

Jesus, the Bread of Life
John 6

This chapter is filled with the profoundest teaching of the significance of Jesus. John shows us our deepest need and how we are utterly blind to it apart from the grace in Christ. He shows us the absolute necessity of faith in Christ and what it means to have faith in Christ. And he displays the glory of Christ. It shows us our sinful condition and our tendency to seek anything but to find our satisfaction in Christ. This passage shows us what it means to have faith in Christ and the absolute necessity of faith in Jesus and displays Jesus as the sole source of salvation and life. We don't just need to study and rehearse these things so we can preach them to others, but we need to rehearse them and own them for ourselves. We cannot survive without these things. We cannot survive without Jesus, the bread of life.

To feed only in order to feed others is an occupational hazard of our calling. But we cannot commend one whom we do not supremely cherish. And if we have not been satisfied by the Bread of Life, we will poorly commend Him to those who need Him for salvation and life.

This passage is fundamentally Jesus and what He came to do and why we must trust Him. This passage is not about the Lord's Supper, but about Jesus.

I want to draw attention to two things particularly —

- ✓ We have a crowd pursuing Jesus while spiritually not understanding Him. By Jesus' own diagnosis, they are not seeking Him for the right reason. That sets the stage for everything that comes after it.
- ✓ Then we have Jesus message to them in which He stresses three things: 1) they needed to know what they really needed — they are seeking Him for the wrong need (and we need to know what we need, too!); 2) Jesus in His reply to this pursuing crowd is designed to teach them how to get what they need; 3) they need to understand who Jesus is, because He *is* the bread of Heaven — He is a far greater miracle than Moses' manna. And they clearly don't get that.

Homiletical statement: Jesus, the bread is life and gives life by His death; and the life He gives is our deepest satisfaction — our salvation and communion.

1. The Bread That Perishes in Contrast to the Bread of Life

The crowd seeking Jesus wanted another food miracle (cf. vv. 30-31). But Jesus does not give this crowd what they ask for or what they are seeking. He explains that they do not know what they need (v. 26). He explains that they've already seen a sign; they're there because they have already seen the sign they need. Jesus diagnoses their desires as earthly.

Notice Jesus' concern for their souls. Crowds show up and Jesus does not assume that the presence of crowds means something good is happening. Jesus is not here to feed Himself and His own ego; He's here to find lost sheep. He is concerned for their souls. We are all vulnerable to the calculation that when more come, good things are happening. And narcissistic people in the ministry feed on this kind of thing. Jesus is not fooled by those kinds of numbers. His concern is for their souls. He is not using them for Himself; He came not to be served but to serve. So He confronts them to their real need and their blindness to that need.

Jesus is concerned about *why* people are seeking Him. And we should be concerned, too. In Jesus' kindness, He has a profound concern for their misdirected desires.

In response to Jesus, they ask a question (v. 28) — so Jesus tells them that they shouldn't work for food that perishes, but that they should work for food that doesn't perish. "What should we do?" Jesus' answer is remarkable — it's Pauline — "this *is* the work of God — that you believe in Him whom He has sent" (v. 29). Faith is of divine origin. It reminds us of Phil. 2:13. God is at work in our sanctification and in our justification. The whole of our salvation is a work of grace (Eph. 2:8-9). Jesus is stressing the utter necessity of faith in Him.

And Jesus uses two descriptions of faith: 1) it is coming (v. 35); 2) it is eating and drinking.

Coming to Jesus is believing in Jesus. It's a picture of where you find rest, refuge, and belonging.

Eating and drinking as a picture designed to cause maximal offense. Priests ate part of the sacrifice, but drinking the blood was completely forbidden. So Jesus' words are designed to bring offense. Jesus is saying that one's whole faith must be in Him or that one will die. Jesus is saying, "You need me more than you need food. If you don't eat and drink me — trust in My death — you will die like a starving dies without food and water." Simeon — "faith is not a mere assent to His Messiahship but a humble betrothal to Him as the Savior of the world... We must renounce all other hope and make Him our desire."

The way you get what you need is through faith in Christ.

2. The Utter Necessity of Faith in the Bread of Life

3. The Glory of Jesus as the Bread of Life (v. 35)

He says, "I am the Bread of life." They respond much like the woman at the well (Jn. 4).

They were looking for a miracle and Jesus said, "I *am* a miracle — the manna in the wilderness just pointed to Me." See also vv. 48, 51. How much more clear could He have been. They

should have been looking for Him rather than what He did.

Jesus then tells them why they need Him (v. 35). It's the same language of satisfaction that Jesus uses with the woman at the well. This is the oldest temptation and is the root of every sin — our seeking satisfaction in anything other than God. And Jesus is our satisfaction. (This was the temptation that began in the Garden.)

This is Jesus saying, "I'm what you were made for." Our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee.

And then He says this in vv. 37, 39 — security! "You come to me and you will not be lost; I will not lose you." He will hold me fast. We need that because all we like sheep have gone astray. We need the Shepherd to seek us when we go astray (Ps. 119:76)!

We need the Lord to come find us because if He doesn't find us, we won't come home.

And then there is salvation, resurrection, and eternal life (vv. 40, 50-51). "I can give you eternal life." Nothing can separate us from the love which is in Christ Jesus, because He is life.

Jesus is speaking of Himself as the one true sacrifice to which all other sacrifices point — "My flesh and blood gives you life." His death gives life.

But in this passage, the people don't get it. The people see the attesting sign of Jesus, but they don't get it. It's not always that way in John (cf. Jn. 4). The truth about Messiah is joined in her with a trust in the Messiah and she is His. She comes home. She eats and drinks of His flesh and blood. And she knows satisfaction and security. He is the bread of life.