

Bread of Life Discourse: Part 1

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[0:00] Jesus said, 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.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. So this morning, we are continuing our sermon series in John's Gospel.

And we're beginning to get into the section of John's Gospel that is called the Bread of Life Discourse.

And he gets us to why we call it that. So, as I was reflecting on this morning's text and thinking through how very comforting it is, I was reminded of something that my daughter Mia used to say to me when she was around three or four years old.

She used to ask me, Daddy, will you ever forget about me? Yeah. I would then reassure her that I will love her forever and that she will always be my little girl.

[1:36] As believers, this passage gives us something to turn to when we are tempted to worry, when we're tempted to wonder if God will forget about us or change his mind about us.

But, of course, this passage also challenges us. As is the case with the Bible generally, we find both comfort and challenge in this first section of the Bread of Life Discourse that we'll be looking at this morning.

As the section presents a lot for us to unpack, though, we're going to begin by looking at it verse by verse. So, if you would, please look in your Bibles with me.

John 6, starting at verse 22. So, verses 22 through 24 give us our setting, as John is always good at doing.

So, what's going on? The crowd that Jesus had just fed miraculously with the fish and the loaves are still on the lookout for him. Remember, he slipped away when he perceived that they wanted to make him king by force.

[2:43] Of course, they didn't see him leave with his disciples across the Sea of Galilee. They clearly didn't catch sight of him walking on the water. So, they cross over the Sea of Galilee themselves in order to look for Jesus and Capernaum on the other side.

And they find him. Verse 25, we read, when they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, Rabbi, when did you come here?

Now, it's really interesting. Jesus does not answer their question directly, does he? Instead, knowing that they are far more interested in the bread that they ate than in Jesus himself, he meets them with what really comes across as a sharp rebuke.

What he says is this, truly, truly, I say to you, you were seeking me not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. In other words, they're seeking Jesus because, well, they liked the bread that they ate.

Then Jesus says something really interesting to them in verse 27. Jesus 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.

[4:05] For on him God the Father has set a seal. So the trouble with this crowd and the trouble with us as human beings in general is that we are dominated by our interest in earthly things.

This crowd is thinking in material terms when Jesus is offering them food that lasts forever. And the crowd doesn't recognize that Jesus is able to give them that.

They don't see that Jesus has the authority and the ability. they don't see that he has the Father's stamp of approval so to speak. How like us as humans is that really?

We work for things that perish for things that will not satisfy us for things that will cause us to still be hungry tomorrow. That's what we build our lives around.

So Jesus responds to them and they seem to think that the food that leads to eternal life is something that, well, they can obtain if they work hard enough for it. So they say, what must we do to be doing the works of God?

[5:32] Seem to be saying to Jesus, maybe you should sign us up. We'll do the work. We're up for it. Again, they don't seem to get that Jesus is talking about greater and eternal things rather than mere earthly things.

And in addition to that, they seem to think they're up to the task. So Jesus clears it up for them, makes it very clear.

Jesus says, this is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent. Do you want to know how to have food that endures to eternal life?

Do you want to know how to be in a right relationship with God? Jesus is clear. It is through believing in God's only Son, the One whom He has sent.

It's not through works of ours at all, but through faith in Jesus. We see later on in John 6, even believing in Jesus is a gift of God's grace, the result of being drawn by the Father to His Son.

[6:56] The crowd is skeptical. They push back. They say to Him, 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. They're thinking, if Jesus really is the Messiah, if He's God's chosen King, if He's making claims like this about Himself, then surely He will produce a sign that equals the sending down of the bread from heaven in the wilderness.

The response that Jesus gives to that is truly striking. Jesus says 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 the world. So first of all, Jesus says, wait a minute, let's not focus on Moses.

It wasn't Moses who gave you bread from heaven. Moses didn't give you the Father's bread from heaven, didn't give your Father's bread from heaven.

[8:41] It was the Father who did that, my Father. God and by the way, He's given you greater and truer bread from heaven in giving His only begotten Son to come down from heaven to give life to the world.

And notice, Jesus has transitioned from merely talking about Himself as the one who gives bread from heaven. He's now identifying Himself as the bread from heaven.

The crowd says, Sir, give us this bread always. But it's not clear that they really get it, what Jesus is saying.

And from what Jesus says next, it's clear, really, that they don't get it. So Jesus continues. 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. Jesus is saying, I am that bread that endures to eternal life.

[10:01] He's saying that if we come to Him, we will never be hungry again. If we believe in Him, we will never thirst again. Jesus is saying to us, if you come to me and you believe in me, you will be satisfied forever.

But He rebukes the crowd. He says, but I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. What a terrible thing that is to have seen Jesus, to have heard the truth about who He is, and still to choose not to believe.

Does that mean that Jesus has somehow failed in this exchange? Not at all. In verse 37, Jesus says, all that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me, I will never cast out. God. While there are those individuals who will not come to Jesus, we see what appears to be a crowd of them in our passage.

[11:19] Jesus says that there are individuals that the Father has given to him, whom the Father will draw to Jesus, and those who are drawn to Jesus will not be lost.

Well, that's a comforting truth, is it not? more on that later. Jesus expands on what he means. He says, 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. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. So let's follow what Jesus is saying here. Those who will come to Jesus are those whom the Father has given to him, and the Father's will is that they will not be lost, but have eternal life, and ultimately even be raised from the grave.

given that God works all things according to the counsel of his will. This isn't a mere hypothetical thing, but it's a guarantee that we can count on to come to fruition.

[12:40] Well, that raises a question for us. what's the identifying mark of those who have been given by the Father to the Son, who won't be lost, who will be raised on the last day?

We see the answer in verse 40. For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life.

I will raise him up on the last day. So those who Jesus is talking about here who have been given by the Father to the Son, who come to Jesus, who won't be cast out or lost, who will be raised on the last day, how do we know who they are?

How do we know if we're in that number? Here's the answer Jesus gives. Everyone who looks on Jesus and believes in him, trusts in him, will have eternal life and will be raised on the last day.

So what do we take away from this morning's portion of the bread of life discourse, as we call it? don't think I'm overstating things and saying that every person hearing this sermon, every person who has ever read this text, can find himself or herself in this text, in one way or another.

[14:27] prayer. Maybe we find ourselves in the unbelieving crowd.

They are lost. They are working for bread that perishes. They are interested only in the things of this world. they are putting their trust and all of their hope in things that don't last, things that eventually in time they will lose.

And they refuse to believe in the bread of life, our Lord Jesus Christ, and refuse to come to him.

When they do approach him, it's not because they're interested in him for who he is.

They like him as a miracle dispenser, possibly as a potential politician. But that's where their interest ends. And they're just like every human being in the world outside of Christ.

And I am not casting stones because I have been there myself. See, the reality is that everybody on earth worships something. And humanity outside of Christ worships created things rather than the creator.

[15:48] So where does this way lead? The way that the crowd models?

I would say that it leads to a deep hunger that will never be satisfied and will be unending. Maybe, on the other hand, we find ourselves in the number of those the father has given to the son.

Well, how would we know we're in that number? It's not complicated. It comes down to a simple question. Have I looked on Jesus and believed in him as my savior?

It's my only hope of salvation. Do I trust in his blood shed for me on the cross and that alone for the forgiveness of my sins? things? Straightforward, it's not complicated.

And if our answer to that question, to those questions is no, as my answer once was, why not?

[17:12] Jesus is the bread to eternal life. Jesus is the bread that satisfies forever and will never leave us hungry again.

We are hopelessly lost without Christ and the invitation to come to Christ goes out to all who hear his word. God, if you have come to Christ, if that's where you see yourself in this morning's passage, you have every reason to rejoice.

You have food that endures to eternal life. It does not mean that life in this world will be all fun and games. It does not mean that it will always be easy.

But if you are a believer in Christ, again, you have food that endures to eternal life. You have the bread of life. You will be satisfied eternally. You will never be cast out.

You will never be lost. Again, you have eternal life and you will be raised on the last day. All because you belong to Jesus and he accomplished the work that the father gave him to do.

[18:41] Going back to my introduction for this morning, I think again of my daughter Mia when she was younger asking me if I would ever forget about her.

Because when I think of the promise that it is the father's will that I not be lost. And not only me, but all who believe in Christ. I remember God is not going to forget about me or change his mind about me.

As believers, we are adopted children of the father. A good father who loves us, the debt of our sin has been paid, and our savior will not lose us.

So one of our diocesan senate speakers once put it, I think this was a couple years ago, our being adopted means that our father isn't going to kick us out and send us back to where we came from. No. here is the promise to all who look on the son and believe in him. We are in the family, God's family, forever.

[20 : 08] And why? Because of a loving father who sent his son down from heaven to be the true bread from heaven, to be our savior, and because of a savior who bled and died and rose from the dead to ensure that he will bring us home and never lose us.

Jesus is indeed, as he says, the bread of life. If we come to him, what we find is that he is the true bread of heaven he is bread that gives life that never ends and satisfies forever.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.