

"I am the bread of life"

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[0:00] That one is mine.

Let us pray. Open our ears, O Lord, to hear your word and know your voice.

! Speak to our hearts that we may see you as you are. ! The bread of life, to hear your word and know your voice. The bread of life that comes down from heaven. That we may eat and believe and partake in that eternal life you come to bring.

In Jesus' name, Amen. I invite you to open your Bibles. If you have your own Bible, open to John chapter 6. We're continuing in verse 35.

You can open your pew Bible. It's on page 1060 of your pew Bible. Page 1060. We continue this morning in John's Gospel.

[1:05] We've been looking at it since last week. And we're looking at, and in fact, we've been looking at it for two weeks now. And we've been looking at the same story, really, haven't we? It's been the same story both in Mark and then continuing in John last week.

And it's the extended look at the miracle of the five loaves and the two fishes. And then the ongoing conversation and discussion in John chapter 6 with the crowd that is following after Jesus after he had performed this miracle.

And if you join us for adult Sunday school this morning, or you've been joining us the last few weeks as we've been looking at the sacraments, you would remember that we said the sacrament, a sacrament is an outward and visible sign of an inward and invisible truth that is being signified.

And I can't help but see something sort of similar in John 6 here with this crowd. The problem with the crowd as they followed Jesus was that they couldn't see beyond the sign.

Jesus has performed, this is the word that John actually uses for miracles in his gospel, signs. And they've seen the sign that Jesus had done, the feeding of thousands of people with five loaves of bread and two little fishes.

[2:36] They see Jesus, the Jesus of their mind, and they've seen the sign he has done. And in some ways, others have seen, even with the disciples, they've seen Jesus walk on water.

They've seen the sign that Jesus will taught with authority and heal the sick. The signs are evident. And yet they are blinded to the one whom the signs are pointing to.

And that seems to be the tension here in John 6. They are blinded to the truth of who Jesus really is. The one who came from God, sent from heaven to give life to the world.

They see a king to rally around to fight their Roman overlords. But they're blinded to the fact that before them is the king of kings. The one who brings deliverance to mankind's greatest oppression. We know the crowd is blinded to who Jesus truly is. And as we saw last week, and again in verse 36 today, they refused to hear and believe what Jesus was saying about himself.

[3:52] They sought him so they could have their bellies filled with food. But Jesus assured them that he could satisfy an even deeper hunger that they have, that any earthly food can satisfy.

But tragically, they were looking for a Jesus that they could fashion into their own image. A pocket-sized Jesus they can take out to grant wishes when they want, and do tricks whenever they wish.

They want to be provided, they want to be provided for like their forefathers in the wilderness. And like their forefathers in the wilderness, they saw the signs.

But they refused to see the thin, the one that the signs signified. They refused to see that the one who stands before them is God incarnate.

They do not recognize their Lord and God. The one who brought them from slavery in Egypt, the one who sustained them with manna and quail in the wilderness, and with water from the rock, the true bread from heaven, now come down to give life to the world, stands before them.

[5:07] And they don't see him. In verse 34, asking the right questions, but unable to see the answer before them, they say to Jesus, Sir, give us this bread always.

That's the right question. But the wrong motives behind their question, they're asking for physical bread, whereas Jesus gives himself a better kind of bread to them.

Jesus answers them in verse 35, I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.

Now we need to pay close attention to the wording in verse 35. Note there that it says, Whoever comes, whoever comes, not whoever eats.

Whoever comes shall not hunger. And it is whoever believes, not whoever drinks, but whoever believes that shall never thirst. And here is the metaphor.

[6:18] To come to Jesus is to eat. That's really what Jesus is saying. When he uses, later on we'll see, he'll be more emphatic in the language. You have to eat my flesh, and drink my blood.

But what he means by that, is to come. To come is to eat. To come to Jesus is to eat of him. To believe in Jesus is to drink.

But they could not see that. They needed faith. Because faith is always needed. From all of us. Of all of us. Faith is needed to apprehend Jesus.

That's why even as you think of this passage, and naturally, I'm sure as you read John 6, naturally you make the connection with the eating and drinking we will partake of at the Lord's table.

And you're right to do so. But you must remember how you're invited to come to the table. Look not merely at the signs.

[7:25] Place not your hope in the bread and the wine. They are significant. They are. But they're only significant because of the person whom they signify.

You are invited to come and feed on him in your hearts by faith. By faith with thanksgiving.

Only those who come and believe in this manner can have eternal life. The eternal life that he gives. They will keep on coming and feeding on him.

Hearing the words of invitation of God to his people are those who have and continue to have eternal life. That's the same invitation that God gives in the Old Testament to his people through the prophet Isaiah.

In Isaiah 55 verse 1. Come, God says. Everyone with us. Come. Come to the waters. Ye who has no money.

[8:28] Come. Buy. And eat. Come. Buy wine and milk. Without money. Without price. And just so you know, anyone and everyone may come.

Anyone and everyone may come. But only those who come without money or price will be received. Perhaps you come thinking you can buy your way in.

You should know. You should know this morning that the only currency that works in God's economy is the merit of Christ Jesus on the cross. Only faith in Christ's finished work and trusting in that, only that, gives life.

The eternal life that is spoken of here. And so look at the type of life he gives in verse 40. Jesus says, 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. That's the promise. And it's interesting that Jesus repeats that phrase again, even in this, in these passages.

[9:54] I will raise him up on the last day. There's another wonderful consolation in eternal life. That is it.

That's the consolation. That your ongoing participation in this life, this new life that Christ has invited you to and brought you into, your ongoing participation in this life that he gives is not dependent on your ability.

Isn't that a wonderful consolation? And some churches teach that God gives you an entrance. God gives you an entrance. You can come.

You get a ticket to enter. But you must then work hard for your keep. As if we're sharecroppers. And God is an unmerciful landlord looking for any ways to kick us out.

That's not what's in view here. When you come, he welcomes you. And then he sustains you. And holds you fast.

[11:08] You see it in those words that Jesus says concerning his father's will. Jesus says, assures us of his father's will. He says, I should lose nothing.

of all that he has given me. But raise it up on the last day. That's what Jesus says. The father has given a people to the son. And the promise that you will come to him in faith will be preserved in faith.

On the basis of the son's perfect obedience. not on the basis of your own fickle and faulting faithfulness.

Is this not the greatest of all good news? If you think about it. That even as I stumble and imperfectly love my savior and my redeemer, I am still yet assured that based on his perfect love and redemption of me, I am secure.

So then, when the accuser comes, you know who the accuser is, right? Satan. That's what that word means. Satan, accuser. When he comes to press you and keep you bowed down beneath your load of sin, when, as John Newton puts it, you find all around war without and fears within, still you can come to Jesus for rest because he is your shield and hiding place against Satan's accusations.

[12:53] You can face his fierce accusation by saying to him, Christ has died for my sins. past, present, and future.

And what's more, you can say to Satan that now, even now, Jesus sits with the Father as my perfect advocate.

Do you know what the word advocate means? It means defense attorney, a defense lawyer. And so you can say to Satan, accuse me all you want.

I have a defender who never loses a case. And in him, I am secure. That's Paul, St. Paul writes of that same assurance in Romans 8.

This assurance that is ours in Christ. He says it in Romans 8. who shall bring any charge against God's elect. It is God who justifies.

[14:05] Who is it to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died. More than that, he is the one who was raised. And he is the one who is at the right hand of God.

What is he doing there at the right hand of God? Interceding. Interceding for you and me. Jesus, brothers and sisters, Jesus is sufficient.

He is all you need. He is all you could ever want. But a hardened heart and an unbelieving heart cannot see Jesus as he truly is.

Also, a heart that looks away from the sufficient Christ, a heart that looks away from the sufficient Christ, and is captivated by the trinkets that the world offers, such a heart will always be prone to feeding on that which cannot satisfy.

And we must confess sometimes we're there. We look at the world's trinkets. We're fixing our eyes on Jesus, who alone can satisfy. And I think that's a tragic situation in verse 41.

[15:27] Jesus told them these words of consolation and good news, these words of life concerning himself. But yet the Jews grumbled about him.

They grumbled because he said, I am the bread of life that came down from heaven. And they said to themselves, it's not this Jesus, the son of Joseph whose father and mother we know.

How does he now say, I have come down from heaven? You can imagine, some of them knew Jesus. This is still Galilee. And Jesus grew up in this area, Nazareth.

And so some of them knew Jesus, Jesus the carpenter's son. and they see him as such with the eyes of flesh. They saw him.

And Jesus told them, at least John tells us here in his accounting, that they grumbled. They grumbled. Where else have we heard that dangerous indictment?

[16:36] Who else grumbled? in the wilderness against God. Their forefathers did the same thing. Even after seeing signs and wonders that God performed in saving and keeping and sustaining them, yet they grumbled.

And here again we see these people grumbling. They grumbled like their fathers did in the wilderness. And what happened to their forefathers? Do you remember? They perished in the wilderness.

They perished in the wilderness of their unbelief. And so this word grumbled is a dangerous indictment of these people.

Because like their forebears, they are content to rely on their own ability. And so far they are asking Jesus to prove himself, to do more tricks, they ask, but they fail to see that human eyes and human wisdom cannot catch, cannot apprehend who Jesus is.

And they fail to see that without knowing Jesus, they cannot know God. So they are stuck in their deadly unbelief.

[17 : 58] They needed divine help to see, but their pride kept them from asking the one who alone could give them that help. And they are saying to themselves, we know this guy.

He grew up among us. He and his father made the cabinet in my kitchen. And I used to go to school with him and his brothers. He cannot be the son of God.

What kind of nonsense is that? That's their reasoning. And that's human reasoning. That's human wisdom. And it's not unlike human wisdom today.

The human wisdom that rejects Jesus today. Here are some of the reasons the world gives today for rejecting Jesus. Some say, well, Jesus as a teacher and a great example is good.

He is a good teacher and he's a good example. But all this miracle and supernatural stuff, it's unscientific. My friends will think I'm weird if I believe that.

[19 : 01] some other reason is this. I'm not so sure he is unique. Yeah, he's a good guy, he's a good teacher, he's a great example.

He's just, but he's just one among many ways to God. Or this, I just want the Jesus that gives me health and wealth and happiness.

happiness. That's all I want. Miss me with all that sacrifice and carrying your cross and dying to yourself stuff. I don't want any of that. Or some say, well, I go to church.

I do. I do my part. I'm meeting Jesus halfway and he needs to come and meet me halfway. That's human reasoning.

or this, I like a Jesus that looks like me and agrees with me. The Jesus of the Bible, I don't believe that is the real Jesus.

[20 : 10] That's just something some primitive, backward people wrote in the first century. We have evolved. That's all human reasoning.

that's human wisdom, as Paul puts it in 1 Corinthians. And such human wisdom cannot, will not, can ever lay hold of the true Jesus that's revealed in the pages of scriptures.

And that's where these people are. They're using human reasoning. And their grumbling shows they need Jesus. They need Jesus like everyone else, like we do, like the world out there needs Jesus.

And so Jesus answered them, do not grumble. In fact, Jesus is saying, do not disbelieve. 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. And Jesus said, God, and continues in verse 45, it is written in the prophets, and they will all be taught by God.

[21 : 19] everyone who has heard, this might be you, 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, whoever, anyone and everyone, whoever believes, has eternal life.

Those whom the Father draws are those who have heard the words of Jesus and whom the Spirit has given life to. And what is clear in these verses is that God is the one who initiates.

Do you see it? He's the one who initiates the work of salvation. And he's the one who completes the work of salvation. The Father draws a people through the word of God preached.

The Spirit teaches us to reject ungodliness and to turn to Jesus. And the Son secures our redemption by his atoning death and perfect life.

[22 : 32] His word is preached. His preached word is word taught. That word, when it is received, received, that is how, when it is received by faith, that is how we feed on him, who is the bread of life.

But even this, even this, we cannot do in our own human power. We see that. The things of God are foolishness to the human mind, we're told. We need the Spirit of God to comprehend the things of God.

God. And so, Jesus continues in verse 48, I am the bread of life. Again, he says it to them. I am the bread of life.

Your fathers ate the man in the wilderness and they died. But 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.

[23 : 45] Will you hear this morning as you gather? Will you submit to the word you've heard from God? Will you acknowledge your need for God and ask him to make your heart open to the word of God?

Only he can do that. brothers and sisters, will you commit to praying that prayer for your loved ones, your friends and your co-workers who don't know the Lord yet?

Will you commit to praying for them that God the Holy Spirit will draw them, that the Father will draw them to the Son through the word preached?

Only God can do it. and will you continue to be faithful in proclaiming that word of life, that good news of salvation to them.

Pray that he may do just that this morning. There is no way to come to Jesus. There is no way to come to Jesus unless the Father draws. And there's no way to believe in his word unless the Holy Spirit opens blind eyes.

[25 : 04] And so that should be our prayer, that God himself will do that. Jesus is the bread of life, come down from heaven. Eat of him.

Believe in him. Come to him. And you will never die. That's the invitation. That's how you get eternal life.

Eternal life, as Jesus says in John 17, is to truly know God and Jesus Christ will be sent. Do you know God?

Well, you need to know that the only way to know him, as we've been saying, is through Jesus Christ, the bread of life who came down from heaven. So if you claim to know him, but you do not know Jesus, the Jesus revealed in the pages of Holy Scripture, God, then I humbly submit to you that perhaps you do not know God.

Maybe you're following the God of this world, but the true God can only be known through Jesus Christ.

[26 : 14] Christ. So will you this morning come to Jesus in faith? Will you come to him in faith and believe in his person and work?

If you do know him, if you indeed do know him, and you've come to him in faith, will you continue then to rest in his finished work?

Trust in him day by day. You can only do that by daily feeding on him. Him who is the bread of life. Just like you need food to sustain your physical life, you also need Jesus. He is the bread of life. You cannot live apart from him.

Keep coming to him, who alone can satisfy your hunger and thirst. Keep coming to him. Keep resting in him.

[27 : 17] Do not reject and do not ignore the one to whom the sign points. And if you come to him, be assured, be encouraged, be comforted that he is sufficient to spare you from death and judgment and give you life eternal.

in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.