

Text: John 6:22-40

Title: "Believe because Jesus is the Bread of Life"

Time: 9/22/2025 am

Place: NBBC

Introduction: We are certainly a well-fed society. News reports surfaced a couple of weeks ago about the way our governor used the Heimlich maneuver on a contestant in a lobster roll eating contest. That our governor was attending a lobster roll eating contest where someone almost killed himself by trying to eat too many lobster rolls is an interesting news story. Perhaps it is also a strange indication of how blessed our lives are with an overabundance of food.

My wife has some water that is designed to curb your hunger when you drink it. The idea is that when you are tempted to snack between meals on a bunch of calories you do not need, you can drink this water and the temptation to ruin your meal appetite will be less severe. It is certainly a sign of the Lord's amazing blessing of His abundant provision of our daily bread that such a substance even exists. Truly, the meals we eat are like the banquets of the royalty of the past. We gladly anticipate another such meal together after worship today thanks to our gifted cooks.

The crowd, who wanted to make Jesus a king after He fed their 5000 families earlier in this chapter, is going to learn how to redirect their hunger in our passage (v. 27). This is Jesus's goal. The lobster roll that nearly killed our fellow citizen was in the category our Lord calls *the food that perishes*. Jesus wanted them to hunger for a different kind of meal, and He wants us to do the same.

It is the Apostle John's purpose once again in this passage to exhort us to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of

God, and believing have life in His name (John 20:31). He writes that we must believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, because He is the Bread of Life. Notice three things John tells us about the Bread of Life this morning.

I. The Bread of Life is eternal (vv. 22-27).

Illustration: I will always remember my first encounter with a road sign that had the words "Frost Heaves" on it. I was going a bit above the speed limit, and although seeing the sign and its warning, I never slowed down. Soon after I found out the hard way, not merely what the sign said, but also exactly what the sign meant. It is one thing to see a sign that you do not understand, and quite another to read a sign correctly with proper understanding.

Application: Jesus fed 5000 families with five barley loaves and two servings of sardines in our chapter. That was the sign He refers to here. The Jewish crowd certainly saw the sign, but they did not understand its meaning. That is what Jesus means when He says that they really did not see the sign (v. 26). When they saw what Jesus did (6:14), they saw something that could better fill their stomachs, their appetite. In support of this possibility, they were willing to work hard to make Jesus their king.

Jesus's purpose for the sign was for a different kind of hunger (v. 27). Jesus says, "Work not, because I have a gracious gift for you." He says, "Work not for food that perishes, because what you really need is something that is going to last forever." And then He tells them that He would freely give them this eternal life if only they hungered for it.

Illustration: While on vacation this past week at my dad's house with my brother, the three of us were trying to find a

place where we could eat after a round of golf together. Dad lives in a remote area on the boarder of South Carolina and Georgia, so the first thing that came up on our google search was that you could order some food at a gas station that also was a good place to purchase your fishing bait and other necessary outdoor items. I suggested that we keep looking, and the reason I did was that I was not sure that the health inspector went to check on the kitchens of those remote gas stations to certify that their food service was safe. Instead, we found a nice restaurant in a town, which had its food license prominently displayed.

Application: When it comes to the food that satisfies spiritual hunger, there is only one Vendor who bears the imprint of God's seal. He is Jesus Christ (v. 27b). Only He bears the seal of God's authorization to save men from sin. The Holy Spirit is the one who stamps others this way, and this may very well be a reference to the anointing of the Holy Spirit that Jesus experienced at His baptism, which readied Him for His ministry as God's Messiah.

The Jews had a common expression that said, "The seal of God is truth." So when Jesus tells His Jewish audience that God set on Him His seal, He is claiming to be God's truth. He will later explain to His disciples, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man comes unto the Father but by Me" (John 14:6). Tragically, we live in a world that thinks that everyone is allowed to come up with their own truth. This is a tragedy because truth does not work that way. That I had a cancerous tumor was not a truth I chose for myself, but it was still true. If we are to come to the Father, if we are to receive everlasting life, we must receive Jesus as our Savior. The seal of God is truth, and God has put His seal on Jesus Christ. Hunger for Him, and you will find that the Bread of Life satisfies your hunger forever.

II. The Bread of Life is a gift (vv. 28-33).

Illustration: Verse 59 of our chapter points out that at least part of this Bread of Life discourse happened in the synagogue of Capernaum. This was the synagogue that the good centurion had built for the Jewish people, whose servant Jesus had healed from a distance (Matthew 8; Luke 7), and where Jarius was an elder, whose little daughter Jesus had healed (Mark 5:22-24). Edersheim mentions that a lintel from that synagogue was discovered on an archeological dig, and that it bore the image of a pot of manna. Another commentator suggested that the Scripture reading for that day may have been from Exodus 16 about God's provision of manna to His people (as ours was some months ago).

Jewish rabbinical teachings remembered manna as a magical food especially designed by God for Jews. Edersheim: "That manna, which was Angels' food, distilled (as they imagined) from the upper light, 'the dew from above' – miraculous food, of all manner of taste, and suited to every age, according to the wish or condition of him who ate it, but bitterness to Gentile palates." The Jews of Jesus's day believed that God provided the manna to Israel through the merits of Moses, and that it ceased to appear on the ground after Moses died. Finally, manna was connected to the Jews' expectations for the Messiah, their second Moses. He would provide the manna again to God's hungry people.

For any one of these reasons, the Jewish crowd tries to remind Jesus that Moses provided God's people with manna (vv. 30-31). Jesus answers first by pointing out that it was not Moses who gave them this manna, it was God (v. 32a). It was not human merit that produced even that blessing. But the greater point is that we should be after a greater blessing than manna or food that perishes – the true bread

from heaven who gives life, not just to Jewish people, but to the world (vv. 32b-33).

So, as we began this chapter together, we saw that physical appetites can get in the way of our hunger for Christ, and here we find that religious traditions can have the same effect. What the Jews thought manna could do for them, many who profess to be Christians today partake of the Lord's Supper with a similar opinion about its magic.

Roman Catholicism teaches that the wine and bread of their eucharist are transubstantiated as a sacrament, meaning that words uttered by the priest have a magical power to turn the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, the eating of which is the partaking of another sacrifice of Christ for the unforgiven sins of Catholics.

John ministered in a day in which the seeds of this perversion of the Lord's Table were being planted among God's people. In that context, John emphasizes here that we are not saved by eating crackers and grape juice. We are saved by faith in the true bread from heaven, Jesus Christ. The Bread of Life is the gift of Christ, whom we receive by faith.

III. The Bread of Life is security (vv. 34-40).

Illustration: It was not long ago during those years of Covid fear that we experienced for the first time empty shelves at grocery stores. I am 60 years old now, and that was the first time I experienced this reality, which others throughout the world experience every day.

I saw a news story that described tightening diplomatic relations between Russia and North Korea. One sign of this greater affinity was that Russia shipped 447 live goats to Pyongyang to help with the food shortages in that land.

Places dominated by the tyranny of socialism, like North Korea and Russia, struggle with empty grocery store shelves. There is no food security in a country like that.

Application: As though they were refugees from North Korea, this Jewish crowd asks Jesus to give them the true bread from heaven always (v. 34). That they are still focused on the bread that perishes is plain from the fact that their request means, "Give us this bread again and again."

Jesus explains that once you have tasted the true bread from heaven you will never hunger in this way again (v. 35). Jesus is the Bread of Life like the tree in the garden of Eden was the tree of life. God gave the tree of life its name, not because it was alive. All the other trees of the garden were alive too. The tree of life was called that because it was the source of immortality. It provided eternal life.

In the same way Jesus Christ is the Bread of Life, the source of immortality, the One who provides eternal life as a gift to be received by simple faith. And those who take of this life, never ever hunger or thirst in the same way again (there is great emphasis here in the original language). In other words, eternal life is eternal, not temporary. One simple act of faith is the tastes that secures this satisfied hunger for eternity (vv. 37-40). The shelves are always full. Jesus teaches that the Bread of Life is security for three reasons:

1. If the Father gives you to Jesus, you will be with Jesus in that place He has gone to prepare for us (v. 37a; John 14:1-3, "Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am,

there you may be also"). Come what may, our hearts need not be troubled, because the Bread of Life is security.

2. If you are coming to Jesus, you are already in, and He will not cast you out (v. 37b). D. A. Carson: "In almost all of [the occurrences of "cast out"], it is presupposed that what is driven out or cast out is already 'in'. 'I will never drive away' therefore means 'I will certainly keep in.'" You and I are on our journey to that place where we will be with Jesus, and pilgrims like us are never cast out.

3. And there is security here ultimately because all of this is the Father's plan. He plans that those He gives to His Son not be lost (v. 39), and He plans to give to His Son those who see Him and His signs, who understand Him and His signs, who hunger for Him, who understand what He has accomplished for sinners, and who believe on Him for forgiveness of sin and eternal life (v. 40). The Bread of Life is security.

Conclusion: As we finish this morning, I would like us to ponder a phrase that only the Apostle John uses in all of the New Testament writings. It is the phrase, "the last day." Every single one of us has our last day on our schedule. We are going to die or be raptured, and that will be our last day of this life on earth.

But Jesus is speaking here of the last day that we all are going to experience together. It is on the one hand a day of bodily resurrection, another blessing of the promise of eternal life (6:40, 44, 54). In 11:24, Martha tells Jesus that she knows that her brother Lazarus would be raised up on "the last day." Jesus then lets Martha know firsthand that He is the One with the power to do that by raising her dead brother from his tomb.

However, in John 12:48, Jesus warns an audience of a different kind about a different outcome on this last day: “He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day.” Tragically, Jesus had to describe many of these Jewish families this way (v. 36). It seems that most will fall into this tragic outcome on the last day.

You and I have read the signs of Christ this morning, His feeding of the 5000 and His claim to be the Bread of Life. The question remains, however: “Have we read with understanding, with true hunger for Him, and with faith believing that He is my Savior from sin?” Or will He say on the last day about the way we have read His signs, “You have both seen Me and do not believe”?

“A man came—I think it was actually in Philadelphia—on one occasion to the great George Whitefield and asked if he might print his sermons. Whitefield gave this reply; he said, ‘Well, I have no inherent objection, if you like, but you will never be able to put on the printed page the lightning and the thunder.’ That is the distinction—the sermon, and the ‘lightning and the thunder.’ To Whitefield this was of very great importance, and it should be of very great importance to all preachers, as I hope to show. You can put the sermon into print, but not the lightning and the thunder. That comes into the act of preaching and cannot be conveyed by cold print. Indeed it almost baffles the descriptive powers of the best reporters.”

—David Martin Lloyd-Jones,

Preachers and Preaching