



“The Bread of Life” ~ September 16, 2018

OPEN

What is your favourite kind of bread? Do you have some special memory connected with it? (eg. “hot crossed buns” – enjoyed at Easter)

John 6:26-58 records the teaching of Jesus in which He claimed to be the Bread of Life. What are your initial impressions after reading this passage?

To appreciate the setting in which Jesus gave this teaching, read what had happened the day before - see John 6:1-14. What impact do you think the feeding of the 5000 had on Jesus’ listeners as He said, “I am the true Bread”?

Jesus’ statement, “I am the Bread of Life” is on one level very simple and easy to appreciate because bread is common and found in many cultures.

But Jesus as the Bread is also a truth that is very deep and profound. One example of bread in the religious life of Israel is found in Leviticus 24:5-9. Do you note both permanence and repetition in this ritual? What does that say about the way followers of Jesus should feed upon Him as the Bread of Life?

DIG

Let’s consider the bread metaphor in three ways...

Jesus is Good Bread (vv. 26-29) - speaks to superficial spirituality

How did Jesus present Himself as the One who satisfies? In what way is He good bread for us?

What kind of “food that spoils” (v. 27) do people seek today? The enduring food of Jesus offers to us what kind of life – see verse 27?

Wilbur Reese suggests superficial Christianity sounds like this prayer:

I would like to buy three dollars’ worth of God, please. Not enough to explode my soul or disturb my sleep but just enough to equal a cup of warm milk or a snooze in the sunshine. I don’t want enough of Him to make me love a black man or pick beets with a migrant. No, I want ecstasy not transformation. I want the warmth of the womb, not a new birth. I want about a pound of the eternal in a paper sack. I would like to buy three dollars’ worth of God, please.

Jesus is Faith Bread (vv. 30-40) - speaks to self-reliant spirituality

Why did the people want another sign to prove who Jesus is?

Why was the feeding of the 5000 insufficient for them?

When the people referred to God’s provision of manna in the wilderness (see Exodus 16) they only thought of sustaining life. How did Jesus shift the focus to eternal life? See verse 33 and 35?

Read verse 36. If you saw Jesus in person, do you think that would help you believe? Why or why not?

How does the promise of verse 40 give you hope and encouragement?

Jesus is True Bread (vv. 41-59) - speaks to separated spirituality

How did Jesus’ listeners regard Him – see verse 42. What kept them from seeing Him as the Son of God?

In this part of the passage, Jesus is appealing to the deepest inner hunger of the heart. And He assured His listeners that they could in fact know a full and complete identification with Him - see verse 56.

However, these people saw His invitation to “eat My flesh and drink My blood” as an “absurd literalism” (Merrill Tenney)? Why did they struggle to understand that Jesus was invited them to feed on Him spiritually and eternally?

REFLECT

Read Mathew 5:13

Jesus, the Bread of life seems to connect with the fact that His followers are commanded to be “the salt of the earth”.

Christians, as the salt of the earth, are a preservative.

In what way does I Corinthians 5:6-8 invites us to keep the Passover feast? How do we cleanse the yeast from our lives? Bear in mind that in the Bible, yeast is a symbol for sin so Israelites purged their homes of it at Passover.

When our lives are filled with God’s grace and goodness, how will we have a preserving impact upon society?

Christians, as the salt of the earth, are to give seasoning

How does II Corinthians 4:7-12 tells us that our Christian lives must be lived with integrity. If we feed on Jesus as the Bread of Life, how should we live so that others can see that He is the One who satisfies the hunger of our heart.

How’s your spiritual diet these days? In what was are you feeding on Jesus, the Bread of Life?