

John 6:22-40

Bread of Life

Image Church // Follow Me // Week 1

Introduction

Coming out of the video: *Here we are!*

Can we put our hands together and celebrate our first official weekend!

And really quick, I want to invite you back next weekend to our **Grand Opening Celebration**- We're going to have a meal, bounce houses and lots of fun so make sure that you come back for that- gonna be awesome!

And the reason we're doing it next weekend is because we got something bigger to celebrate today- **It's Easter!!**

And I have some good news for you- the tomb is empty!!

- *Let me hear you, He is risen- [response] HE IS RISEN INDEED!!*

And listen when we say that we don't mean this figuratively, poetically, metaphorically, we mean it literally!

That Jesus who was killed, and confirmed dead, got up out of the grave by His own power completing everything necessary to save sinful people like me and you!

It's through His resurrection that we experience new life, and it's in the resurrection that we find hope...

See, the resurrection was the start of making all things new- it begins with Jesus restoring our broken relationship with God...

But it doesn't end there! Jesus says that He will return and when He does, He will bring restoration to everything that's broken in this world! And He will establish His Kingdom where there's no more hurt, no more pain, and no more tears... He will make all things new!

The resurrection is the foundation of the Christian faith, *and it changes everything for us!* And that's good news!

This morning we're kicking off a new series called **Follow Me**, where we're going to be looking at who Jesus is and the implications He has on our lives...

I don't know about you, but I've had a whole lot of assumptions in this life, some informed and some misinformed...

- I had assumptions about what college would be like- then I found out you actually had to study...
- I had assumptions about what jumping into the work world would be like- then I started waiting tables...
- I had assumptions about what marriage would be like- *then I got married and realized that I had out-kicked my coverage so there's that...*
- I had assumptions about where I would be in my career, I had assumptions about what life would be like as I got older...

The thing is, this isn't just true for life, it's true when it comes to our view of Jesus- many of you have a lot of assumptions – some informed, and some misinformed, that have shaped how you view Him...

- And some of you if you're honest are not impressed or moved by Jesus at all...
- Or you feel discontent or stagnant spiritually...
- Maybe you're on the outside edge of the church and Christianity and you have assumptions about Jesus and these assumptions have left you comfortable being touch and go and never really committing...

- You just kind of lean in at Christmas and Easter and you never really engage- you just check a box so that you can keep your *Christian card up to date...*

I don't know what you came in here assuming this morning, but what I want to do today show you the *incredible hope that's found in who Jesus is and what He's accomplished!*

If you have your Bibles go ahead and turn to John 6...

As you're turning to John 6, let me give you a little context on what is going on here...

At the very beginning of Chapter 6 there's a huge crowd following Jesus. **Verse 10** tells us there's 5,000 people, but back then they only counted the head of the households, so that means there's about 20,000 including women and children!

- *That's like Golden Corral on a Sunday right there...*

Well, Jesus makes the people sit down and then he breaks out the "*ultimate Messiah meal plan*" on these people... Where he takes a little boy's **5 barley loaves and 2 fish** and multiplied it to feed all 20,000 people which is insane!

Not to mention there were 12 baskets full of leftovers! Big moment, the people are blown away by this!

Check this out, look at **verse 14**:

14 When the people saw the sign he had done, they said, "This truly is the Prophet who is to come into the world." **15** Therefore, when Jesus realized that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, he withdrew again to the mountain by himself.

These people were fired up! They're like: "Man, if he did that, think what he could do **if He was king of our nation!** Cow prices would sky-rocket, and it would finally be a seller's market for chicken owners. And no one would ever be hungry again!"

These people are like this is our guy who could finally liberate us from Rome *and can't nobody stop Him with these miracles!!*

*But the end of **verse 15** says that when this happened, he withdrew again to the mountain by himself...*

That seems odd, doesn't it?? Why would he do that, didn't He come into the world to **be** King?? Yes! But not in the way that they were thinking...

He didn't come to free them from Rome, ... And He didn't come to end world hunger, at least not at first, as important as that is.

He came for something even more important than all of that, but the people were completely missing it!¹ So, He withdrew to the mountain by Himself...

*Let's pick back up in **verse 22** to see how this plays out:*

22 The next day, the crowd that had stayed on the other side of the sea saw there had been only one boat. They also saw that Jesus had not boarded the boat with his disciples, but that his disciples had gone off alone. **23** Some boats from Tiberias came near the place where they had eaten the bread after the Lord had given thanks. **24** When the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they got into the boats and went to Capernaum looking for Jesus. **25** When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, "Rabbi, when did you get here?" **26** Jesus answered, "**Truly I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate the loaves and were filled.**"

Notice, Jesus doesn't even answer their question... He jumps straight to the reality of why they were really looking for Him...

He's saying: "*You guys are missing it... You're out looking for me because I filled up your stomach. They saw what He did yesterday as a powerful act of how **useful** He could be, but they failed to see it as a **sign** pointing to who He was!*"

¹ Some thoughts gathered from JD Greear, Sermon: *The Shortsighted*. Can't Believe #3

What's a sign? It's something that's supposed to direct your eyes to something else...

Example: Think about a road sign... If you see one that's curvy and almost looks like a snake, what purpose does that serve??

It's supposed to point you, and your eyes, to the curves ahead...

Now, if I lock in on the sign as I am driving by and keep my eyes on it, what's going to happen? I am going to wreck and run off the road. And I would have missed the whole purpose for why the sign was there!

Jesus was like, *You guys ran completely off the road and missed the whole purpose behind what I did!*

To put it in the words of one pastor: "[They were] *fixated on the product and not the person*"²

Here's the thing though- we do the exact same thing, we look past *who* Jesus is, for what He can do for us... *Here's what I want you to see...*

Jesus is not a means for material gain

The people didn't want Jesus for who He was, they wanted Him for what He could do for them... They loved having full bellies, and so they saw Jesus as useful for immediate satisfaction... What a great king he would be- imagine all He could do for us...

For many of you, intentional or not, you view Jesus as a means to further your success and your agenda...

- You're not willing to lay down your life at His feet, but you have no problem coming to Him when you want Him to make your life better...

You know one of the places we see this the most today? In **sports**... You want to find the biggest prayer warriors, go to the sidelines at pregame before a national championship game!

Look at the uniforms, you find scripture written in places you didn't even know you could put it!

Go to an **MLB baseball game** and watch as almost every pitcher kneel to pray before they throw the first pitch. Or watch the batter draw a cross in the clay before he hits, or makes a cross on his chest...

We do the same thing in the **business world**, a prayer before a big pitch to a client, or before the presentation at an important meeting. Asking Jesus to let us hit our numbers this year...

Here's another one, before the **big test**, *I didn't study, please help!*

You know when else we see this... **when crisis strikes**... When everything breaks loose, when we have nowhere else to turn, when we feel like all hope is lost, we go to Jesus.

Now, I want to be clear on this: I am **NOT** saying that it's wrong to do any of that, it's not, in fact, I would argue you probably should be doing that...

But what I'm saying, is that **IF** those are the **ONLY** times you're looking to Jesus, then you have to ask yourself the question:

Do you really see Jesus for who He is, or do we see Him for what He can do for you?

When we look at Jesus for what He can do for us, He's nothing more than a Genie that we're hoping will grant our wishes...

- We see Jesus as a means for our success, a means for accomplishing our desires...

² John Piper, Sermon: *Do not labor for the food that perishes*. Nov. 15, 2009

Jesus *didn't* come to make you happy, healthy and wealthy; **He came to make you Holy!**

He didn't come to increase your success, He came to be your savior!

Listen, can Jesus provide immediate satisfaction? Yes... but **not** by assisting you in meeting all your desires... Immediate satisfaction comes by understanding **WHO Jesus** is and what He has accomplished in your place, **HE didn't come to give you your desires, He came to be your desire!**³

Natalie Grant has a song out where she puts lyrics to this, she says:

Help me want the **Healer** more than the **healing**
Help me want the **Savior** more than the **saving**
Help me want the **Giver** more than the **giving**
Help me want you **Jesus** more than **anything**

Then Jesus goes on to say this in **verse 27**:

27 Don't work for the food that perishes but for the food that lasts for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set his seal of approval on him."

These people got a full stomach yesterday and they are back trying to figure out how they can get some more...

And Jesus is like *Boys, you're looking for the wrong food!*

What you're after will only sustain you for a little while, but what God offers you, will sustain you forever!

Don't set your eyes on temporary things as a means of satisfaction and fulfillment

This is big because so often we hunger after food that we think will sustain us, but in the end, it just leaves us coming back for more.

³ Thoughts from: John Piper, Sermon: *Jesus came not to give bread, but to be bread*. Nov. 19, 2009

Examples:

- Money- if we can just make enough or have enough
- Material things- if we can just get the stuff we want
- Power- If we can be accomplished, respected and praised
- Sexual fulfilment- We want to feel loved, we want intimacy
- If we can just find the right job
- If we can just get to the right place in our career
- If we can just get married

And so, we chase after these things, investing all of our time, effort and energy, hoping that at some point we will be satisfied, that at some point we can sit back and say "This is it!" But the truth is, we never really get there...

Money is never enough, stuff is never enough, we've all been there, you want something – a new house, a new car, heck even a new iPhone— and you finally get it just to then realize it isn't enough and there is something else you want next.

The same exact pattern happens with people searching for ultimate fulfilment in sex, relationships and even marriage, or why people are obsessed with climbing the corporate ladder just to find there is another rung in the ladder to climb.

It's a black hole that keeps sucking us in but never really gives us what we actually want...

Example: Merry-go-round... I want that horse, check out my horse... I need to get to that horse... Only to find out we're just going in a circle over, and over again... This is where some of you are!

CS Lewis says: *We are far too easily pleased, if I find in myself desires which nothing in this world can satisfy, the only logical explanation is that I was made for another world.*⁴

⁴ Merry-go-round riffed on from Joby Martin, CS Lewis Quote also found from Joby Martin.

There are some of you here today that are controlled by the hunger to pursue things that are fading, things that won't last, you're going after food that won't keep you full...

Jesus wants you to know that there's a different type of food, there is a different source of nourishment that's from God and that will satisfy and last forever...

And Jesus is saying to you today- Stop working to satisfy your hunger by looking to things that won't last and start looking to Him because only He can offer you something that will last forever, only He will sustain you, only He will satisfy your hunger!

So, Jesus lifts their eyes from the temporary satisfaction they *seek*, to the eternal fulfillment that they *need*...

And here's how they respond... **Verse 28:**

28 "What can we do to perform the works of God?" they asked.

IOW: *Tell us what works God requires, and we will perform them.*⁵

They hear what Jesus says and they go from working for temporary fulfillment to now wanting to know what they need to do for God- so that they can get access to this food that lasts for eternal life...

Tell us what God requires, and we will do it!

They missed Jesus' point: it's not about what they need to *do*, it's *what they need to receive, that Jesus came to give*...

29 Jesus replied, "This is the work of God—that you believe in the one he has sent."

Jesus says *believe* not *do!*

Jesus came because we can't perform the works God requires

*Listen, the message of Jesus isn't about what *you do*, it's about what's been **done**... It's about believing and receiving the finished work of Jesus...

So that means that your works accomplish absolutely nothing when it comes to your standing before God.

*Being a good person and going to church doesn't save you *anymore than me sticking my head in the oven makes me a biscuit!*

It's impossible, in the same way that it is impossible for you to accomplish what's necessary to be in right standing with God...

GOSPEL

But for some of you, you're missing that... You get tired and worn down because when you do something bad you feel like you need to do good to make up for it.

You think that your standing before God is based on your ability ...

That you have to Be a good person, have a good reputation, pray before meals, don't hunt on Sundays, and make sure you go to church esp. on Easter!

That if you can be religious enough then somehow, you're going to be ok...

And what happens is you live under the oppression of never really knowing what God thinks about you.

You struggle with constant guilt and frustration. You lack consistency in your life- you try to start new spiritual initiatives, but you never stick with them.

It's this continual cycle in your life never really knowing where you stand with God... Or assuming you're just good because you've checked some boxes and you're not!

⁵ Carson, D. A. (1991). *The Gospel according to John* (p. 285).

Let's look at what happens next... So essentially Jesus just said believe in me I was sent from God... And they're like hold up...

verse 30: "What sign, then, are you going to do so we may see and believe you?" they asked. "What are you going to perform?"

You got to be kidding me! As if feeding 20,000 people off a little boy's Happy meal wasn't enough?!?

31 Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, just as it is written: **He gave them bread from heaven to eat."**

Really?!? Didn't you just get bread from heaven!!

Verse 32 Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, Moses didn't give you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. **33** For the bread of God is the one who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

Jesus says Moses wasn't the one that gave them bread... and then He makes a turn and in the **present tense** and says: "My Father gives you true bread from heaven." And that **bread** is the one who's actually come down from heaven to give life to the world!

34 Then they said, "Sir, give us this bread always."

Again, they miss it and jump right to materialistic gain. They're wanting the bread that keeps their bellies full, but what they're missing is that physical bread is just a picture of the real bread, the real nourishment that they need for their soul!

So, Jesus drives it home for them:

35 "I am the bread of life," Jesus told them. "No one who comes to me will ever be hungry, and no one who believes in me will ever be thirsty again."

This is what your heart needs...

Jesus was the true bread that was sent down from heaven to accomplish what we could never do for ourselves...

*And He didn't come to save us from starvation but to save us from damnation.*⁶

See, our hearts are infected with a disease called **SIN** that separates us from God... and there's only one remedy... to receive the Bread of Life...

See, in the same way that we take bread, and we break it and we eat it and we crush it with our teeth, **Jesus would be crushed and broken for us... and in the same way water is poured out to quench our thirst, Jesus blood would be poured out on the cross.**

He would take the place of sinful people like you and me and offer us perfection through His life, and he would pay for our sin through His death. And in His resurrection, offer us new life in Him!

When you believe in Jesus you are receiving Him, understanding that He's the True Bread that will sustain you forever through what He accomplished for you!

He's what your soul needs
He's the one that will sustain you
He's the one that will fill you
He's the one that will complete you
He's the one who will give you and identity
He's the one who will love you unconditionally
He's the one who will give you hope

When you see for who Jesus is, you recognize that He's all that you need, and you understand that everything you have really been looking for can be found in Him!

He is the **True Bread** that will fulfill you in every way, that will last forever...

⁶ Jon Bloom; Article: *Don't miss the Bread*. Jan. 30, 2014

I want to close with this and bring it all together for you with **verse 40**:

For this is the will of my Father: that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him will have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day."

That's a promise to say that if you have trusted in Jesus this life is not all that there is- you have an incredible hope beyond this life...

Family listen, it's the resurrection that makes this a reality!

It's through the resurrection of Jesus that you can be raised up

See not only do you get to experience fulfillment in this life- but you get to experience it beyond this life!

For many of you, if not all of you, there are places of brokenness in your life that you have, are or will experience...

Flesh out the power and implications of the resurrection!

Conclusion [VAMP]

The way that you receive that...

John 1:12 But to all who did receive him, he gave them the right to be children of God, to those who believe in his name...

Listen, there are some of you this morning that are just like the people here with Jesus, He was right in front of them- He was telling them who He was, and they didn't see it...

For some of you, Jesus has been in front of you time after time. You've heard about him, you know the story, but you've never actually received Him...

Today is the day...

For others you think you're too far gone, without hope...

Make the Call:

Big push to believe and receive...

Talk about when my eyes were opened... For some of you today is the day...

We're going to stand and sing... You come forward... we will have our Pastors and prayer team...

Today is the day...

Pray- ask God to move...