

I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE

SMALL GROUP NOTES

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SCRIPTURE

John 6:25-51

SCRIPTURE SUMMARY

The day after Jesus has performed the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand, the crowds go on the hunt for Jesus in Capernaum. When they find him Jesus says the reason they are searching for him is not because they were amazed by his miracle but because they ate a lot. It seems they may be after a similar experience. Jesus warns them not to get caught up with temporary things, that's not why he has come. He has come to bring eternal life.

The people ask for a sign that they should believe Jesus, citing the provision of manna in the wilderness for the people of Israel. It's possible that the Jews were expecting the Messiah to renew the miracle of manna, which they saw as a continuous thing. Maybe that is why they have come seeking it again. Provision of bread once doesn't make you a Messiah but if you can do it over and over again...

Jesus says they are missing the point. It's not physical bread they need but the 'bread...who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.' Hoping for another physical miracle they ask Jesus to give them this bread. He subverts their expectation with his response; 'I am the bread of life.' The people in the wilderness ate the manna and died but whoever eats this bread will have eternal life.

Did you know?

There are parallels with Exodus 16 and John 6. Both are about the miraculous provision of bread. In both accounts the people grumble against the Lord. John may be setting out to make the point that Jesus is leading a new exodus.

Capernaum, the setting for this discussion, was on the north-west shore of Galilee and was Jesus' home for at least part of his ministry (Mark 2:1).

QUESTION FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. What was Jesus saying about himself when he said 'I am the bread of life'? Think about all the things you associate with bread and what they tell us about Jesus?
2. Read John 6:27. What do you think Jesus means here? What is the food that perishes?
3. In verse 31 the people say that the people seem to ascribe the provision of manna in the wilderness to Moses and not God (see Jesus's response in v32). In what ways can we overlook God's provision? What can we do to recognise God's hand in the everyday?
4. Read v35-40. What promises are there in this passage for today and the future?

DIGGING DEEPER

Re-read John 6 and think identify all the things you think the Jewish hearers would have found hard about what Jesus was saying and why? What things could people find difficult about what Jesus is saying today?