

WHO IS JESUS?

THE BREAD OF LIFE!

“And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.”

John 6:35

Home missionary, Pastor Audred Spriensma

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A great multitude came out to Jesus. Jesus asked his disciple Philip, “Where shall we buy bread that these may eat?” Philip knows that they did not have enough money to buy bread for all the people to eat. But there was a little lad who had five little barley loaves and two fish. Jesus took the loaves and fish, broke them in pieces and distributed them to the crowd of about 5000 men plus women and children! After the people had as much as they could eat, Jesus told his disciples to collect the left overs, that nothing would be lost. They collected and filled twelve baskets of left overs!

What a good deal! The people wanted to take Jesus and make him a king. Jesus could take care of their lives for them. They were interested only in material advantage. Jesus left them. When they found Jesus, he said, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed (John 6:26, 27).”

When Jesus told them to believe on him, they roughly demanded to see some sign that Jesus could do. They pointed to the great leader Moses who they said gave them bread from heaven to eat. Jesus pointed out that it was not Moses who gave the manna from heaven but God himself! And the true bread of God is “he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world (John 6:33).” God’s gift from heaven alone could meet their deep need and satisfy their souls.

JESUS IS THE TRUE BREAD

In John 6:32, Jesus speaks of himself as the “true bread from heaven.” Jesus, of course, does not mean that he is literally a piece of bread. Jesus uses the figure of bread identifying himself as the only spiritual food of a person’s soul. He alone is able to nourish one with forgiveness, friendship with

God, and eternal life. Jesus is bread. Not just any bread or another bread, but **the** bread of life. “True” speaks of real, genuine, and satisfying. “From heaven” speaks the spiritual character. Compared and contrasted are two kinds of bread: physical bread and spiritual bread. How is Jesus like bread?

First, bread is a necessary food. Many things that we might eat are luxuries, like steak or jam. You can live without the luxuries, but bread is essential. We depend upon bread. God made us that way. It is the way by which our life is supported here on earth. Without bread, we die. So Jesus is the necessary food for sinners. He is the soul’s basic and only need. He is the living bread. He is able to not only give us eternal life but also to sustain it, nourish it and make it grow. We must have Jesus or we perish. Do you see your need for Jesus?

Secondly, bread is a daily food. There are foods like turkey or pumpkin pie that we eat at Thanksgiving. But we do not eat them every day. But bread is needed daily. This is what God taught with the manna in the wilderness. Jesus taught us in the Lord’s Prayer to ask God for our daily bread. So spiritually, we must have Jesus daily, or we grow weak and wither. We do not just believe on Jesus once, and then neglect him. In Jesus, we have our daily supply of grace that is in him, or we perish. Jesus is our constant, on-going need.

Thirdly, bread is a satisfying food. It takes care of our bodily needs, and we are left nourished and strong. Jesus as our bread of life satisfies our souls spiritually. He supplies grace that saves from sin, gives us peace, strength to fight against sin, and finally fills us with the hope of eternal life.

HOW IS JESUS THIS BREAD OF LIFE?

Why is Jesus the only spiritual food for our soul? How can he be grace to sinners? How can he be forgiveness, righteousness, and peace? How can he give eternal life?

First, notice that he says, "I am..." This is the first of seven "I am" statements in John's gospel. These statements go back to Exodus 3 when God spoke to Moses from the burning bush. God introduces himself as "**I AM THAT I AM**." And God said to Moses, "Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you (Ex. 3:14)." When Jesus used these 7 statements, he was teaching that he is eternal God. Jesus was not a mere human man but divine, fully God. He is from heaven. He is the living bread because he is the living God, the very source of life.

Second, he is the bread of life because he came down from heaven to earth. This is what we read about in John 1:14, Jesus' incarnation. He took on our flesh, which means that he had a human body and soul. How important is this? Well, we cannot climb up to God to get what we need. God comes down to us and gives himself to us. God alone saves. We are unable to do anything to save ourselves.

Third, Jesus is our daily bread because he gave his flesh for the life of the world. This refers to his sacrifice on the cross. He would give himself to death as a payment for our sins. By taking our sins upon himself, God's wrath for us because of sin was put on Jesus instead. He laid down his life for us.

Fourth, Jesus is the bread of life because he conquered death. It could not hold him, but he arose on the third day. Therefore he is the living bread, powerful to give his life and salvation to us.

Jesus is the bread of life. We read in John 6:50, "This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die." Do you know your need for Jesus as the "bread of life?" God provided for the physical needs of Israel with manna from heaven. He provides for our spiritual need by providing his Son as the Bread from heaven.

THE NECESSITY OF EATING THE BREAD

If physical bread is going to do you any good, it must be eaten by you. You cannot merely look at it. Even if you know everything there is of how the wheat is grown, cut down and beaten, baked in the oven, and all the good properties about it, unless you eat it, it will do you no good. Earthly bread is meant to be eaten. You must take it in, swallow, and digest it. Only then will it can it nourish and strengthen you.

So it is also with Jesus, the bread of life. It is not enough to know about Jesus. It is not enough to have Jesus before you when the gospel is preached. You must take him in and digest him as the very food for your soul. Without that, the bread of life will do you no good.

How does this eating Jesus take place? Obviously, it is not with the physical mouth. Jesus tells us in John 6:35 that we partake of him by coming to him and believing. Coming to Jesus does not mean walking to him. It means that we come to Jesus with a believing heart. We hunger for Jesus in our hearts because we know our sin. Coming to Jesus means that we are sorry for our sins. We come to Jesus trusting him as the only Savior. We throw ourselves upon him in trust, embrace him, receive him, and feed upon him.

How can you and I who are dead in sin come to Jesus? Jesus tells us in John 6:44, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." By ourselves we cannot come nor do we even want to. Is it hopeless? No! The good news is, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out (John 6:37)." God works in those whom he has chosen, drawing them, working powerfully his grace and faith in us. God does this by his Spirit.

We eat Jesus by faith when we hear the preaching of the gospel. And we have new life in us. It is the life of Jesus. It is eternal life that cannot be taken

away. What wonderful security that is! Nothing on earth and not even our physical death can separate us from God's love in Jesus Christ.

When we feed on Jesus, the bread of life, we will not seek any other savior. He is all we need. We will not hunger or thirst for anything else. We will be fully satisfied with the riches of salvation in Jesus.