

58. The Gospel of John—6:35-40

“The Bread of Life” Pt.4

(1/20/19)

As we entered into John chapter 6, we have entered into one of the greatest chapters in the Bible, containing one of the greatest teachings in the Bible—the Bread of Life discourse.

We have begun to work our way thru this all-important discourse (all-important because the topic is ‘eternal life’ mentioned 8 times!)—our first main point:

I. The Physical Preoccupation of the Multitudes—v.22-34

Now, by saying this I mean that—this great multitude of people (twenty-thousand) were more interested in their physical stomachs than they were in their eternal souls—**“You only seek Me...because you ate of the loaves and were filled.” (v.26)**

The whole issue that Jesus will be addressing in this chapter is those who seek Him and even follow Him for the wrong reasons—for selfish reasons.

These people sought Him purely for what He could give them and do for them.

He is going to use this ‘interactive’ sermon (question and answer format) to try to elevate their thinking and perception of life from the physical to the spiritual.

Matthew 6:33 (NKJV)

³³ But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

II. The Divine Declaration of the Savior—v.35-40

John 6:35a (NKJV)

³⁵ And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life..."

As I've already said, this is the first of 7 "I Am" statements that John built his gospel around.

John's gospel is highly organized—he built it around seven miracles, that led to seven discourses, that culminated in seven 'I Am' statements.

The phrase "I Am" is the name of God as first expressed in the book of Exodus 3:13-14.

In John's gospel Jesus called Himself "I Am" (name of God) coupled with 7 different nouns—think of it as a name coupled with a description—like, "*Phil Ballmaier—the pastor*".

Each of these statements is a declaration of divinity since they each begin with Jesus declaring Himself to be the great 'I Am' in human form.

And so, as we study John 6 understand that the whole chapter is built around the feeding of the five-thousand (men plus women and children) miracle and contains a very important discourse—culminating and climaxing with His declaration of divinity, "I AM—the Bread of Life."

In this section, Jesus likens Himself to *bread*—a staple of life.

In John 4 to the woman of the well of Samaria He likened Himself to *water*—another staple of life.

By doing this He was communicating two important truths about Himself—

1. That He is essential for life

By likening Himself to '*bread* and *water*' Jesus was presenting Himself as essential for life—but the context of *this* sermon is 'eternal life'.

When Jesus called Himself 'Living Water' the woman of Samaria mistakenly thought He was talking about some kind of 'magic-water' that if she drank, she would never thirst again physically, which prompted her to say to Jesus—"**Please, sir...give me this water! Then I'll never be thirsty again, and I won't have to come here to get water.**" (John 4:15)

Now this was also the mistake that these folks in John 6 made when Jesus talked to them about the "**true bread from heaven**" (v.32).

They too mistakenly thought He was talking about some kind of *miracle* bread that once they ate of it, it would impart eternal life—as long as they kept on ingesting it.

This prompted them to say to Him—"Lord, give us this bread always." (John 6:34)

But Jesus would go on to clarify that He wasn't talking about literal bread—but spiritual 'bread'—in other words Himself as being essential for eternal life!

2. That He is accessible to all

When Jesus called Himself '*bread*' and '*water*'—again these are staples for life that everyone on planet earth has access to (for the most part excluding famine).

If he would have said, "*I am the caviar and fine-wine of life*"—that would have limited Him to a select few while making eternal life inaccessible to most of the people in the world.

When it comes to a person receiving eternal life Jesus wanted us to know that it is available to anyone who wants it—whether they be rich or poor, slave or free—whether they have lived a moral life or a sinful life—Jesus invites all to come to Him!

Salvation is available for and attainable by every human being because it's a *gift* we receive by faith and not a *reward* we earn thru our hard work, good deeds and religious observances.

The first mistake these people made was to think eternal life was something they had to work for (their Judaism taught them that)—"**What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?"** (v.28) To which Jesus replied—"**This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.**" (v.29)

And the second mistake they made was to think that when Jesus said, "**My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.**" (v.32-33)—He was talking about physical bread (like the manna) that had some kind of '*magic*' properties which if ingested on a regular basis they could go on living indefinitely.

Which led them to ask Jesus—"**Lord, give us this bread always.**" (v.34)—or in other words, "*Lord if this true bread from heaven will give us life—please give it to us always!*"

At this point the Lord Jesus begins to clarify that He wasn't talking about *literal* bread—but *spiritual* 'bread'—in other words Himself as being essential for eternal life!

A. The Source of Eternal Life—v.35

John 6:35 (NKJV)

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** [shall never hunger and thirst in their soul—will be satisfied]. (Explain)

Once again, the emphasis of the 'Bread of Life' discourse is *eternal life*.

Let me stop here for a minute so that we can define just what **eternal life** is all about.

We know that whatever it is—it is only found in Jesus.

John opened his gospel talking about Jesus being the source of eternal life—“**In Him [alone] was life...**” (John 1:4)

In saying this, John was not talking about *physical* life because he uses the Greek word ‘zoe.’

Zoe refers to *spiritual* life—whereas the Greek word ‘*bios*’ (from which we get the English word “biology”), is the word for *physical* life.

So, John is saying that not only is Jesus the Founder of all *physical* life (v.3)—but He is also the Fountain from which all *spiritual* life flows as well.

But just what is this *life* that is only found in Jesus?

Well, first of all, concerning this life Jesus said, “*I have come that they might have life [zoe]—and that more abundantly*”.

So, whatever this life is we know Jesus wants us to have it—and not just a little bit, but abundantly.

If I were to go around asking people to define the concept of ‘*life*’—for many it would be a little hard to nail down.

Most people today would probably try to define life in terms of a *quality of living*.

They would say that life is about achieving a certain level of happiness based on material possessions and affluence.

But the *abundant life* that Jesus spoke of isn't *external* as many believe and teach—it isn't an abundance of money, possessions or earthly success.

This life is *spiritual* in nature—as Jesus said in John 6:63, "*The words I speak to you are spirit and life*".

Look, money can buy you things but not happiness, books but not wisdom.

Money can buy you a *quality* of living but not a *quality* of life (the first being outward, the second inward).

In fact, Jesus warned us against trying to define our lives in terms of our possessions when He said, "*Take heed and beware of covetousness for one's life doesn't consist in the abundance of the things they possess.*" (Luke 12:15)

You see, eternal life (Zoë) isn't just a *quantity* of life; it's a *quality* of life.

The thing that makes eternal life so wonderful and so appealing is not its 'quantity' (never ending) but its 'quality' (richness and fullness).

Eternal life wouldn't be appealing if it simply meant living forever—if that life was painful, hopeless and empty (people in hell will live forever but that won't be a blessing!).

What makes the eternal life that Jesus gives so appealing and desirable is that—it is never ending life in all of its fullness, richness, joy, and blessing!

Spiritual life is to have your spirit resurrected and connected to God by the Holy Spirit—i.e. *‘to be born again’* (John 3:7)—in short it is to have the life of God within us thru the indwelling Holy Spirit.

The life that Jesus gives is a dynamic life, a fruitful life, a fulfilled life, a joyful life, an overflowing life as He Himself expressed to the woman by the well in John 4—*‘If you drink the water that I give it will become a fountain of water within you springing up into everlasting life.’* (John 4:14)

And so, as the Lord is presenting His Bread of Life discourse which is emphasizing eternal life—He first talks about Himself as:

A. The Source of Eternal Life.

B. The Skeptics of Eternal Life—v.36

John 6:36 (NKJV)

³⁶ But I said to you that you have seen Me and yet do not believe.

A skeptic is a person who has the facts presented to them (whether verbally and/or visibly)—but can’t bring themselves to accept and embrace the truth those facts are pointing to.

When Jesus said to the multitude that they had ‘seen’ Him—He didn’t mean they had seen Him ‘casually’ or ‘superficially.’

The Greek word He used meant to *‘see with understanding’*—or at least they should have.

He was saying to them that He had made sure they had seen Him perform enough miracles to understand that He was the Messiah and Savior who had come down from heaven (as did the manna)—so that they were without excuse.

This applies to mankind in general—

Romans 1:20 (NKJV)

²⁰ For since the creation of the world His invisible *attributes* are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse,

We often think that a person doesn't believe in God because they lack information, but the truth is that often the problem isn't in their head it's in their heart—they willfully reject the knowledge they have about God (Romans 1:18).

And the reason so many refuse to commit themselves to believing in God is because then they would have to acknowledge His authority over their life—and they can't handle that.

For the person who wants to live in sin they really only have two choices—1) Believe in God and live with the guilt of disobedience (but that feels lousy) or; 2) Do away with God—no God no guilt!

However, it's really not that easy rejecting the existence of God because there is that 'little' thing called the *creation* that's constantly staring them in the face.

Psalm 19 says, "*The creation, in a universal language, declares the glory* (starting with the existence) *of God.*"

The creation is such a clear and unmistakable source of revelation about God that Paul said in Romans chapter 1—all those who reject the existence of God will not be allowed to plead ignorance on the Day of Judgment.

But getting back to the people Jesus was addressing—they had seen His miracles which clearly pointed to Him as the One God had promised in their Scriptures, He would send into the world someday—the Messiah and Savior.

And so, Jesus is indicting these people for their *willful* unbelief—which was simply proof that they didn't belong to Him, that they weren't His sheep.

John 10:25-26 (NKJV)

²⁵ Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me. ²⁶ But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep, as I said to you...

And so the Lord now turns His attention to those who *are* His sheep and who *will* come to Him and receive Him and their Lord and Savior—

C. The Security of Eternal Life—v.37-40

John 6:37-40 (NKJV)

³⁷ **All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out. 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."**

These verses contain a lot of truth that we need to understand.

The bulk of what Jesus is saying here about those who come to Him for salvation—will have to wait for next time.

Let me just close this morning and introduce our study for next week by saying that Jesus said—

"And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself." (John 12:32)

By saying this did Jesus mean after His crucifixion He would (thru the Holy Spirit) draw all the peoples on earth to Him to be saved?

In other words, was He saying that salvation would be available to everyone on planet earth?

Or, was He saying that the ‘all’ He would draw to Himself for salvation would be limited to a special (and small) group called the ‘elect’?

In other words, *“If I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all the elect to Myself.”*

Which begs the question—*“How can I know if I’m one of the elect? What if I’m not—that means I can’t be saved and go to heaven!”*

That’s a pretty important question!

I mean, when Jesus said, *“Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.”* (Matt.11:28)—did He mean ‘all’ in the sense of anyone in the world, or ‘all’ in the sense of only those belonging to the elect?

Again, that’s a pretty important question and one we’ll take a closer look at next time.