

Roland Burrows - 29 August 2021

(Sermon Summary)

Reading: John 6:1-14

Jesus Christ, the Bread of Life

Throughout the Old Testament there are wonderful pictures and parallels which speak of the coming Messiah. Even the small details about the tabernacle point us to Christ. The oil made from beaten olives, the beaten gold covering the Ark, the crushed incense and the beaten corn meal all show how Christ had to suffer on the Cross. Christ was made perfect through suffering and through it became a sympathising Saviour.

John's Gospel, in turn, refers back to the books of Moses.

- John 1:1-2 reminds us of the beginning of Genesis.
- John the Baptist points to Jesus as the Lamb of God, foreshadowed by the Passover lamb.
- Jesus' first miracle was turning the water to wine; Moses' first miracle was turning the Nile to blood.
- Jesus likened himself to the serpent which was lifted up in the wilderness.
- The feeding of the 5000, which happened at Passover, reminds us of the provision of manna in the desert. The rabbis expected the Messiah to do greater miracles than Moses, and this miracle fulfilled that hope. This was a miracle of creation, showing that Jesus is God.

The rest of this sermon looks specifically at Christ, the Bread of Life who came down from Heaven.

Bread is abundant

Bread is found throughout the world in every culture and is eaten by everyone. Like bread, the grace of God is abundant and can satisfy every need of the human soul. Many hymns speak of this abundant grace:

- "Plenteous grace with Thee is found ... More than all in Thee I find" (Wesley: *Jesus, lover of my soul*)
- "In Him there dwells a fulness all divine" (Gadsby: *Immortal honours*)
- "Such abundance is my portion" (Williams: *Jesus, Jesus, all sufficient*).

Bread is a staple food

Bread is suited to all tastes, from the highest to the lowest, the youngest to the oldest. In a world starving for truth, reason, purpose, salvation and the strength to go on, bread is there! "Taste and see that the Lord is good".

We receive bread for our souls when we think about God. For example, we can reflect on the way in which the Christian faith perfectly brings together the justice and mercy of God.

The "old corn"

Psalm 78 speaks of the Lord giving corn from Heaven, angels' food. When the Israelites crossed the Jordan they ate 'the old corn of Canaan'. Later, Joseph stored up corn during the famine, so the people had 'old corn' to eat. In Christ we are eating the 'old corn' of Heaven, since His sacrifice was planned from before the beginning of time. The waving of a sheaf after the Sabbath suggests the resurrection.

Bread is nourishing and sweet to the taste

As such it is a picture of fellowship with God. Moses, Aaron and the elders of Israel saw God on Mount Sinai, and while on the mountain they ate and drank (Ex. 24). We don't know exactly how they saw God - perhaps they had a vision of the pre-incarnate Christ - but they did experience fellowship with God, and God did not lay a hand on them.

How can we eat the living Bread?

Our Lord is the living Bread who imparts life to the soul. He said that we must eat His flesh and drink His blood. This simply means putting our whole trust in Christ and what He did on the Cross. You can't eat or drink for anyone else; similarly we must come to Christ one by one, as individuals. "We taste Thee, O our living bread".