

AM John 6:22-59 The Bread of Life

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[0 : 00] Our first reading this morning is taken from Exodus chapter 16 verses 11 to 20. And that's page 82 of the Church Bibles.

So Exodus chapter 16 verses 11 to 20.

And the Lord said to Moses, I have heard the grumbling of the people of Israel. Say to them, at twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread.

Then you shall know that I am the Lord your God. In the evening quail came up and covered the camp, and in the morning dew lay around the camp.

And when the dew had gone up, there was in the face of the wilderness a fine flake-like thing, fine as frost on the ground. When the people of Israel saw it, they said to one another, what is it?

[1 : 11] For they did not know what it was. And Moses said to them, it is the bread that the Lord has given you to eat. This is what the Lord has commanded. Gather of it each one of you as much as he can eat.

You shall each take an omer according to the number of persons that each of you has in the tent. And the people of Israel did so.

They gathered some more, some less. But when they measured it with an omer, whoever gathered much had nothing left over, and whoever gathered little had no lack.

Each of them gathered as much as he could eat. And Moses said to them, let no one leave any of it over till the morning. But they did not listen to Moses.

Some left part of it till the morning. And it bred worms and stank. And Moses was angry with them. Morning by morning they gathered it, each as much as he could eat.

[2 : 16] But when the sun grew hot, it melted. And our second reading is from John chapter 6, verses 22 to 59.

That is page 1075 of the Church Bibles. So John chapter 6, verses 22 to 59.

This is the day after Jesus performed the miracle of feeding the 5,000. 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?

[3 : 36] Jesus had 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 you. For on him God the Father has set to seal.

Then they said to him, What must we do to be doing the works of God? Jesus had answered them, This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.

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 bread, the true bread from heaven.

[4 : 44] For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the 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. But I said to you that you have seen me, and yet do not believe.

And 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. For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, 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, It is not this Jesus. They said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, his father and mother we know?

[5 : 55] How does he now say, I have come down from heaven? Jesus had answered them, Do not grumble amongst 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 his eternal life, I am the bread of life.

Your fathers ate the manna in 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, sorry, 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.

[7 : 08] 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 on 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 in Capernaum.

And thanks be to God, for the reading of his holy word, and his name be the glory and praise. Amen. Let's pray.

[8 : 25] Lord, we thank you for the gift of your scriptures, and the opportunity to study them together. May the words of my mouth, and the thoughts of our hearts, glorify your name forever.

As we ask you, Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. Amen. The last time I had the pleasure of preaching here, in both the morning and evening services, I referred to statements where Jesus said, I am.

And I said we'd go back to look at those statements that he had made. And since we'd met the, or reached the midpoint of Galatians, I thought this would be a good time to take a break, and go back, and look at some of those sayings.

One of the sayings I'd used was that Jesus, had said that, I am the bread of life. And that was the first of the seven, I am sayings, which John, accredited to Jesus.

And these statements have a clear message for us today, and we'll look at Jesus' teachings, in the time of the first century hearers, and the implications for them, and for us.

[9 : 49] It was a long reading this morning, but Jesus describes himself as, the bread of life, which meets our every need. And the, as well as meeting our every need, it also brings to us, eternal life.

But throughout the discourse, the Jews, are unaccepting of Jesus, having come from heaven, and seek signs of his divinity. But, Jesus sees, their true heart, that they're only interested, in the earthly value of these signs, which they are demanding.

Rather, Jesus desires to show them their mistake, encourage them, to look, heavenwards, for the answers, that they are seeking.

To look at the spiritual element, of what they'd seen, and what they'd heard, in his teachings. So we shall look, at the two strands in tandem, highlighting, Jesus' message of salvation, and then look at the implications, for our lives today.

As I say, the teaching has as much significance, for us today, as it had, for the hearers, in the first century AD. The crowd had been fed, the previous day, excuse me, and realising that, Jesus had departed, sometime, after the disciples' boat, had set sail, for the other shore, they decided, to go and seek him.

[11 : 24] And in verse 26, Jesus quickly identifies, the hearts of the crowd, that they seek him, for all the wrong reasons. They seek him, because, he fed them the previous day, and they wished another meal.

They once more, were hungry. They came asking questions, trivial questions, about, how he'd got back, to Capernaum. But he ignores their questioning, and rather, rebukes them, for, their complete lack, of faith.

Interested, in meeting only, their physical needs, and missing, the point, of his signs, and his teachings. In verses 28, and 29, we see that, the Jews, misunderstood, Jesus' teachings.

As they ask, what must we do? And what, must they perform? They are, in their old, human ways, of gaining, the rewards, by their own endeavours.

And we've seen that, throughout Galatians. That, the false teachers, wanted, to put things, on top of what, was already, in the gospel.

[12 : 39] That they would need to do, human acts, to get true salvation. There is no sensitivity, in Jesus' hearers, to the fact, that, eternal life, was a gift, from God, through, his son, Jesus Christ.

But Jesus, sets them straight. He says, it is the work of God. It is not their work, it is the work of God. And what God, requires of us, is faith.

This is not a faith, that is abstract, that is pie in the sky, but, is in a person, before them, that God has sent.

And this reflects, the teachings, which the Jews, would have known, from the Old Testament. In Malachi 3, 1 for example, the prophet writes, Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare, the way before me.

And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come, to his temple. And the messenger, of the covenant, in whom you delight. Behold, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. The message of Jesus, should not be, new to the Jews, and especially, to the religious leaders.

[13 : 53] Jesus was proclaimed, by the prophets, and he now, had arrived. He will announce, and fulfill God's plan, for the deliverance, of his people.

As we look at, the next section, of this course, verse 30 to 40, we see, Jesus as the bread of life. And we need to be aware, of the Jewish expectation, that when the Messiah came, that he would repeat, the signs, that Moses had done, in the wilderness.

That, the Messiah, would recall, the manner, that came from heaven. Jews, demanded, miraculous signs, expecting, the like of the manna, to be produced.

If this was the Messiah, that was truly sent, from God. Jesus, however, had already, produced signs, which the Jews, and their earthly thoughts, had missed.

He had already, declared to them, in John 2, how that, if they destroyed, this temple, that in three days, that he would raise it up.

[15 : 08] The Jews, of course, responded, it had taken 46 years, to build the temple, and questioned, how he would raise it, in three days. Jesus, had been teaching, in the temple, of course, at Jerusalem, when he had made, this statement.

But he had made, this statement, about his earthly body. But his Jewish audience, in Jerusalem, were like his hearers, in Capernaum, and focused, entirely, on the earthly solution, that they seen before them.

The temple itself, not Jesus' body. But Jesus, immediately, focuses, sorry, but Jesus, immediately, here, focus, on their earthly views.

They await another act, that Moses, given the manna, to the people. Not once, and not simply, to 5,000, but to a nation, under an ongoing basis.

However, in verse 32, Jesus, highlight the distortion, in the crowd's emphasis, on focusing, too much, on Moses, under the little, and too little, in God's actions.

[16 : 18] And Jesus, is clear, that manna, was not Moses' gifts, from God. After all, in Exodus, as we read, in Exodus 12, I have heard, the grumbling, of the people of Israel, say to them, at twilight, you shall eat meat, and in the morning, you shall be filled, with bread.

Then you shall know, that I am the Lord, your God. God was the ultimate, supplier of the bread, from heaven. He was the ultimate, supplier of the manna.

It was not, Moses, it was not, the work of man. But now, God, provides through Jesus, a bread, that is not like the manna, it is the true bread of life.

It will not spoil, it will not turn into worms, as the manna did. And unlike, the manna, which needed to be collected daily, because people would again hunger, the true bread of life, will fulfill us, and cease, our hunger, for fulfillment, for satisfaction.

This seems too, good to be true, but of course, the crowd desires, such a feast, saying, Sir, give us, this feast, always.

[17 : 39] And in verse 35, Jesus declares, for the first time, that he is, the bread of life. And he goes on, to repeat that, a further twice, in verses 48, and 51. His I am statement, is an emphatic, statement, of his divinity, and his links, with God.

God says to Moses, in Exodus 3, when Moses asks, who shall I say, to the people, who has sent me, who will I say, sent me to you?

And God says to Moses, I am who I am. And he said, say this to the people of Israel, I am has sent me to you. So when Jesus states, I am the bread of life, I am the way, the truth, and the life, he is making divine reference, to himself.

Jesus here links himself, with the heavenly father, and that whoever comes to him, will be satisfied. Those like the crowd, who reject Jesus, as a Christ, will continue to hunger, and thirst, and will die, just like the Israelites, in the wilderness, who consumed the manna.

Manna was an earthly bread, it was not a spiritual bread, that gave life forever. It was temporary, and the Jews, and the wilderness, still died, in their time.

[19 : 05] However, the crowds only see, the material element, of these events. They see only a physical man, a potential king, not the son of God.

They see the bread, and the power, but not its true significance. Verse 38 to 40, reminds us, that Jesus was not, on his own journey.

He was not, doing this for his own merit, but to do the will, of his father. Jesus came, not to, please himself, but to do, what God desired.

It was his heavenly father, that sent him, for a purpose. He came down, from heaven, to specifically, do the will, of his father. An image, that is repeated, several times, in the chapter.

In keeping, in the will of the father, he will ensure, that he loses, none, whom his father, gives to him. And he will raise him, in the last day. Of course, this is so odd, with the, teaching of the, Jewish, community.

[20 : 12] And, the Jews, start to grumble, at his claim, of coming from heaven. The question is, highlighting, that, they knew his roots, they knew his family, or, as we might say, in the west of Scotland, I can his father.

How then, can he claim, to be from heaven? But of course, they speak in ignorance, and they know not, his true identity. We have the gift of, scripture, that tells us, the full story of Christ, that has been imparted, to them, bit by bit.

So they do not know, his true identity. In verse 43, Jesus challenges, their grumbling, and repeats, verse 37, that all, who come through him, through the, father's grace, through his mercy, it is the work of God, to draw us close to him.

It is Holy Spirit, which moves within us, to soften our hearts, that we may be accepting, of his son. We have seen in Galatians, the Jews think, they come, or can come, to God, by their own volition, by their own merits.

Jesus however, assures us, of the impossibility, of this. It is God, the father, who draws us. He draws us in, through his grace, through his Holy Spirit.

[21 : 41] Jesus here, only, reminds us, for a third time, that he will raise, his people up, on the last day. Leading to Jesus, making, an emphatic statement, that stands alone, in verse 48, I am the bread of life.

Jesus allows, the statement, to stand, with no further, evidence, simply, I am the bread of life. If the teachings, of Jesus, had caused, grumbings to date, they were about, to cause, almost apoplexy.

As he goes further, with his metaphor, of being the bread of life. Jesus points out, that, the manna, had its limitations. It was food for the body, and no more.

Those who ate it, still died. Jesus now, offers something greater, in verse 50. Bread, that brings life, which brings an end, to death.

Anyone, who takes of it, will have, life eternal. A quality, and quantity, of life, quality, and quantity, of life, that is never ending.

[22 : 52] So you can imagine, if you're given that offer, most folk are going to say, yes please, give us it now. In verse 50, Jesus introduces, the twist.

The eating of his flesh, an image that may make, us feel uncomfortable, at best, but possibly reviled, and possibly reviled, but for the first century Jew, it would be abhorrent.

And in verse 53, when reference to, the drinking of his blood, is introduced, it would have been too much, far too much, for his Jewish listeners.

This was completely against, the Mosaic law. The law forbid, Jews to drink blood, or to even meat, to eat meat, which still contained blood in it.

Again, we see purely, immediate, and the physical view, of Jesus' hearers. As they take the literal intent, of his word. But if you use the message, but if you use as a metaphor, what other metaphors, were similar, and were familiar, to first century Jews?

[24 : 02] In the sense of, the Jews have, heard Jesus state, the giving of his body, and eating of his flesh.

And they take it literal. Yet, within Jewish teachings, there is a clear reference, to the ingestion, of food. To the ingestion of knowledge, to the eating, as a metaphor.

The metaphor, of eating and drinking, was common amongst Jews. It pointed, to taking, within one's, innermost being. Of internalizing, and absorbing, wisdom, and knowledge, into their lives.

This is most clearly seen, in the book of Proverbs. A book, the religious Jews, would have been, clearly familiar with. In Proverbs 9, this metaphor, of eating, is clear.

The idea, that we internalize, knowledge, we read, that wisdom, has built her house, prepared her banquet, and she has sent out, her messengers, to declare, in verses 5 and 6.

[25 : 13] Come eat of my bread, and drink of the wine, I have mixed. Leave your simple ways, and live, and walk, in the way of insight. So instead, of a literal eating, of his flesh, and drinking, of his blood, Jesus is pointing, to the sacrifice, he will make, for his people, those given to him, by the work, of his father.

Jesus is referring, to the gift, of his body, that he will give, up to be broken, on the cross, at Calvary. Of his blood, which he will shed, for the forgiveness, of our sins.

And Jesus will raise, up, the believers, in the last day. He announces, to his hearers, that those, who believe in him, and his teachings, that those, who internalise, these beliefs, into their lives, will have eternal life.

They will live, through him, and he will live, in them, forever. And bring them, home to God, our heavenly father. This however, is not a message, that lies in the past, whose relevance, ended, some 2000 years ago, as Jesus spoke, to the crowds.

Or, spoke in the synagogue. But an important part, in our lives also. And our response, determines, our route in life. The message is clear, and it's repeated, several times.

[26 : 40] So we can't miss it. First in verse 35, Jesus states, I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me, shall not hunger. And whoever believes in me, shall never thirst.

For the Christian, he is our everything. He is central, to our salvation, and the example, of how we should, lead our lives. He provides, all that we need, both physically, and spiritually.

That we should not, require anything else, but him. He sustains us, he upholds us, and he will guide us, in life, through his Holy Spirit.

For those, who do not, have a personal relationship, with him, Jesus waits, for you to see him, as the bread of life. For you to accept, that he is, your only route, to salvation, to a life, and a personal relationship, with God.

In life, it is easy, to have our own gods, with which, we can meet our needs. It can be the following, of the British, and Irish lines. It can be the following, of the Glasgow Rangers, or Dumfries perhaps, Queen of the South.

[27 : 50] Or, being part, of another group. It can be success at work, gaining promotion, having a nice car, or it can be, seeking fame, and fortune.

But do any of them, really satisfy? Do any of them, really satisfy? I remember, starting my career, in residential childcare, feeling frustrated, about achieving, my work goals.

And I thought, well, if I get a promotion, then that's going to help, because that will give me, a bit more power, and it will help me, do more things. I gained promotion, and thought, now, I was a senior, I would have the power, to meet my goals, bring about the changes, that I wanted.

But after a time, realised, little had changed. But once more, was frustrated, and thought, if I just got one more promotion, that takes me higher up the chain, it gives me more influence, I can achieve more.

What I quickly learned, was each time, that I get a promotion, a little would change, and then the same frustrations, would arrive. And eventually, I became a unit manager, but I realised, my power was still limited, and promotions, could bring me, could not bring me, the satisfaction, that I desired.

[29 : 17] And I'm sure, it is the same for gods, which you have chosen, instead of Jesus. They bring fleeting pleasure, and enjoyment, but it fades.

Fast cars, slow with age, and you won't surpass them. Sports teams, are only as good, as their last season, or their last game, if we look at the British Lions. As part of you, the shine from our false gods, fade, but not Jesus Christ.

He is the bread of life, that satisfies, he is the same today, he is the same yesterday, and he will be the same, in the future. He is unchanging. As part of humanity, we are responsible, in our own fallen, and sinful nature, for our decisions, to follow, earthly ways of power, wealth, and position, which can vanish, in an instant.

But ever since man, first sinned against God, ever since Adam, obeyed, disobeyed, that one commandment, God has made, his redemptive plan, for man, clear, and will fulfill it.

Nothing shall stand, in its way. Paul, in Romans 8, 38 and 39, writes, for I am sure, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else, in all creation, will be able to separate us, from the love of God, in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

[30 : 59] Nothing seen, or unseen, this world, or the supernatural, will disrupt, God's plan, for our salvation. God does not require, that we pile up merits, to obtain a heavenly credit.

Rather, God, will, is simple for us, to have faith, to believe, in the Son, to believe in his Son, that he sent, as our Saviour.

In verse 40, Jesus states it simply, for this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks, on the Son, and believes in him, should have eternal life, and I will raise him up, on the last day.

Here is the reiteration, of Jesus' earlier teachings, in the Gospel, in John 3, 16 and 18, for God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him, should not perish, but have eternal life.

For God did not send his Son, into the world, to condemn it, to condemn the world, but in order the world, might be saved, through him. Whoever believes in him, is not condemned, but whoever does not believe, is condemned already, because he has not believed, in the name, of the only Son of God.

[32 : 20] Jesus waits for you, to ask him, into your life, a life that will be, for eternity, or you can continue, with fleeting pleasures, that never fulfill, your search, for satisfaction.

But rather, in me preaching, Jesus' words say it, better than I ever can. To go back to John 3, for God did not send, his Son into the world, to condemn the world, but in order, that the world, might be saved through him.

Whoever believes in him, is not condemned, condemned, but whoever does not believe, is condemned already, because he does not believe, in the name, of the only Son of God.

Let's pray. Father, we thank you, for the gift, of your Son, that he is, the bread of life, that he nourishes us, spiritually, he fulfills, our every need, and most importantly, intercedes for us, before you.

For those of us, who know, that experience, we give you thanks, and praise. For those questioning, who Jesus really is, we ask that you, pour out your grace, upon their heart, that your Holy Spirit, moves within them, and that they come, to see, your Son, as their Saviour, their way, to fulfilment.

[34 : 10] These things, we ask through Jesus Christ, our Lord, and our Saviour. Amen. Let's close our worship, this morning, with Psalm 78, from St.

Sam's, so it's Psalm 78, verses 18 to 34, and it's page 102. In the desert, God, they challenged, can he satisfy our taste?

When he struck the rock, it opened, down the crags, the waters raced. Now our thirst is satisfied, can he food for us provide?

from St. Psalms, Psalm number 78, verses 18 to 34. Thank you for. St.

our Moss, can he novels? Christ, can he have proof for us? Jesus Christ, you're born in St. Twins in Amen, since constantly working. By the Ilaman■■■, you grow up as the earth, but Jesus Christ, can he come.

[36 : 22] May he sum to the earth not to meine Babies of Aahle, worshiping God. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, go with us all. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

[40 : 57] Amen.