

THE BREAD OF LIFE

SERIES: JESUS IS...

Pastor Gilbert Silva

John 6:22-35 (NLT) The next day the crowd that had stayed on the far shore saw that the disciples had taken the only boat, and they realized Jesus had not gone with them. ²³ Several boats from Tiberias landed near the place where the Lord had blessed the bread and the people had eaten. ²⁴ So when the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they got into the boats and went across to Capernaum to look for him. ²⁵ They found him on the other side of the lake and asked, "Rabbi, when did you get here?"

²⁶ Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, you want to be with me because I fed you, not because you understood the miraculous signs. ²⁷ But don't be so concerned about perishable things like food. Spend your energy seeking the eternal life that the Son of Man can give you. For God the Father has given me the seal of his approval." ²⁸ They replied, "We want to perform God's works, too. What should we do?" ²⁹ Jesus told them, "This is the only work God wants from you: Believe in the one he has sent."

³⁰ They answered, "Show us a miraculous sign if you want us to believe in you. What can you do? ³¹ After all, our ancestors ate manna while they journeyed through the wilderness! The Scriptures say, 'Moses gave them bread from heaven to eat.'" ³² Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, Moses didn't give you bread from heaven. My Father did. And now he offers you the true bread from heaven. ³³ The true bread of God is the one who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." ³⁴ "Sir," they said, "give us that bread every day."

³⁵ Jesus replied, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry again. Whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. ³⁶ But you haven't believed in me even though you have seen me.

John 6:41-42 (NLT) Then the people began to murmur in disagreement because he had said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." ⁴² They said, "Isn't this Jesus, the son of Joseph? We know his father and mother. How can he say, 'I came down from heaven'?"

Introduction: Many of Jesus' followers were unsure what to make of him. They knew he was a miracle worker because of the miracles he performed, such as multiplying the fish and loaves. Others believed he was a prophet and teacher who spoke on God's behalf. Others saw him as a healer, with power over demons and the ability to raise the dead. But who was he actually, and who do we believe he is?

Is he simply a heroic character with an incredible story? Is he a historical figure whose life we seek to emulate? Is he someone we turn to as a last resort when we find ourselves in a difficult situation? What happens when we genuinely comprehend who He actually is, rather than how we see him depending on our circumstances?

In this passage we find Jesus revealing Himself as “the bread of Life”. It is the first of seven “I am” declarations of Jesus found in John’s gospel account.

What did Jesus mean by this declaration? Why were the people offended with His statement? What can we learn from this account?

The context:

The people who came to Jesus had been part the crowd that had eaten from the fish and loaves that Jesus had multiplied. There must have been something about the fish and loaves that convinced them that Jesus was someone they definitely wanted to hear more from.

At the same time, if he did this miracle what else could or would he do? They didn’t want to miss out of the benefits of following Jesus.

Jesus wasted no time in pointing out the real reason why they had come to look for him. It wasn't because of who he was, but because of what he accomplished for them.

Similarly, many people today follow Jesus because of what he can do for them rather than because of who he is.

Jesus makes this clear when he tells the people, “I tell you the truth, you want to be with me because I fed you, not because you understood the miraculous signs.

What was it that He wanted them to understand about the multiplication of the fish and loaves?

Every miraculous sign that Jesus performed had an ultimate purpose. There is no doubt that Jesus sincerely healed and did miracles because of His love for the people but according to John the ultimate purpose that the miracles took place was to reveal who He was and what he came achieve.

John 20:30-31 (NLT) The disciples saw Jesus do many other miraculous signs in addition to the ones recorded in this book. ³¹ But these are written so that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing in him you will have life by the power of his name.

It’s so easy to think that Jesus came simply to make our lives better, to heal, care for and prosper us. Although he may do all these things it is not merely for these things that Jesus had come.

John 6:27 (NLT) But don’t be so concerned about perishable things like food. Spend your energy seeking the eternal life that the Son of Man can give you.

Christ's primary goal was to bring about eternal life. This was what mattered most. Physical food is crucial for survival, but the most important meal was the bread of life.

They completely missed what Jesus was saying. They wanted the perks and the power to accomplish what he did. They were more interested in His power than His person.

John 6:28-29 (NLT) They replied, "We want to perform God's works, too. What should we do?"
²⁹ Jesus told them, "This is the only work God wants from you: Believe in the one he has sent."

Wow! They didn't want Jesus they wanted the power to do what He did. For them power meant approval from God. But is this what God wanted? Absolutely not!

The only thing the Father wants us for us to do is believe in His Son. This is the foundation of everything else we do. Faith in Christ alone.

The people push the envelope and challenge Jesus to do another miracle in order to prove His identity. Moses provided bread from heaven, why don't you at least do the same?

Jesus give them a theological adjustment.

John 6:32-34 (NLT) Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, Moses didn't give you bread from heaven. My Father did. And now he offers you the true bread from heaven. ³³ The true bread of God is the one who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

The people didn't get it. They are focused and remembering the fish and bread they ate earlier and now Jesus is offering bread from heaven. They have to have it! "Sir," they said, "give us that bread every day."

Some things don't change do they. People want God to give them what they want but not what they need.

Jesus didn't come to give them a new type of bread "manna". Jesus makes clear that he is not talking about physical bread like, but about His life. He was the bread of heaven.

John 6:35 (NLT) Jesus replied, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry again. Whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."

The essence of the message of Jesus

He is the answer to the needs of the human heart. As bread was the primary source of nourishment and life, so Jesus was the Father's provision for eternal life.

Manna met only a limited need. It provided temporary physical life. If you remember the Old Testament account the Israelites came to hate it, and ultimately, they died. Jesus is a Bread of a different kind. He is from heaven and gives life. A person who eats of that Bread will not die.

Nothing in this life can satisfy and fulfill the hearts of men like Jesus. When we surrender to Christ He fills our hearts with life everlasting.

Jesus had their attention until he talked about coming down from heaven.

John 6:41-42 (NLT) Then the people began to murmur in disagreement because he had said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." ⁴² They said, "Isn't this Jesus, the son of Joseph? We know his father and mother. How can he say, 'I came down from heaven'?"

The people knew who Jesus was when it came to His family but they didn't know who He truly was. He was more than a carpenter's son, he was more than a Galilean, he was more than Mary's son. He was heaven's bread. God's one and only Son sent to provide the means for eternal life.

Just when people were dealing with the idea of Jesus referring to himself as the food of Heaven, He took things to the next level and made a statement that they couldn't stomach.

John 6:53-58 (NLT) So Jesus said again, "I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you cannot have eternal life within you. ⁵⁴ But anyone who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise that person at the last day. ⁵⁵ For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. ⁵⁶ Anyone who eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him. ⁵⁷ I live because of the living Father who sent me; in the same way, anyone who feeds on me will live because of me. ⁵⁸ I am the true bread that came down from heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will not die as your ancestors did (even though they ate the manna) but will live forever."

This was the dividing line. There is no way that the people could accept the words of eating flesh and drinking anyone's blood. The drinking of blood was forbidden by the law of Moses as life was in the blood.

First, He claims to come from heaven and now He calls those who would be true followers to eat His flesh and drink His blood.

John continues to write that many of Jesus' disciples said, "This is very hard to understand. How can anyone accept it?"

They were unable to understand that Jesus' language symbolically points to a spiritual reality, not a physical requirement.

Eating and drinking were metaphors for faith.

John 6:35 (NLT) Jesus replied, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry again. Whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.

John 6:66 (NLT) At this point many of his disciples turned away and deserted him.

What a tragedy that so many people opted to reject The Bread of Life.

“If Jesus is the Bread of Life, loss of Jesus means starving. If Jesus is the Light of the World, loss of Jesus means darkness. If Jesus is the Good Shepherd, loss of Jesus means wandering alone and lost. If Jesus is the resurrection and the life, loss of Jesus is eternal death. And if Jesus is the Lamb of God, sacrificed for our sins, loss of Jesus means paying that price for ourselves.”

Rebecca McLaughlin

Not everyone rejected Jesus on this day...

John 6:67-69 (NLT) Then Jesus turned to the Twelve and asked, “Are you also going to leave?”
⁶⁸ Simon Peter replied, “Lord, to whom would we go? You have the words that give eternal life.
⁶⁹ We believe, and we know you are the Holy One of God

Sadly, one of them would betray Him not long after this....

John 6:70 (NLT) Then Jesus said, “I chose the twelve of you, but one is a devil.” ⁷¹ He was speaking of Judas, son of Simon Iscariot, one of the Twelve, who would later betray him.

Conclusion: Following Jesus means placing our complete trust and faith in Him as Lord and Savior. It is a call to total commitment to Him. To rely upon Him as the source of our life. It is to live in Him and for Him.

Jesus Christ gave His life and shed His blood for us. This spiritual reality is what we remember and celebrate today as we take communion and partake bread and juice that represent His body and blood.

This is a meaningless religious act if you have not surrendered your life to Him and placed your faith in Him as Lord and Savior. He is the bread of life. Why starve spiritually when God has provided the source of life and forgiveness?

Mathew 16:13-16 (NLT) When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" ¹⁴ "Well," they replied, "some say John the Baptist, some say Elijah, and others say Jeremiah or one of the other prophets." ¹⁵ Then he asked them, "But who do you say I am?" ¹⁶ Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."