

Bread Spread

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 05 August 2007

Preacher: Canon David Short

[0 : 00] Welcome to August at St. John's. If you've ever been to a synagogue, you know that synagogues don't run Sunday school, and all the children remain in the gatherings, so there is a buzz, a kind of a noise throughout the gathering.

And that's what we're going to do in August. If you are near young children, be very glad and thankful there are young children in the congregation. Wouldn't it be great if in 20 years' time that child was to say, I loved going to St. John's in the summer.

I didn't know what they were talking about, but I felt really welcome. Old and young, every category, we're here this morning, and we're going to be here for the next four weeks together.

We're trying to make the services a bit briefer, and we're going to try and make the sermons user-friendly, not that they're not always user-friendly, but when I've been to the synagogue, every now and again, the rabbi calls out, quieten down, everyone, quieten down.

So that's the feel, that's how it's going to be. Now I need six volunteers to help me with the drama, please. Yes, someone volunteered to come out. Yes, actually I need some adults as well.

[1 : 28] You can be Andrew. Thank you. You can be Philip. Yes. Yes.

Yes. Come, please. Jacob. Brother, you can be Jesus. Thank you. Okay.

You can be a great crowd. Great crowd. Let's hear your voice. Say great crowd. No, say it louder. Great crowd. Even louder.

Great crowd. That's great. Okay. Now I need someone who can read especially well, who can be out here for a little while. Goodness gracious.

Mel, come on out the front. That would be great. Thank you. Mel, you can be the narrator. And if you would go over, you've got your own microphone over there.

[2 : 31] And four microphones. This is like a radio play. If you just move back a step. Here is the microphone. Each of you has to speak into the microphone when it's your turn.

All right? So we turn onto page one, John six. And begin with the narrator reading to us. Away you go, Mel. Mel. Sometime after this, Jesus crossed to the far shore of the Sea of Galilee.

That is the Sea of Tiberias. And a great crowd of people followed him because they saw the miraculous signs he had performed on the sick. Great crowd.

Okay. Fantastic. I'll push you. Keep going, Mr. Narrator. Then Jesus went up on a mountainside and sat down with his disciples.

The Jewish Passover feast was near. When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?

[3 : 39] He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do. And Philip answered him, Eight months' wages would not buy enough bread for each one to have a bite.

Another of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, spoke up, Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish. But how far will they go among so many?

Jesus said, Have the people sit down. There was plenty of grass in that place, and the men sat down, about five thousand of them.

Jesus then took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed to those who were seated as much as they wanted. And he did the same with the fish. When they had all had enough to eat, he said to his disciples, Gather the pieces that are left over.

Let nothing be wasted. So they gathered them and filled twelve baskets with the pieces of the five barley loaves left over by those who had eaten. After the people saw the miraculous sign that Jesus did, they began to say, The people, surely this is the prophet who is to come into the world.

[5 : 03] Jesus, knowing that they intended to come and make him king by force, withdrew again to a mountain by himself. Take a bow.

Fantastic job. Thank you so much. When we need a great crowd, we will call on you again. Now, Thurston, I need some props. Thank you, sir.

Very good. Yes, I need another volunteer. I need a tall, male-type person. Tim, come out the front. Thank you very much. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Well, now, that is an amazing miracle, isn't it?

It's the only miracle that's in all four Gospels. Jesus feeds 5,000 people. Actually, it says 5,000 men with children and women.

[6 : 19] It might have been a crowd of 20,000 people. And afterwards, everyone had everything they needed. They were full and they collected 12 baskets full. And it's a picture of how well Jesus supplies and gives to us.

But everyone, I want you to know that this is not just a miracle. It is a sign. All of the miracles in John's Gospel are signs. You know how signs work. You see the exit signs at the door? The exit sign is not the exit. It's a sign that points to the exit. The bathroom sign is not the bathroom. It points to the bathroom. It's very important. What does the sign point to?

Two things. The first is Jesus is the bread of life. All right. Now, I want you to concentrate. There are two kinds of bread. This is eating bread.

[7 : 23] Physical bread. And I need to tell you, it's fresh. And very nice. We buy it from a bread shop.

If we don't eat bread, we die. If we do eat bread, we grow strong. But there's another kind of bread. Would you read us John 6.35, please?

If you would hold that open. That's it. Thank you very much.

There are two kinds of bread, two kinds of life. One is a life that I'm born with, that I feed with this kind of bread, that there is a different kind of bread, a different kind of life, that comes from heaven. And Jesus says, I am the bread of life. Would you read verse 33, please? For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.

[8 : 33] Thank you very much. Jesus says, nobody else has seen God the Father. I have come down from heaven to give this, to be this bread and to give this different kind of life.

Now this bread is for this life and it perishes. This has a use by date. It's going to go bad very quickly. And my life will also go bad very quickly.

This life that Jesus brings us, this bread never passes away. It never wears out. It's eternal life. I get one kind of life by feeding on this bread.

I get the other kind of life by feeding on Jesus. Now, why am I saying, why does Jesus say this? We have a deep spiritual hunger. All of us do. And there's nothing in all the world that can satisfy our hunger apart from Jesus.

Nothing. You could win ten gold medals for Canada. hunger. You could have more degree than anyone else. You could have more money than anyone else. You could have more friends than anyone else.

[9 : 39] Nothing can give this life apart from Jesus Christ. He who comes to me, Jesus says, shall not hunger and he who believes in me shall not thirst. That's the first thing the sign points to.

Together. Together. Just nod, please. Thank you very much. Two different kinds of bread. That's the first thing the sign points to. The second thing the sign points to is how we receive this bread. See, I know how to eat this bread. I go out and I bake it or I buy it and if you're like me in the car on the way home you start to nibble on it. I once, I once baked my own loaf of bread and performed a small miracle myself.

I let the bread rise overnight, I put it into the up the next day and it came out as hard as a rock and it weighed a hundred times as much as the stuff I put into it and my boys used it as a door stopper for a few days.

So how does this work? How do we receive this bread? Would you read verse 51, please? I am the living bread which came down from heaven.

[10 : 51] If anyone eats of this bread he will live forever. And the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh. Thank you. Did you hear that?

The bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world. Tim, if you turn that upside down. What is Jesus talking about? He's talking about the cross.

He's saying, yes, I am the bread of life but you can't receive the bread of life unless I give my life for the life of the world. It's in his death that we receive the bread of life.

We can't receive the bread of life just generally hoping and trusting. We receive the bread of life by coming to the cross of Jesus Christ. Or as Jesus says back in 35, whoever comes to me and believes in me will never hunger and never thirst.

We have to come. It means he's talking about heart food, about a heart hunger. And it says we move towards him in our hearts. That is how we have the bread of life.

[12 : 08] That is how he fills our hearts. To feed on Jesus, he's not really talking about the communion service which we're going to share in just a minute, although he's talking about what's behind the communion service.

It's to believe in me, in our hearts. It's to know as I walk down the street or as I go out this afternoon that Jesus Christ has died for me. My sins are forgiven.

And I'll tell you one final thing it means. It means Jesus said three times in the passage, it's come down a bit too tall, Jesus says whoever believes in me I will raise them up at the last day.

I will raise them up at the last day. I will raise them up at the last day. This is the message of John 6. Jesus has come down from heaven as the bread of life. He's gone to the cross for us.

He's gone back up into heaven. And now he calls all of us to come to him and he says every person who believes in me I will raise up to heaven on the last day.

[13 : 18] And feeding on Jesus is taking this news and living it so it's true now. Pray.

Lord Jesus Christ you love us so much and we thank you for coming down from heaven to be the bread of life. Help us to trust you and come to you.

Thank you for the promise that you will raise us up at the last day. Help us to live in the light of this truth in Jesus name. Amen. Amen.

Thank you Tim. Now let's all kneel together as heart leads us in prayer. Amen. Amen. Amen.