

The Journey of Faith

Bread of Heaven

John 6:22-71

Introduction:

Today's lesson focuses on the food which perishes and the food which endures to eternal life (6:27a)

I. The primary event

A. The feeding of the 5000

1. This was the lab exercise in which Jesus demonstrated His power over creation
2. The remainder of the chapter shows Jesus taking this lab lesson to a profound lecture (the Bread of Life Discourse)

B. No wonder so many intentionally followed this miracle worker (after all where else could they find such an abundance of food?)

1. Consistent with our human nature, the crowd turns to Jesus once again when their hunger returns
2. Reference vv. 22-25

II. The prevailing theme (the feeding highlights important issues)

A. Clarifying the motives

1. Jesus addresses the crowd's motive in seeking Him vv. 26-27
2. Notice the contrast with John 4:13-14 and John 6:27 (food that spoils and food which endures)
3. Jesus uses confusion once again to teach!
4. There are two kinds of hunger and two kinds of food
 - a. Physical and spiritual
 - b. Jesus exposes their motivation as physical satisfaction!
 - c. They are more interested in their stomachs than in their hearts
 - d. They are more intent on the here and now than on the hereafter!

Evaluating your motives:

Jesus tells us in the Sermon on the Mount: "...do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes?" Matthew 6:25

Take a moment to examine your anxieties. Do you work for food that spoils or is getting your daily bread your consuming passion? Jesus offers us guidance for getting out of the valley of worry... "So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." Matthew 6:31-33.

B. The discussion of miracles

1. The crowd's motives were brought to light when they respond to Jesus with a question v. 28 "...What must we do to do the works God requires?"
 - a. Jesus answers them in v. 29 "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent."
 - b. Jesus is trying to reveal His identity in a way they can understand (He's the Messiah!)
2. But the crowd essentially say to Jesus... Prove it! v. 30 "So they asked him, 'What miraculous sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do?'"
 - a. Recalling some of the stories they grew up with they move from "prove it" to "top this!"
 - b. Read v. 31 "Our forefathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written: 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'"
 - c. Jesus responds by telling them that this gift was not from Moses, but that the bread of God was a gift from God, whether it was shaped into manna or the Messiah! vv. 32-33
3. Here's the confusion once again... v. 34 "'Sir,' they said, 'from now on give us this bread.'"
 - a. Look at v. 4:15 (The woman at the well)
 - b. Look at v. 6:35 "Then Jesus declared, 'I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty.'"
 - c. Yet they still do not understand the gift of salvation that Jesus speaks of... so Jesus explains... "But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe. All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. For

my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."

d. In spite of their continued rejection, Jesus extends the offer again: vv. 47-51 "I tell you the truth, he who believes has everlasting life. I am the bread of life. Your forefathers ate the manna in the desert, yet they died. But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which a man may eat and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live for ever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

C. The reaction of the multitude (vv. 41, 52 the Jews grumble)

1. Jesus once again explains it to them vv. 53-58 "Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him. Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Your forefathers ate manna and died, but he who feeds on this bread will live for ever."

III. Personal Impact (we see three attitudes that parallel responses we see today in the world)

A. Open defection

1. Many were attracted to Jesus the person (miracles and teaching ability)

a. But once His points got sharp many retreated and walked out

b. Read vv. 60-66 "On hearing it, many of his disciples said, "This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?" Aware that his disciples were grumbling about this, Jesus said to them, "Does this offend you? What if you see the Son of Man ascend to where he was before! The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life. Yet there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus had known from the beginning which of them did not believe and who would betray him. He went on to say, "This is why I told you that no-one can come to me unless the Father has enabled him." From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him."

c. Clearly these people were unbelievers and found Christ's words to difficult to choke down

B. Firm Determination

1. Look at Simon Peter- vv 67-69 "You do not want to leave too, do you?" Jesus asked the Twelve. Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God."

2. The crowd didn't discourage them, but made them even more determined!

C. Subtle Deception

1. There was one who stayed and looked and sounded sincere like the other disciples vv. 70-71 "Then Jesus replied, "Have I not chosen you, the Twelve? Yet one of you is a devil!" (He meant Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, who, though one of the Twelve, was later to betray him.)

Conclusion: What category do you fall into?

A. Is it the grumbling crowd? (Open defection)

1. Is it like Judas (Subtle deception)

2. Or is it like Peter (Firm determination)

B. Application

1. As long Jesus is merely a figure in a book, He remains outside of us

a. But when we invite Him into our hearts as Lord we can feed upon His life and be sustained by the author of life Himself!

b. William Barclay- A book which a person has never read is meaningless...

Scot Poirier

Minister

Chelmsford Church of Christ

205 North St.

Chelmsford Ma.

978-256-8901