

“The Bread of Life”
John 6:22-35
(Preached at Trinity, March 20, 2019)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. **Verse 22** begins, “The next day . . .” – The day after the feeding of the 5,000, the stormy night, and the day they landed at Capernaum. Jesus has proved Himself mighty. He has proved Himself to be the great provider. He has fed them supernaturally, but did they understand the meaning? We read of the Apostles in **Mark 6 Mark 6:52 NAS** - "they had not gained any insight from the *incident* of the loaves, but their heart was hardened."
2. This section begins with confusion among the multitudes. The disciples had gone away alone and there were no other boats in the area. So where did Jesus go? Meanwhile, small boats were arriving, and the crowds were boarding them and heading towards Capernaum seeking Jesus.
 - A. To their credit, they were seeking Jesus. There is no higher object of our focus.
 - B. Sadly, however, their attention was upon themselves; their physical needs, and they were seeking Jesus to meet those needs.
 - C. This is the way most people approach Christ. They are most interested about having their own needs met. Too many Christians are willing to serve as long as they feel some benefit from their service.
3. The people were surprised when they finally found Jesus.
John 6:25 NAU - "When they found Him on the other side of the sea, they said to Him, "Rabbi, when did You get here?"
4. Jesus didn't entertain their question, which would have merely strengthened their conception of Jesus as a miracle worker. Instead, Jesus issued a mild rebuke:
John 6:26 NAU - "Jesus answered them and said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled."
They had witnessed the miraculous work of Christ, signs with the purpose of authenticating Him as the Messiah sent from God. They validated His claims about Himself. But they weren't interested in Christ. They were only interested in themselves.
5. They came looking for a sign, but they made clear what kind of sign they were looking for. They were interested in signs that would satisfy their fleshly needs.
John 6:30-31 NAU - "What then do You do for a sign, so that we may see, and believe You? What work do You perform? ³¹ "Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness"
6. Then Jesus proceeded to move their thinking from the physical realm to the spiritual.
John 6:27 NAU - "Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you, for on Him the Father, God, has set His seal."

- A. As we've seen over and over, they were completely ill-prepared to comprehend what Jesus was saying. The lost person is unable to comprehend spiritual truths.
1. We saw it with Nicodemus in **Chapter 3**
John 3:3-4 NAU - "Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." ⁴ Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he?"
 2. We saw it with the Samaritan woman in **Chapter 4**
John 4:13-15 NAU - "Jesus answered and said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again; ¹⁴ but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life." ¹⁵ The woman said to Him, "Sir, give me this water, so I will not be thirsty nor come all the way here to draw."
- B. Now Jesus is about to speak words that will explode their minds.
John 6:27 NAU - "Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you, for on Him the Father, God, has set His seal."
1. Like Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman, their minds immediately went to the physical realm.
 - A. Jesus claims to have food which endures to eternal life. They ask Jesus for a sign to validate His claims. Amazingly, this comes the day after Jesus fed the multitudes with just a few loaves and fish.
 - B. They expose what they are really looking for-
John 6:31 NAU - "Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness . . ."
 2. Jesus answers them:
John 6:32 NAU - "My Father who gives you the true bread out of heaven."
John 6:33 NAU - "For the bread of God is that which comes down out of heaven, and gives life to the world."
 3. The people were still thinking in the physical realm. They were thinking about having their physical needs met. They were thinking about the manna in the wilderness. They answered Jesus:
John 6:34 NAU - "Lord, always give us this bread."
6. Jesus answered them:
John 6:35 NAU - "I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst."
7. This teaching came on the heels of the feeding of the five thousand. Jesus recognized their physical need. It wasn't diminished.
 The purpose of the miracle was to provide bread for their physical nourishment but ultimately the design was to point to a much greater bread that only He could fulfill.

- I. Bread or food is essential to our physical life
- A. Physical nourishment has had a place of priority from the beginning
1. Food was important for Adam even before the fall
 2. God gave Adam's nourishment a central place in the Covenant of Works
Genesis 2:16-17 NAU - "The LORD God commanded the man, saying, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; ¹⁷ but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die."
 3. The fall of man was the consequence of eating the forbidden fruit
Genesis 3:6 NAU - "When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make *one* wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate."
 4. After the fall, a major aspect of our existence has been the labor for our food. God told Adam it would be a laborious task
Genesis 3:17-19 NAU - "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat from it'; Cursed is the ground because of you; In toil you will eat of it All the days of your life. ¹⁸ "Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; And you will eat the plants of the field; ¹⁹ By the sweat of your face You will eat bread, Till you return to the ground"
- B. Food is essential to our life
1. We must eat to live. God has given us a physical appetite for food to maintain our steady intake of food.
 2. We all understand the importance of food
 - a. It is a major priority in our life. We think about. We talk about it. There are nutritional aspects to consider. Because God has designed our bodies to be so efficient in processing food it is easy to over indulge—and so there are endless diets and weight loss programs.
 - b. Jesus included it in one of the petitions of the Lord's Prayer "Give us this day our daily bread."
 - c. The scarcity of food has always been a source of anxiety
Matthew 6:31-33 NAU - "Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?' ³² "For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. ³³ "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."
 3. Satan used our Lord's hunger as an opportunity of temptation
Matthew 4:2-3 NAU - "And after He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry. ³ And the tempter came and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread."
 4. Fasting is one of the means God uses to focus upon spiritual things and away from our physical appetites.

- C. The scarcity of food has often been used of God in redemptive history.
1. Israel cried out for food and complained in the wilderness
God graciously provided manna.
Exodus 16:2-4 NAU - "The whole congregation of the sons of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. ³ The sons of Israel said to them, "Would that we had died by the LORD'S hand in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat, when we ate bread to the full; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger." ⁴ Then the LORD said to Moses, "Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you"
 - a. They soon cried out and murmured about the manna
Numbers 11:5-6 NAU - "We remember the fish which we used to eat free in Egypt, the cucumbers and the melons and the leeks and the onions and the garlic, ⁶ but now our appetite is gone. There is nothing at all to look at except this manna."
 - b. It is interesting that the people asking Jesus for a sign are boasting about the very thing their forefathers complained about.
 2. God used famine to raise Joseph to a place of authority and preeminence in Egypt and then used him as the deliverer of Israel, thus serving as a type of Christ.

II. While no one diminishes the importance of physical nourishment in our lives, Jesus is talking about another kind of bread—another source of life

- A. We are born as both physical and spiritual beings
1. As newborn infants we are born with a physical appetite and immediately begin partaking of milk. The baby cries out to have his physical cravings assuaged. The milk sustains us and provides for growth. Deprived of this sustenance we cannot live.
 2. As spiritual beings we are born dead, without life
We lack any appetite for spiritual food. We are unable to partake of spiritual food. We are cut off from spiritual life.
 3. The truth is, the spiritual dimension of our life is more important than our physical life.
- B. Jesus is saying that He is the spiritual food; the only source of spiritual life.
John 14:6 NAU - "Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me."
1. Israel failed to see the significance of God's provision of the manna
 - a. It was bread from heaven – it was from God's hand
Exodus 16:4 – "Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you"
 - b. It reflected the glory of God
Exodus 16:7 – "you will see the glory of the LORD"
 - c. It was life-giving bread that satisfied their hunger – they were filled
Exodus 16:12 – "in the morning you shall be filled with bread"
 - d. It was characterized by sweetness.
Exodus 16:31 – "its taste was like wafers with honey."
 - e. It was designed to point to the true Bread of Heaven

2. Jesus Christ is the ultimate fulfillment of God's provision – the Manna pointed to Him. He was the bread from heaven – life giving bread
John 6:32-33 NAU - "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. ³³ "For the bread of God is that which comes down out of heaven, and gives life to the world."
 3. If the manna was a display of God's glory Jesus is the fullness of that glory
John 1:14 NAU - "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth."
Colossians 2:9 NAU - "For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form,"
 4. Jesus is the life-giving bread that satisfies the true need of men
John 6:35 NAU - "I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst."
John 6:50-51 NAU - "This is the bread which comes down out of heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. ⁵¹ "I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread also which I will give for the life of the world is My flesh."
John 6:53-58 NAU - "So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves. ⁵⁴ "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. ⁵⁵ "For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink. ⁵⁶ "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. ⁵⁷ "As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also will live because of Me. ⁵⁸ "This is the bread which came down out of heaven; not as the fathers ate and died; he who eats this bread will live forever."
- C. We'll see more later on the importance of partaking of Christ
1. He is the only way of life – spiritual life and eternal life
 2. Most men are offended at Jesus – they will not have Him. They understand well their need for physical food, but they cannot perceive their desperate need for this spiritual food.
John 6:52 NAU - "Then the Jews *began* to argue with one another, saying, "How can this man give us *His* flesh to eat?"
John 6:60-61 NAU - "Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard *this* said, "This is a difficult statement; who can listen to it?"
⁶¹ But Jesus, conscious that His disciples grumbled at this, said to them, "Does this cause you to stumble?"
John 6:66 NAU - "As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore."

Conclusion:

1. Only Jesus can satisfy our true need—he gives us Himself
Isaiah 55:1-2 NAU - "Ho! Every one who thirsts, come to the waters; And you who have no money come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk Without money and without cost. ² "Why do you spend money for what is not bread, And your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, And delight yourself in abundance."
2. Man's true need is not physical but spiritual
 Our Lord's words to Satan are of infinite value. He quoted from Deut. 8
Deuteronomy 8:2-3 NAU - "The LORD your God has led you in the wilderness these forty years, that He might humble you, testing you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. ³ "He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD."
3. Are you feasting upon Christ as your sole source of spiritual nourishment? Is He your life? Does He satisfy you? Or do you think like most people on the earth that your physical nourishment is of the greatest importance.
Philippians 3:18-19 NAU - "For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are* enemies of the cross of Christ, ¹⁹ whose end is destruction, whose god is *their* appetite, and *whose* glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things."