

John 6:22-40

The True Bread from Heaven

²² On the next day the crowd that remained on the other side of the sea saw that there had been only ^(V)one boat there, and that Jesus had not entered the boat with his disciples, but that his disciples had gone away alone. ²³ Other boats from Tiberias came near the place where they had eaten the bread after the Lord ^(W)had given thanks. ²⁴ ^(X)So when the crowd saw that Jesus was not there, nor his disciples, they themselves got into the boats and ^(Y)went to Capernaum, seeking Jesus.

²⁵ When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, ^(Z)“Rabbi, when did you come here?” ²⁶ Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, ^(AA)you are seeking me, not because you saw ^(AB)signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. ²⁷ ^(AC)Do not work for the food that perishes, but for ^(AD)the food that endures to eternal life, which ^(AE)the Son of Man will give to you. For on ^(AF)him God the Father has ^(AG)set his seal.” ²⁸ Then they said to him, “What must we do, to be doing ^(AH)the works of God?” ²⁹ Jesus answered them, “This is the work of God, ^(AI)that you believe in him whom ^(AJ)he has sent.” ³⁰ So they said to him, ^(AK)“Then what sign do you do, that we may see and believe you? What work do you perform? ³¹ ^(AL)Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, ^(AM)‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’” ³² Jesus then said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. ³³ For the bread of God is ^(AN)he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” ³⁴ They said to him, ^(AO)“Sir, give us this bread always.”

³⁵ Jesus said to them, ^(AP)“I am the bread of life; ^(AQ)whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst. ³⁶ But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. ³⁷ ^(AR)All that ^(AS)the Father gives me will come to me, and ^(AT)whoever comes to me I will never cast out. ³⁸ For ^(AU)I have come down from heaven, not to do ^(AV)my own will but ^(AW)the will of him ^(AX)who sent me. ³⁹ And ^(AY)this is the will of him who sent me, ^(AZ)that I should lose nothing of ^(BA)all that he has given me, but ^(BB)raise it up on the last day. ⁴⁰ For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who ^(BC)looks on the Son and ^(BD)believes in him ^(BE)should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.”

Main Idea:

Jesus is the true bread from heaven who gives eternal life to those who believe in him.

Nearly 2,000 years ago, on the eastern side of the Lake of Galilee, up on the side of a mountain, Jesus of Nazareth fed 5,000 men plus their families with only 5 loaves of bread and two fish. All were well fed and there were 12 baskets of leftovers. We read about his last Sunday in the first 15 verses of John chapter 6. This was a great miracle, an unheard of miracle. How do you explain this? Remember what Brother Wayne taught us: the prologue, the first 18 verse of John’s gospel, introduce us to Jesus Christ, the

Son of God, and to the content of this gospel that reveal a number of signs, miracles, that confirm that he is the Son of God whom the Father sent from heaven.

We read in the prologue, for example, in John 1:3, “**All things were made through him...**” Jesus Christ, to put it plainly, is the Creator of all things. He created the universe and the earth and all the plants that grow, including the wheat that grows on the hillsides. He did all this by the word of his power, by his command. If we keep this in mind, we should then not be too surprised that he was able to feed all these people in such a miraculous way. God in the flesh has no less power than when he created the universe.

Not everyone believes he did this miracle that day. Some liberals say that when the boy shared his 5 loaves and two fish it encouraged all the people there to share their lunches with one another and so all were fed!

But it was, in fact, a great miracle. It was a great testimony to who Jesus was. He was a man, yes, but more than a man. He was also God who had come to earth and taken our human nature upon himself. He did this without losing an ounce of his deity, that is, of what makes God to be God. This was a clear sign of who he was. Who else has ever done this? Who else could ever do this? The people testified to this fact when they exclaimed in John 6:14, “**“This is indeed (B) the Prophet (C) who is to come into the world!”**”

We think that the bread that Jesus caused to be multiplied, to reproduce itself, was probably small barley loaves, the kind that poor people would eat because they could not afford wheat bread. Bread, as has been said, is called “the staple of life.” In many cultures, such as the Jewish culture of Jesus’ day, bread was the staple of life – it was the main food that most people used for basic survival. The Lord’s prayer reads, “**Give us this day our daily bread.**” Now their bread was likely whole-grain bread, so it was much healthier than some of our current forms of bread which use refined white flour which are far less healthy than bread made from whole-grains.

So such nutritious bread was well able to serve as the basis of a healthy diet. Jesus fed the people with good food that day; it was not junk food, but food that would sustain them for their continued journeys to their destinations. It was the Passover season, so many would likely have been traveling to Jerusalem for the great feast there.

We are going to take up our text today at verse 22:

²² On the next day the crowd that remained on the other side of the sea saw that there had been only (M) one boat there, and that Jesus had not entered the boat with his disciples, but that his disciples had gone away alone. ²³ Other boats from Tiberias came near the place where they had eaten the bread after the Lord (M) had given thanks. ²⁴ (X) So when the crowd saw that Jesus was not there, nor his disciples, they themselves got into the boats and (M) went to Capernaum, seeking Jesus.

After Jesus fed the 5,000 on the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee he went back to the western side of the lake, to the area of Capernaum, on the northwestern shore.

When the crowd of people whom Jesus had fed discovered that he and his disciples were gone, evidently back to the western side of the lake, they loaded up the boats, maybe there was something like taxis they could hire, and they set off across the lake, some eight miles across the water, to find Jesus.

25 When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, ^(Z)“Rabbi, when did you come here?” 26 Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, ^(AA)you are seeking me, not because you saw ^(AB)signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. 27 ^(AC)Do not work for the food that perishes, but for ^(AD)the food that endures to eternal life...

The first thing I want us to see here today is that these people were...

I. Bread Chasers

They were chasing after Jesus not because they had seen a great miraculous sign, a testimony that Jesus had to be the prophet whom Moses had predicted would come into the world; they were not coming because they recognized that this was the promised Messiah, but because he had fed them a great feast on the mountainside, and they wanted a repeat performance!

Jesus recognized their motivation. They were “bread chasers,” not Messiah worshippers. You know today we have so-called “ambulance chasers -” lawyers who learn about someone who’s been in a car wreck and then they follow up on them hoping to persuade them to sue the other party so they can represent them and make some money. They’re in it to make money off of people – basically selfish motivation.

So these people were “bread chasers” – they were looking for a free meal, another feast like they’d had on the mountainside on the other side of the Lake. Their lives were focused on seeking material things. They wanted to fill their bellies with food, not their hearts and minds with spiritual truth, with communion and fellowship with God. How many are like that today!

But here’s Jesus advice to them; actually since he was the Son of God, it was more than advice – it was a command: ***27 ^(AC)Do not work for the food that perishes, but for ^(AD)the food that endures to eternal life...***

How many people today “are working for the food that perishes?” Their lives are consumed with pursuing perishable things, things of this world – money and possessions and food and drink and pleasures. I read yesterday of a prominent lady executive of a prominent international company and she made this remark, “I spend my money on wine, food, and travel.” So many people in our world would do the same thing if they could, have enough money to spend it on wine, food, and travel. But what does

Jesus say, He says those are things that perish. Don't let things that perish consume your life.

Paul had something to say about this, ³ **among whom we all once lived in ^(D)the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body^[a] and the mind...** These people were only concerned about their bodies - eating another big meal.

But Jesus says "don't do that. That is a dead-end street. It may get you somewhere in this life but it won't get you anywhere in the life to come. Instead, work for something else "...**for ^(AD)the food that endures to eternal life, which ^(AE)the Son of Man will give to you.**" (v. 27).

..from Bread Chasers to... (Bread Believers)

II. Bread Receivers

²⁷ ^(AC) *Do not work for the food that perishes, but for ^(AD)the food that endures to eternal life, which ^(AE)the Son of Man will give to you...*

Jesus is saying, you're pursuing the wrong thing, you're pursuing bread for your stomachs, but you need to pursue something of a total different nature, you need to pursue food that endures to eternal life.

Jesus is not talking about perishable food. Bread, if its life out in the open, or even in the refrigerator, will develop green mold and it will begin to have a pungent odor. It will rot, it will perish. Why spend all your life and energy on something like that?

There is a better food, a better bread. It's the food that endures to eternal life. Don't you want to have eternal life? He would say to those people and to all of us today, when you die, you're going to become like that moldy bread and even worse. Why not live forever?

That sounds good, Jesus. How can we do that? There is a secret here. Jesus says the "Son of Man will give it to you." **Give it** to me? You mean I don't have to work for it? The Son of man would give me eternal life? Would he look on a sinner like me, one who has pursued the satisfaction of the flesh and mind all my life, and give me eternal life? That's exactly what Jesus says he will do.

How do I know Jesus will do this? Look at the rest of verse 27, "**For on ^(AF)him God the Father has ^(AG)set his seal.**" What is this seal? It may be the seal of the Holy Spirit that was poured out upon Christ at his baptism and the Father spoke from heaven and said, **This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.**" Or it may have been when the Father spoke from heaven when Jesus was on the Mount of Transfiguration, and spoke again,

This is my beloved Son,^[a] with whom I am well pleased; ^(J)listen to him.

But the supreme seal that the Father set upon him must be when he raised him from the dead. This certified that his death on the cross was sufficient and acceptable as the payment for the sins of his people. The Son of Man who is speaking here is the one

who a couple of years later would be raised from the dead on the third day. Christ's resurrection confirms and certifies that all he spoke was true.

Jesus was saying (v. 27) "...work for the food that endures to eternal life..." So those who were listening carefully asked him a legitimate question (v. 28), "***What must we do, to be doing ^(AH)the works of God?***" "Jesus, you're telling us to work for the food that endures to eternal life, so what work do we need to do? Do we need to give our money to the poor? Do we need to volunteer to help clean the synagogue every Friday? Do we need to memorize more of the Law of Moses in the first five books of the Holy Scriptures? Tell us Jesus, we're willing to work our fingers to the bone if we can have this eternal life."

Jesus gives them a surprising answer (v. 29), "***This is the work of God, ^(AI)that you believe in him whom ^(AJ)he has sent.***" Jesus is saying this: to have eternal life you don't have to work your fingers to the bone doing good deeds, you just have to believe in the one whom the Father sent. "You need to believe in me." You don't have to work, you don't have to labor, you don't have to agonize and crawl on your knees for your sins, you only have to believe in me. Your only responsibility is to believe in me. Trust me to save you and give you eternal life. If you believe in me, you will not perish; you will have eternal life.

III. Bread Believers

Look at their response (v.30-31): "***Then what sign do you do, that we may see and believe you? What work do you perform? ^{31 (AL)}Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, ^(AM)'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'***"

What are these people saying? They're saying, "Jesus, show us a sign and then we'll believe in you. Come on, Jesus, show us a sign. Can you do what Moses did when he prayed for the people and manna came down from heaven every morning and covered the grass and they had food to eat for the day. Jesus, do something like that, like what Moses did, and we'll believe in you."

What is Jesus' response? (v. 32-33) "***Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. ³³ For the bread of God is ^(AN)he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.***"

The Lord Jesus corrects them here. Moses did not have the power to send down manna from heaven; only God the Father could do this. But the Father does much more than this. Instead of sending perishable food like manna that would not keep until the next morning, the Father sends you true bread. It is not perishable bread, but it is imperishable bread. And it is not something you put in your mouth and devour to give your physical strength, but it is a person. The true bread of God comes from heaven is a person. He comes down from heaven because he was in heaven. As the prologue to John's Gospel states,

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (v. 3) And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us...(v. 14)

This true bread comes down from heaven, he is the Word who became flesh and as v. 33 says, "...**he gives life to the world.**" Again, in the prologue, John 1:4, we read, ⁴*In him was life,^[a] and the life was the light of men.*

Jesus is saying to these people, "I am the true bread of God who came down from heaven and I give life to the world. I have come down from heaven to give you life."

Well, this sounded good to these people, so they say, "**Sir, give us this bread always.**" Reminds us of the woman at the well in Samaria when he told her he had living water to give her that would well up to eternal life, she said, "**Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water.**" (John 4:15). It doesn't look like either one is catching Jesus' deeper meaning yet. They're still thinking about physical water and physical bread. So Jesus states it again. He says in verse 35,)"**I am the bread of life; ^(AQ)whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.** Jesus is speaking of spiritual realities here, not physical realities. Even as bread made from wheat that grows on the hillsides was the staple of life for these Jewish people, so Jesus Christ himself is the staple of life, of spiritual life, of eternal life, for those who believe in him. As someone has written, V. 35 – NBC – "*Bread of life " means bread which gives life. Coming to Christ and believing in him are seen to be synonymous, as the only means of securing spiritual satisfaction.*

What is Jesus saying here? He's saying, I believe, that if you come to him, you'll no longer hunger to find God, you'll no longer grope in the dark, you'll no longer be ignorant of the way of salvation. You'll no longer hunger to have your sins and guilt and shame removed. Christ will take all these from you and put it on himself and bear the burden in your place.

It means you'll no longer be thirsty to know if there is a God or not, to know if God cares about me or not, to know what will happen to me when I die.

What Jesus is saying here, is that our deepest longings to know God, to be in fellowship with him, to have assurance that we will go to be with him when this life is over – all these longings will be met by Jesus Christ our Lord. He has come from heaven as the Bread of Life. He is the true bread who has come down from heaven.

And Jesus is not alone in this great work of salvation. He says in v. 37, "All that the Father gives me will come to me..." We do not come to Jesus just because one day we decide to do this. There is a work of the Father that brings about in our lives faith in Christ and belief in him. The Father actually gives to his Son all those who come to faith in him. We come to faith in Christ because the Father gives his people to his Son. Every believer is a gift of the Father to his Son. Can you imagine being in such a special privilege?

The Father has given me to his Son. He has given me faith to believe in his Son. I do not work for my salvation but I receive his salvation. His salvation is a gift. It is not a work we do to earn our salvation. It is a gift to us; we are also a gift in our own persons. The Father gives us to us Son.

The bread these people were pursuing only had temporary power and effectiveness. Once it was eaten and digested the people would be hunger again. It was a never ending cycle. Hunger and satisfaction. Hunger again and maybe some food, but not enough. And then hunger again and again – never permanent satisfaction and contentment.

But in Jesus, the true Bread from heaven who gives life to the world, Jesus says in verse 39, “I should lose nothing of all that he has given me.” He is saying, “If you come to me as the true Bread from heaven who gives life to the world, I will give this this life. I will give you eternal life, and you will never be lost. You will always be secure in me. You will not lose your salvation. The Father has given you to me as a gift. You are now mine; mine forever. I will not lose any of those whom the Father has given me. All hell and Satan and all his demons and the whole world of evil could rage against a believer but he or she will never be lost. As Peter says in his first letter, (1:5) ⁵ ***who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.***

But this is not the end of the story of salvation. Look what the final destiny of the believer is. These people who had been chasing Jesus around the Lake only had daily bread, the next meal on their minds, but Jesus casts their minds toward the future, toward the end of human history, and look what verse 40 says, **For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who (BC) looks on the Son and (BD) believes in him (BE) should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.”**

Here again we see both the Father and the Son are at work in the salvation of the believer. It is the Father’s will that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life – that means my spirit, my soul will live forever, right? Yes, but that is only part of the truth.

Listen to 1 Cor. 6:14 - ¹⁴ ***And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power.***

John 11:25 - ²⁵ ***Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live,***

1 Thess. 4:16-17 - ¹⁶ ***For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.***

1 Cor.15:51-53 - ⁵¹ **Behold! I tell you a mystery. ^(BM)We shall not all sleep, ^(BN)but we shall all be changed, ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For ^(BO)the trumpet will sound, and ^(BP)the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. ⁵³ For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and ^(BO)this mortal body must put on immortality.**

So these people on their way to the great Passover Festival in Jerusalem, had heard that the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee were in the area and they went to find him and spent a day on the mountainside listening to his teaching. He was feeding their minds and hearts with teachings they had never heard.

Then to top it all off he looked up to heaven and prayed and was able to take 5 small barley loaves and two small fish and feed them all until they could hold no more. So the day ended and Jesus and his disciples left.

The next day the crowd discovered that Jesus and his disciples had departed to the other side of the lake so they got in boats and sailed to the other side and found Jesus. Ah, they thought, now we'll get in on another feast.

They did get in on a feast, but it wasn't a feast of physical food to fill their stomachs – they were taught divine truths about salvation from the lips of the Son of Man, the Prophet Moses spoke of, the long-promised Messiah.

What have we seen today? **Jesus Christ is the true bread from heaven who gives eternal life to all who believe in him.**

I. Bread chasers

II. Bread Receivers

III. Bread Believers

Applications:

Pursuits of this world give only temporary satisfaction.

The food of this world perishes.

The Food Jesus gives endures forever. He gives himself as the true and lasting bread from heaven.

Salvation comes by faith alone – in Christ alone.

Jesus Christ is God the Father's gift to those who come to him.

Christ will never turn away those who come to him in sincere faith.

All who come to Christ will never be lost.

Belief in Christ leads not just to the satisfaction of a single meal for the body, but to eternal life for the whole man – body, soul and spirit.

Christ will raise up every believer on the last day.

-by Jeff Gregory, pastor
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