

Sermon John 6:22-34, 35-58

Jesus: Bread of life

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5<sup>th</sup> February, 2017

- **Bread**

Have you ever noticed how many different kinds of bread you can buy these days? Multi grain, 5 grain, white bread, brown bread, whole meal bread, flat bread, bread rolls, Gluten free bread, raisin toast bread, sandwich bread...

Bread is a basic part of our diet. For most people, bread is an essential. It's a need. Imagine life without bread!

But what else is our "bread" today? I think today's bread is money. It's our basic need to buy things like...bread!

You could say that money is our bread of life in the Western world. It's what we "live" on. But for some people, money means "satisfaction".

- **Satisfaction**

These days, you can "buy" satisfaction by buying experiences.

A skydive over the beach - \$329

Aerobatics flight training - \$399

Drive a V8 racing car for \$449

Hot air balloon over the Hunter Valley for \$289

Today, in our society, satisfaction is the new "bread". Instead of buying what we need, money is what buys us satisfaction and it becomes our source of satisfaction in life. But Jesus wants us to know that it is not the bread of *real* life.

- **Jesus said, verse 35: "I am the bread of life."**

Jesus says: I am what you *need*.

Earlier in this chapter, Jesus has done a miracle – feeding 5000 men, plus women and children, with just 5 loaves of bread and 2 small fish. And people are chasing after him because this miracle was pretty amazing. And so the people chase him down and find Jesus in Capernaum. And when they find him, verse 26:

- *"26 Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw the signs I performed but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. 27 Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you."*

Again, Jesus is trying to move people from the physical here and now, to the spiritual and eternal things. From signs and wonders to HIM. From being satisfied with the bread of life to finding satisfaction in HIM.

And to do that he makes an important comparison between **himself and Moses**. Remember when the Israelites wandered in the desert for 40 years, after being slaves in Egypt? God sent down manna from heaven – food fell from the sky – to feed them every day for 40 years. God sent them exactly as much as they needed. If anyone collected too much, it went rotten overnight. It didn't last. God was teaching the Israelites that they needed to depend on Him every single day. They had to trust that he would provide their daily bread. We pray, in the Lord's Prayer, "give us today our daily bread". We pray that we would trust God to provide what we need **day by day**.

But do we mean that when we pray those words? Or do we really mean: "Give us today our daily bread, plus a bit extra in case we need it, plus something for our retirement, plus a little something to leave for the kids when I die, plus a little extra for some fun and entertainment and satisfaction..."

The lesson the Israelites learned in the desert was a lesson of dependence on God DAY BY DAY. And now they see Jesus doing this great miracle of feeding thousands of people in the middle of nowhere with a few loaves of bread and a couple of fish. And they see that he is possibly even better than Moses.

And what does Jesus do with this? He points to God. He wants them to see that it was not Moses, but **God**, who sent down the manna from heaven in the desert. But those who ate it still **died** in the desert. It was just bread. It didn't last. It went off overnight. It looked after earthly, physical needs. Temporarily. But now, God has sent down JESUS from heaven. Jesus is the **new** manna, the **new** bread, that God has sent down. And Jesus is life giving bread. Whoever shares in HIM will not die.

Now, these are big statements, for 2 reasons:

**1. First Jesus says he is the bread that came from heaven.**

This was a claim to be God. The Jews didn't like this. Because only **God** comes from heaven.

**2. The second thing is that Jesus is saying only HE can offer eternal life.**

Again, this is a claim to be God. Because only **God** can offer eternal life. Verse 51:

- ***51I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."***

Jesus is claiming to be sent from God. He's claiming to be the saviour, the Messiah, the Christ, the King. He's claiming to have the authority to offer eternal life. And

although he's able to feed thousands of people with a few bits of bread and fish, he's also able to feed them much more – he can offer **eternal** life.

And so Jesus goes on to explain that those who want eternal life must, verse 53:

- ***“Very truly I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.”***

Just like in chapter 4 last week, Jesus is talking **spiritually**. Eating his flesh and drinking his blood means that we are to come to Jesus as our bread of life. We are to come to Jesus as the one who satisfies all of our needs. We are to come to his flesh, the perfect life he lived, and to his blood, the sacrificial death he died, so we can be saved.

So if you do **not** come to Jesus, you will **not** have eternal life.

**Story – offensive sign:**

I put up a sign once in front of a church that said:

- ***Know Jesus, know life. No Jesus, No life.***

Someone wrote a letter to the local paper. He was Jewish. He was offended that he had to explain this sign to his grandson. He was offended because he didn't like the implication. For 3 weeks, letters went back and forth to the editor of the paper with a lot of people defending our right as a church to have freedom of speech. That letter had the most responses to any letter the paper had received in years. But it was still, for this Jewish man, an offensive sign. Because it said that there was no life without Jesus.

And in fact, in the very next passage we are told that many disciples deserted Jesus because they could not accept this teaching. They could not accept that he was from God, and that he is the only one who can offer eternal life.

For many Christians, it's an easy message to hear, but a difficult message to live by. It calls us to depend on Jesus, daily, for our needs, for our satisfaction, for our eternal life.

DO WE trust Jesus for our daily bread?

Verse 27:

- ***27Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you.”***

What are you working for? Think of all the work you do on this earth. As an employee to earn a wage, as a father, a mother, a child, your work in ministry here,

time with friends – all the “work” that you’re involved in. What do you do it for? Are you working for food that does not spoil? Verse 28:

- **28** Then they asked him, “What must we do to do the works God requires?”  
**29** Jesus answered, “The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.”

It seems so simple doesn’t it? All Jesus asks of us, all he expects is that we would believe in him. In other words, to put our trust in him for our daily bread, and for our eternal life.

Our “work” is to *believe*. That word appears 149 times in the gospel of John. This is what it’s about. Our work is to **trust, to believe** in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. Our work is to have faith that Jesus provides all our needs and we can find our complete satisfaction in him.

### **What do people expect from you?**

What expectations do people have of you in life?

For example, we’re often expected to pick up the phone when it rings. To answer an email when we receive it, to buy a birthday present for someone, to turn up to work on a Monday, to visit our parents or children, to work hard.

A lot of the expectations that are on us, and that we put on others, are about satisfying people. Pleasing them. About people thinking well of us. About meeting our responsibilities and being seen as valuable in the eyes of the world. And these things are important to some extent. If we say we’re going to do something, it’s important to be faithful with our word, and not fall back on excuses like “I forgot” or “I didn’t put it in my diary”, or “I thought our anniversary was next week”.

But as we meet the expectations of people each and every day, let’s not forget that we are called to meet the expectations of God. What is our work? What does He expect from us? “What must we do to do the works of God?” Believe in the one he has sent. Trust him. Daily.

So when we pray “Give us today our daily bread”, let’s depend on **God** for our **daily** bread. And let’s remember that we depend on the work that Jesus has done in his death and resurrection for our eternal life – for the **one thing** that does **not** spoil.

Let’s pray.

22The next day the crowd that had stayed on the opposite shore of the lake realized that only one boat had been there, and that Jesus had not entered it with his disciples, but that they had gone away alone. 23Then some boats from Tiberias landed near the place where the people had eaten the bread after the Lord had given thanks. 24Once the crowd realized that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they got into the boats and went to Capernaum in search of Jesus.

### **Jesus the Bread of Life**

25When they found him on the other side of the lake, they asked him, “Rabbi, when did you get here?”

26Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw the signs I performed but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. **27Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you.** For on him God the Father has placed his seal of approval.”

28Then they asked him, “What must we do to do the works God requires?”

29Jesus answered, **“The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.”**

30So they asked him, “What sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do?”

31Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written: ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’”

32Jesus 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. **33For the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.**”

34“Sir,” they said, “always give us this bread.”

35Then Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. 36But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe. 37All those the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. 38For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. **39And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all those he has given me, but raise them up at the last day.** 40For my Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day.”

41At this the Jews there began to grumble about him because he said, “I am the bread that came down from heaven.” 42They said, “Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, ‘I came down from heaven’?”

43 “Stop grumbling among yourselves,” Jesus answered. 44“No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them, and I will raise them up at the last day. 45It is written in the Prophets: ‘They will all be taught by God.’ Everyone who has heard the Father and learned from him comes to me. 46No one has seen the Father except the one who is from God; only he has seen the Father. **47Very truly I tell you, the one who believes has eternal life. 48I am the bread of life.** 49Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, yet they died. 50But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which anyone may eat and not die. **51I am the living bread that came down from heaven.** Whoever eats this bread will live forever. **This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.**”

52Then the Jews began to argue sharply among themselves, “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?”

53Jesus said to them, “Very truly I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. 54Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day. 55For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. 56Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in them. 57Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me. 58This is the bread that came down from heaven. Your ancestors ate manna and died, but whoever feeds on this bread will live forever.” 59He said this while teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum.