

The Bread of Life

August 22, 2021

John 6:32-35

32 Then Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. 33 For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." 34 They said to him, "Sir, give us this bread always." 35 Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty (NRSV).

Jesus is *The Bread of Life*. The people want it but they do not really understand who Jesus is and what Jesus is offering. Last week we talked about when Moses was feeding the nation. However, it is very important to understand that it was not Moses who fed the people; God provided the food for the people. So, when we get to today's Scripture, the people in the New Testament had the lessons of the Old Testament, they knew that God is the one that fed the people.

In John chapter six, Jesus feeds 5,000 men and connects the miracle feeding with a lesson on *The Bread of Life*. Do not work for the food that perishes but for the food that endures for eternal life. The lesson deals with a contrast between the spiritual realm, which is everlasting, and the desires for physical wants and desires for nourishment that needs replenishing. The audience had a hard time understanding Jesus because their interpretation was based on an understanding of the performance of works. Their belief was that you had to earn God's favor by doing things that are righteous. So, they ask, what do we have to do to get the goods? The answer is to believe in the one that God has sent. This is a main point of our faith - believe in Jesus.

Here is the deal. The people compare the miracle of Jesus feeding fed 5,000 men on one occasion to Moses feeding the entire nation for decades. This presents a problem and they challenge Jesus. They have seen the miracles and are impressed with his ability to feed thousands but they compare him to Moses. Their challenge is based the fallacy of a questionable premise which is an argument that is founded upon something that is false. They accept the premise that Moses fed the people even though they should know that it was God that fed the people in the wilderness.

The audience in today's Scripture knew the Old Testament story. They knew that God is the one that fed the people but their perception was skewed by their desire. They were putting their physical wants and needs first instead of putting God first. So, Jesus sets record straight – the bread came from God not Moses. Then Jesus teaches that the bread of heaven gives life to the world. Now the people, who are swayed by selfish desire say "give it to me." They added the adverb "always" which indicates the magnitude of their selfishness. Then Jesus says "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty" (NRSV). The lesson from Jesus is on a higher realm of meaning than the people are able to understand. This is because their thinking is skewed by their materialistic desires. Jesus is offering spiritual nourishment of the soul which brings internal satisfaction, that does not need external stimulus, and eternal satisfaction, which will last forever. You will never be hungry and you will never be thirsty. This offering is intangible. All of us physically still get hungry and thirsty. The people wanted to be fed physically but the lesson from Jesus is much

more profound. In the heavenly realm there is no desire for self gratification, we no longer crave things that do not last. With Jesus you get everlasting nourishment.

Notice the irony of the situation. The people accept Jesus if he meets their desires and expectations. What Jesus is giving is love; gifts of love to the people; healing, feeding, and the bread of life. Gifts of love don't want anything back. Gifts of love give because they love you. The irony is that instead of thank you and praise, they respond with a challenge. They make their demands known immediately after the feeding miracle which they all recently shared in. The crowd does not recognize the sign that has already been given. Their understanding is very limited. The People sought out Jesus because he fed them and they were eager to be fed again.

What Jesus feeds us lasts forever. He offers real simple solution to their dilemma; accept the one that God has sent. Then you get a new life where selfish desire is eliminated and you no longer base your life on what you can get but you live your life based on the theology of surplus. God gives us everything we can ever want or need. So, we are to praise God and thank God and live our lives according to God's way. We do not live by the theology of scarcity where people struggle for resources and live by selfish desire for more and where every day is lived in fear of not having enough. What Jesus feeds us is much more satisfying than anything on the earth and it never wears out.

Jesus identifies himself as the bread from heaven. The eternal bread from heaven gives life to the world and leaves us with no unsatisfied desire. It is the will of God for all who see the glory that is revealed in the Son and surrender to the faith. Then you possess a real life that lasts forever as he receives all who come to him.