. Come to me he says. Believe in me. You want God's special provision from heaven like they had back in the wilderness long ago?

[15:29] I'm here. Come to me. Believe the words that I'm saying and you'll see that what your soul truly needs will be provided for forever.

forever. Jesus has much more to say to the crowd but we're going to look at what he continues to say next Sunday.

For this morning we simply want to focus on these precious words of Jesus. I am the bread of life. In a few minutes we're going to partake together of the Lord's table and as we move towards this table this thing that Jesus said I am the bread of life it gives special meaning to what we're about to do.

It's no coincidence that Jesus chose on the night of his betrayal to break bread and hand it out. he said that night to his disciples this is my body given for you take and eat.

In a similar manner he took a cup and he said this is my blood of the covenant which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

[16:55] the meal was deeply symbolic. The bread and the cup represented how the very next day Jesus would give himself as a sacrifice for the life of the world.

His body would come to hang on that Roman cross and his blood would be poured out from the scourging and from the nails.

and all of this a gift of love to save us from death from everlasting punishment that we all deserve because of our many sins against God.

And so eating from this table as we're going to do in a few minutes here is no small thing. Eating from it is deeply symbolic. Eating that bread means that we receive the sacrifice of Jesus.

It means that we believe that he is our bread of life. The one God has provided so that we might have life and not die.

[18 : 07] It means that we believe he died on the cross for us. In the same way drinking from the cup means that that we we take the forgiveness of God which his blood secured.

We take it unto ourselves. We receive it. It's a very outward and tangible thing we do with the bread and the cup in our hands and yet when we eat and drink it it represents something that we have done on the inside.

That we have come to Jesus and that we really do believe in him. That he is that special provision of God that we need for life.

So in just a couple of minutes we're going to serve the bread and the cup and if you have come to Jesus and if you believe in him I want to invite you to join and partake with us as we celebrate our bread of life.

broken for us. I just want to give a couple words of instruction. In just a minute we're going to have a few minutes in which we can quietly reflect and pray.

[19 : 30] There will be some soft music playing in the background. It's a chance for you to confess your sins to God quietly. It's a chance for you to talk to him about the one that he has provided for you.

and when the music is finished Charles is going to come and serve us the bread. When he comes with the bread please hold your hands open like this if you wish to participate and he's going to drop it into your hands.

Next he'll serve the cup and when he comes with the cup you'll notice that the cups have been spaced apart in the tray and just ask that you take care to touch only the cup that you are taking.

Once we've all received the bread and the cup just ask that you would hold on to both of those until everyone has been served and then I'm going to lead us in a prayer of thanks and we'll eat and drink together and remember the death of our Lord.

being the ■■■■■■■■ and also having Thank you.

[21 : 27] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[23 : 57] Thank you.

Thank you.