

24. I am the Bread of Life

March 6, 2011

From 1789 to 1815, France was in the chaos of the French Revolution. It was a time when the wealthy, high echelon of their society traveled in extravagant golden carriages while ragged peasants begged on the streets. For the rich, life was luxury beyond imagination with waste; for the destitute, a soup line for each meal.

Revolutionary France parallels the way many of us live our lives today. Indulgence and indigence live side by side within ourselves. While many people splurge on material goods, they are poverty-stricken spiritually. While one may wine and dine at a fancy restaurant, but in that person's heart, his or her spirit is starving to death due to a lack of the Bread of Life.

Just as a physical hunger can only be satisfied with physical food, a spiritual hunger and thirst must only be met with the Living Bread and the Living Water from God.

This morning we are going to study from the portion which many Bible commentators would call "the Bread of Life Discourse" of John chapter 6.

A. WHERE IS MY BREAKFAST?

John 6:22-23 On the following day, when the people who were standing on the other side of the sea saw that there was no other boat there, except that one which His disciples had entered, and that Jesus had not entered the boat with His disciples, but His disciples had gone away alone— 23 however, other boats came from Tiberias, near the place where they ate bread after the Lord had given thanks—

Perhaps for the first time, the multitude that was fed with all-you-can-eat fish-n-chips. It is no wonder, then, that they were looking for Jesus, the miracle worker for their breakfast – they probably were hoping to have Kosher McMuffins.

Just a side note, I am so glad that we are going to have scrumptious meals in heaven without getting fat or having to work out after meals. Can I hear, "Amen" on that?

They saw the disciples of Jesus getting into the boat and left there to Capernaum and also saw Jesus going up to the mountain by Himself.

They were looking for Jesus because they had empty stomachs, not because they were longing for His truth.

B. THE SEAL OF GOD ON JESUS

John 6:24-27 when the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, nor His disciples, they also got into boats and came to Capernaum, seeking Jesus. 25 And when they found Him on the other side of the sea, they said to Him, "Rabbi, when did You come here?" 26 Jesus answered them and said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. 27 Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him."

Did you notice how Jesus completely ignored their question? While they remained in their physical realm, Jesus was leading them to focus on the spiritual.

Jesus pointed out that there are two kinds of food: food for the body, which is necessary but not the most important; and food for the inner man, the spirit, which is essential. What the people needed was not food but life from the Lord, and life is a gift. Food only sustains life, but Jesus gives eternal life.

Isaiah 55:2 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 let your soul delight itself in abundance.

Wouldn't it be great if people are truly seeking Jesus with the right reason? As these people sought after Him with wrong reasons at that time, many still seek Him with wrong reasons. They go to church to satisfy their religious void which we all have from the beginning. But they stop in their tracks before finding out the truth from the Lord. Because they don't want the truth and they cannot handle the reality of the truth that reveals their own spiritual malnutrition.

People want forgiveness, but they don't want to repent. They want to go to heaven, they want to wear the crown, but they don't want to bear the cross. They just want religion that would make them feel warm and fuzzy without the truth and righteousness of God. In other words, they want Christianity without Christ.

But it's a package deal. You don't get to pick and choose the things that you like. You may think, "I want forgiveness. I want to know I'm going to heaven. But I still want to sin." No. It DOES NOT work that way.

When they are confronted by the truth from the sermons by Bible teaching church pastors, they choose not to go to that church anymore and start to look for other churches that have "Seeker-Sensitive" teachings.

2 Timothy 4:3-4 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; 4 and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.

As I've said several times before, it is not what they say at "Seeker-Sensitive" church that will make you stumble, rather what they don't say.

C. THIS IS THE WORK OF GOD

John 6:28-29 Then they said to Him, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?" 29 Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent."

Those who questioned Jesus seemed sure that if only Jesus told them what to do, they could please God by their works of God. For these people, as with many people today, salvation is found in the right formula for performing works that will please God.

Listen, Jesus first and foremost command for us was not "to do", but "to believe". If we want to do the work of God, it begins with believing Jesus. God wants our obedience to Him to grow out of a relationship of loving belief. How would you feel about your child who obeys you perfectly but does not believe or love you? Some of you are thinking, "Can I try those kids for a while instead of my own kids?"

This would lead us to another question: If the work God wants us to do is to believe in Him whom He sent, does it mean that God is unconcerned about what we do for

Him? No, faith is not a substitute for works. Faith is the foundation for works that really please God.

D. GET YOUR FACT STRAIGHT

John 6:30-33 Therefore they said to Him, "What sign will You perform then, that we may see it and believe You? What work will You do? 31 Our fathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'" 32 Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. 33 For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

These people sure had nerve to ask this question to Jesus, "What sign will You perform then, that we may see it and believe You?" Was the dinner for the 15000 men, women and children the night before not good enough for a miracle? Hello!?!?

As I said this previously, the Israelites' first idol in the wilderness was not the golden calf, rather it was Moses. They even thought that it was Moses who gave manna to their ancestors. Their lame argument was so shallow – if they see Jesus' miracles, they would believe. That is not faith. That is witnessing. They didn't even do it.

Faith can not be based on signs alone, because some miracles do not point to Jesus our Savior. Because the Bible tells us that even satan can perform lying wonders.

2 Thessalonians 2:8-10 And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. 9 The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, 10 and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

Then Jesus clearly identified that He is the true Living Bread that came down from heaven. But He came, not only for Israel but for the whole world. And He came, not just to sustain life, but to give life. The Old Testament manna was but a type of the "true bread," the Lord Jesus Christ.

E. I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE

John 6:34-35 Then they said to Him, "Lord, give us this bread always." 35 And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.

What these people said reminds me what the Samaritan woman said in chapter 4. She was not earnestly seeking Jesus, the Living Water, rather she was merely smart-mouthing at Him.

John 4:15 The woman said to Him, "Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw."

In His reply to their haphazard request, Jesus brought two important words: 'come' and 'believe.' To come to Jesus means to believe in Him, and to believe in Him means to come to Him. Believing is not a mere intellectual thing, rather it means to come to Christ and surrender yourself to Him.

In v35, we see that infamous "I am" of Jesus as God revealed Himself to Moses by the name I AM (Jehovah). God is the self-existent one who was, who is and who is to come. So when Jesus used the name 'I AM', He was definitely claiming to be God.

F. FOUR DEEP THEOLOGIES

John 6:36-40 But I said to you that you have seen Me and yet do not believe. 37 All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me will come to Me. 38 For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. 39 This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. 40 And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day."

Jesus was able to sum up four deep theologies of personal salvation in 5 short verses. It is no wonder that He is known as the best communicator in human history.

Let's start to slice them into our bite size:

1) **Divine Predestination** – v37 *"All that the Father gives Me"*

It is God the Father who predestines individuals according to His omniscient knowledge and He knows who is going to come to His Son Jesus to seek one's salvation.

Romans 8:29-30 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

2) **Human Responsibility (a.k.a. Free Will of Man)** – v37 *"will come to Me"*

We all have free will to choose in our hearts. Those who have learned the truth of eternal life through Jesus Christ want to have it. As the Word of God says in John 14:6, Jesus is the only way to get to heaven. So the people who want to receive salvation from Jesus come to Him with their broken hearts.

3) **Eternal Security of Salvation** – v39 *"all He has given Me I should lose nothing"*

What a comfort that is! We don't have to wonder or worry if we are going to be lost after we get saved because Satan is too strong for God to handle. Satan is not a rival with God. He is a mere creature while Jesus is the Creator of the universe. No force outside of each believer's heart can cause individual to lose one's salvation. To believers of Jesus, death is not the end; rather it is only the beginning of a new chapter.

4) **Believer's Bodily Resurrection** – v40 *"I will raise him up at the last day"*

To our omnipotent God, it doesn't matter how an individual believer died – killed in action in a battlefield with a powerful explosion; died and buried thousands of years ago; was cremated and the ash sprayed all over the world like our friend Louise Laverty, pastor Jack's late wife. It is not a problem to our God.

From Adam to the last believers of Jesus Christ, God can put their bodies back together so that their bodies can reunite with their souls in heaven. However, they will no longer have human bodies, but glorified bodies like Jesus.

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.

G. APPLICATIONS

- 1) You have to decide – do you just want bread that will rot soon, or do you want the Bread of Life for eternity?
- 2) There is a literal heaven and hell difference between knowing Jesus personally and knowing about Him intellectually.
- 3) Faith is not a substitute for works. Faith is the foundation for works that really please God.