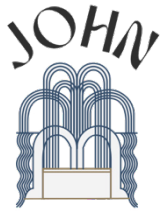


An Exposition of the
GOSPEL OF JOHN



“THE BREAD OF LIFE”

John 6:30-40

Theme: Christ Jesus is God’s provision for the soul’s hunger for forgiveness of sin.

Introduction: Hunger is a recurring sensation. We can gorge ourselves in gluttony, and in a few hours, our stretched-out stomachs begin to retract, and our hunger returns. The hunger of the heart is the same. We yearn for what can satisfy our cravings for fulfillment through meaning and significance. It drives us to seek something that will fill the void – we all know we lack something. Thus, every human heart knows what it means to be hungry. Hunger is a reminder that we are dependent creatures—never fully satisfied for long, always needing more. Food can fill the stomach, but no meal has ever filled the soul. Deep within, mankind carries a gnawing hunger far greater than the body’s craving for bread: the hunger for peace with God, the hunger for forgiveness of sin, and the hunger for everlasting life.

Our passage calls us to look beyond the perishable food of this world and to see Christ as God’s eternal provision. The manna that once fell in the wilderness sustained Israel for forty years, but those who ate it still died. Christ, the living Bread, has come down from heaven to give life to the world—and whoever eats of Him by faith will never hunger again.

[Read Text] In this passage, the crowd that had just seen Jesus multiply loaves and fish came back to seek Him—but for the wrong reasons. They wanted another meal, another miracle, another temporary fix. Jesus confronts them with a higher truth: ***He is the real bread from heaven, sent by the Father to meet the deepest need of humanity—the forgiveness of sins and the gift of eternal life.***

1. **The Conflict with the Bread of Life (vv. 30–33)** – The crowd challenges Jesus, demanding a sign, failing to see that He Himself is the sign and the gift.
2. **The Conditions for the Bread of Life (vv. 34–37)** – Jesus declares that only those who come and believe in Him will find their souls’ hunger eternally satisfied.
3. **The Commitment by the Bread of Life (vv. 38–40)** – Christ pledges to do the Father’s will: to save, to keep, and to raise up all who believe on the last day.

I. The Conflict with the Bread of Life – 6:30-33

A. The Human Standards – vv. 30-31

1. Salvation is the work of God.
2. Jesus, having instructed the unbelieving people around Him, called on them to ***“believe in Him whom [the Father] has sent.”*** – ***v. 29.***
3. Their response to this instruction was defiant – ***“they said to Him, ‘What then do You do for a sign, so that we may see, and believe You? What work do You perform?’”***
4. They essentially say to Him: “That’s one major claim you have there ... one that is going to have to be substantiated by a little bit more than a

single show of power.”

5. They continue and demand that a comparable sign would be something on the scale of what Moses did in providing them manna: *“Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, ‘He gave them bread out of heaven to eat.’”*
6. Feeding 20,000 (5,000 + women & children) one meal didn’t particularly compare in their estimation with the superior display of divine power that was available to their fathers in the wilderness – something that fed 2-2.5 million for 40 years – *Exodus 16:35*.
7. They completely misunderstood everything – who provided the manna, what Jesus had to provide, and consequently demanded of Christ that He exceed what Moses had delivered.

B. The Heavenly Standards – vv. 32-33

1. Jesus response was to call their attention to the One who ought to have received the “credit” for providing for them – it wasn’t Moses: *“Jesus then said to them, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread out of heaven, but it is My Father who gives you the true bread out of heaven’.”*
2. It was God who gave them the manna, not Moses.
3. Jesus essentially urges them to realize that they should be seeking what God provides — in the wilderness, it was physical food, called “bread come out of heaven,” or manna.
4. However, that bread was only a representation of what would eventually be given when God provided the true *“bread of God”* – the Lord Jesus Christ – cp. *v. 38*.
5. In shifting the tenses from what God *had* provided to what He *is giving*, He reveals the true focus – *“the bread of God”* being given today.
6. What is this ultimate “bread of God?” – He answers this by stating: *“For the bread of God is that which comes down out of heaven, and gives life to the world.”*
 - a) *In the wilderness, the “bread of God” was called manna, and it provided for their physical needs.*
 - b) *However, that was only a representation (a “type”) of the real focus of God – the “Bread of Life” that is the Lord Jesus Christ.*
7. Whereas the manna provided by God through Moses lasted 40 years and fed a couple of million, Jesus Himself is the bread that, when received, lasts for eternity and is sufficient for the whole world – *John 6:51*.

II. The Conditions for the Bread of Life – 6:34-37

A. The Conditions Acquiring the Bread of Life – vv. 34-35

1. Hearing Jesus “assert” that God had something just as profound to offer through Jesus as their fathers had received in the wilderness, they want to be in on the big event: *“Then they said to Him, ‘Lord, always give us this bread!’”*
2. They said, *“Always give us this bread,”* and Jesus replied, *“I am the bread!”* – cp. Matthew 28:20.
 - a) This is the 1st of seven *“I am”* statements made by Jesus in the Gospel of John.
 - b) Jesus also used *“I am”* to describe Himself as “the Light of the world” (8:12), “the door of the sheep” (10:7, 9), “the good shepherd” (10:11, 14), “the resurrection and the life” (11:25), “the way, and the truth, and the life” (14:6), and “the true vine” (15:1, 5).
 - c) Jesus also used *egō eimi* (“I am”) in an absolute, unqualified sense (4:26; 8:24, 28, 58; 13:19; 18:5–8) to appropriate for Himself the Old Testament name of God (Ex. 3:14).¹
3. For the sake of those who would truly be seeking the solution to their sin problem, Jesus extends an open invitation: *“He who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst.”*
4. These are the conditions for acquiring the immortality of the soul and reconciliation with God:
 - a) *“he who comes to Me ...”* – **Repentance**
 - (1) “comes” [ἐρχομαι] – [Pres. Mid. Part] describes a person who, of his own will, stops going in a direction away from God and turns to God.
 - (2) This, of course, is the essence of repentance – the changing of one’s perspectives of satisfaction in sin and desires to repudiate what they once held dear in order to embrace righteousness – cp. 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10.
 - (3) It is to forsake who you are as a sinner, in rebellion to the authority of Christ, and submit to Him as Lord.
 - (4) Repentance is not a human work which earns us God’s favor, but a gift from the Lord through the work of God’s Spirit – cp. Acts 5:31; 11:18; 2 Timothy 2:25; Romans 2:4.
 - b) *“he who believes in Me ...”* – **Faith**
 - (1) The second aspect serving as a means of gaining *“the bread of life”* is faith.

¹ John F. MacArthur Jr., John 1–11, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 2006), 246.

- (2) Faith exists when a person is willing to completely trust in Jesus as the Son of God and Savior of sinners, acknowledging that He alone can save.
 - (3) It is to embrace fully the work of Christ and claim it as the only solution to resolve the problem of sin
 - (4) Even as the sinner cannot be credited with repentance as a human work, neither is faith a human product – cp. *Ephesians 2:8-9; Philippians 1:29; Acts 13:48.*
5. Without repudiating our sinfulness and embracing the work of Christ by faith, one cannot and will not receive the bread of life.
 6. This alone will resolve the “*hunger*” and “*thirst*” of one’s soul – without it, the emaciated & shriveling soul will perish eternally by starvation; and the parched and dry soul will likewise perish by dehydration.

B. The Conditions Assuring the Bread of Life - vv. 36-37

1. The sad point here is that Christ was offering eternal life, and all they sought was the reinstitution of “manna” – “*But I said to you that you have seen Me, and yet do not believe.*”
2. He then makes a remark that lets us know that there is a hope for sinners generally – that even though the immediate audience of the Lord is rejecting Him, that there would be many who will know the provision of grace and would be brought to Christ through faith: “*All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out.*”
 - a) “*All that the Father gives Me*” – is a reference to the issue of election and God’s sovereign hand in our redemption – cp. *v. 44.*
 - b) *If the Father draws men to Christ and thereby gives them to Him, Jesus states that He treats that gift as the most precious possession ever, declaring that He would never discard it – “the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out.”*
 - c) *We are not considered precious to Christ because of some innate attraction (like we ascribe to items of value like a diamond), or because of our consistent obedience to what He expects of us – but simply because of the value of the One who gave us to Him.*
 - d) *Despite my unworthiness and the inevitable disappointment that I bring to the heart of God, I am nevertheless secure because for Christ to discard me would be to despise a gift from “the Father.”*
 - e) *Instead of possessing disdain, Christ sets Himself to perfecting us by His grace:*
 - (1) *Ephesians 5:25-27* – He is cleansing and preparing us to present us to the Father as “glorious.”
 - (2) *Colossians 1:22* – He is going to do whatever it takes to be able to present us “*holy and blameless and beyond reproach.*”

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3. Let no one hesitate – thinking that perhaps *“the Father”* has not given me to the Son and I am “breaking in” where I don’t belong.
4. Anyone whose soul is grieved for their sin and turns to Christ Jesus need not anxiously wonder whether they belong – because Jesus Himself states: *“all who come to Me I will certainly not cast out.”*
5. Those who do not come to Christ and believe merely certify what is true of all of us – left to ourselves, none of us will seek after God – cp. *Romans 3:9-12*.

III. The Commitment by the Bread of Life – 6:38-40

A. The Commitment by the Savior – vv. 38-39

1. Having indicated He values what is given to Him by the Father, Jesus continues to provide confidence to sinners by stating that He is accountable to the Father for the stewardship given Him by the Father: *“For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.”*
2. It is not that Jesus saves sinners against His will, but that it is not a matter of His will – He will yield to the Father and whomever the Father gives Him, He will save – *John 17:6*.
3. The Father’s will is that every one of the “gifts” (sinners who come to Christ) is preserved all the way through to glory: *“This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day.”*
4. Jesus saves those of us who come to Him not because of what we do, but because He is so intent on obeying the will of the One who has given us to Him.
5. This phrase, *“I will raise it up on the last day”* refers to those who come to Him and believe – cp. *vv. 40, 44, 54*.

B. The Commitment to the Sinner – v. 40

1. He then makes a commitment to the sinner who is striving to know the forgiveness of sin – *“For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life.”*
2. Essentially, He says: “I will save all whose eyes are opened by the Holy Spirit so that they understand (“behold”) Me and who therefore respond to what they see by ‘believing.’”

3. Christ again provides this greatest of guarantees – one upon which we all place the hope of eternity, by repeating His promise of shepherding those He has purchased with His own blood all the way through to glorification: *“... and I Myself will raise him up on the last day.”* – cp. *Romans 8:29-30*.
4. This commitment is the most important reality of our redemption and is reserved for those who accept Jesus Christ as the provision of God for their soul’s hunger – the forgiveness of sin.
5. Do you have this commitment as your own?

So What?

1. In what ways do I struggle with the temptation to seek temporary satisfaction instead of seeking Christ as my ultimate fulfillment?
2. When I reflect on Jesus’ promise never to cast out anyone who comes to Him, how does that shape my assurance of salvation and my willingness to keep coming to Him in faith?
3. How does knowing that my salvation rests not on my ability to hold onto Christ, but on Christ’s commitment to do the Father’s will and hold onto me encourage me?
4. Since Jesus is the Bread of Life, what habits or disciplines can help me “feed” on Him more fully throughout the week?

Theme: Christ Jesus is God’s provision for the soul’s hunger for forgiveness of sin.