

“I Am the Bread of Life”

John6:22-51

Jesus is the bread of life. He is the true bread from heaven who gives more than temporal sustenance.

Last week we looked at another of Jesus miraculous signs, as recorded in John’s gospel account – the feeding of the 5000.

The purpose of the sign was that it served as an object lesson for the sermon.

The sermon? That Jesus is the bread of life. He is the true bread from heaven who gives more than temporal sustenance.

Like the living water offered to the woman at the well – Jesus offers food that does more than sustain life – it is the source of life.

The people had come to Jesus for another McDonalds “Happy Meal”. He was offering himself as the true life giving manna from heaven.

His offer was not a temporary quick fix but a gift of inestimable and eternal value.

In Matthew chapter six Jesus tells his followers to seek first His kingdom; eternal things.

How often do we instead seek our security, significance and satisfaction in things that rust and fade away?

Strange then that Jesus refers to himself using the everyday ordinary staple of life we call bread.

In the Lord’s Prayer we are told to pray, “Give us this day our daily bread.

Was Jesus referring to a loaf of white sliced sandwich loaf?

We need to be careful that we don’t leap to a wrong conclusion. John’s meanings in His gospel account run much deeper than what we might at first conclude.

But let’s consider bread for a moment.

Woodrow Kroll in his book “The I Am God” writes,

“Bread. There is nothing in the world like bread. Take a piece of warm homemade bread from the oven and spread some real butter on it, and eat it before it cools. Is there any better aroma in the world than the sweet smell of baking bread?”

Bread is the essential staple of life. It not only supplemented every meal in Jesus day it was the utensil one got food into ones mouth with.

So how is Jesus like bread? Well think about it.

- i) Bread is the basic substance of life – it is the most fundamental food.
- ii) Bread is for hungry people and the universal cure for hunger.
- iii) Bread is only beneficial when eaten.

If you and I want real life, want the source of real life – Jesus must fill our life like bread fills our stomachs and sates our hunger.

Jesus as the bread of life is necessary for life; eternal life.

Jesus is the bread of life because he is the universal answer for a spiritually hungry world.

Jesus is the bread of life because he is the one essential for eternal life.

John uses the image of a grain of wheat that had to fall into the ground and die before it could bear fruit.

See John 12:23-26

As Woodrow Kroll says,

“The I AM God came as a grain of wheat to die and be raised from the dead to pay the price for your sins and mine.”

Now listen carefully.

John again uses the repetition of seven as a cryptic clue to emphasis what he is saying about who Jesus is.

Seven times in this passage John records Jesus saying that he is the bread who has come down from heaven. Verses: 33, 35, 41, 47, 48, 50, and 58.

When you see it you are not likely to miss it again.

John is telling us that this Jesus of whom he writes, is the one sent from heaven to be the saviour of the world.

Make no mistake about John's intent. He slams it home in every chapter of this gospel account.

In John 20:31 we read his main aim in the whole gospel account.

"These things are written so that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the son of God. And that by believing in him you will have life by the power of his name."

John draws this chapter to a close with a mighty statement. Its prominence stands out like a rich, luscious, red strawberry atop a fabulous cupcake.

Let's read it together in verses 68 and 69.

68 Simon Peter replied, "Lord, to whom would we go? You have the words that give eternal life. 69 We believe, and we know you are the Holy One of God."

Whenever life gets too difficult and you are battered and doubting remember that passage.

There is no one in the world like Jesus.

Find your sufficiency in him alone.

We are all spiritually hungry whether we will acknowledge it or not.

Often we try to sate that hunger with junk food but only the bread of life is sufficient.

One last thought for us to take away with us.

When Jesus talks about eating his flesh and drinking his blood, what do you think he is referring to?

Why is there no account of the institution of the Lord's Supper in the gospel of John?

If John is writing to believers some 30 or 40 years after Jesus' resurrection could he be referring to Holy Communion in John chapter six?

If so what is he trying to tell us?

John has already alluded to the theology of baptism in Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus.

Maybe John is highlighting the importance of Holy Communion in the life of every believer.

Maybe this is John's way of saying that there is forgiveness, salvation and eternal life through the body and blood of Jesus when we partake.

As St Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 10:16 English Standard Version (ESV)

16 The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?

I am the bread of life, whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.

Come to Jesus my friend. He is the bread of life. He has living water. His promise? That he will meet our spiritual hunger and thirst.