

DEVOTIONAL 2



CHRIST
CHURCH

SERMON TEXT

JOHN 6:30-40

³⁰ So they said to him, “Then what sign do you do, that we may see and believe you? What work do you perform?” ³¹ Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’” ³² Jesus then said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. ³³ For the bread of God is he who 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 shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst. ³⁶ But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. ³⁷ All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never 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 And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. 40 For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.”

DAY 1

JOHN 6:25-27

²⁵ When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, “Rabbi, when did you come here?” ²⁶ Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. ²⁷ Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal.”

Gift giving is an often overlooked tradition in our culture. Consider the various times it’s appropriate to give or receive a gift: a birthday, anniversary (of many kinds), holidays such as Christmas and Easter, Mother’s Day, Father’s Day, etc., etc. Now of course marketing pushes this agenda for capital gains and our insistence on accumulating more stuff means we often don’t think twice about gift giving. Yet in John 6:25-27 Jesus wants us to consider the message behind the gifts.

Jesus senses that the people seeking him were actually seeking his gifts--like the actual bread they received from him at the feeding of the 5000. They sought him because he was useful: useful for bread, money, health, and recognition. They were interested in the gifts, the tangible things and items received, not the one who gives those gifts, and certainly not Jesus himself. You see, the gifts that Jesus provided: bread, healing, community, etc, were all signs, benefits and things that pointed to the true treasure, Jesus himself, the Living Bread.

- God gives good gifts (Matt 7:11, James 1: 17), how do you confuse God’s gifts with God’s true treasure? I oftentimes find myself thanking God for the things in my life, but less often for Jesus himself.
- Pray that God would lead your heart to rejoice in the best gift of all, Jesus. Not what Jesus provides for us, but in who he is.

PRAYER

Father in heaven. You are the perfect gift giver. You know exactly what we need. Far too often we delight in the gifts we receive and forget where they come from. Would you lead us to rejoice in our King Jesus, the one with whom you are well pleased, and who you sent as a gift to humanity? Today, Lord, open our eyes to see, our ears to hear and our hearts to tune to your good and precious gift. It’s in the name of that gift, Jesus that we pray, Amen.

DAY 2

JOHN 6:28-29, 36, 40

²⁸ Then they said to him, “What must we do, to be doing the works of God?” ²⁹ Jesus answered them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.” ... ³⁶ But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. ... ⁴⁰ For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.”

What do you want me to do? Does that sound like a familiar response to meeting needs or challenges? Just tell me what to do, and I'll get on it! So when Jesus told the pursuing crowd they were looking for the wrong thing, they instinctively asked what they should do.

Jesus is leading them to understand that He is talking about another kind of life that cannot be satisfied or sustained by more bread. He sees that they wanted Him, but could not see who He really was or what they really needed. They were physically alive, but spiritually dead. The gift He is offering is eternal life, God's life, that will transform their lives on earth, and carry them through death into God's presence to live forever. He clearly stated this life is in Him. It cannot be earned or achieved, only received. And believing is the way we can receive.

John's gospel was written so that we might believe Jesus is the Son of God, and by believing have life in His name. (20:31) Reading his gospel brings definition and understanding to what belief means. Here are some things we can learn:

- Believing has value only in relation to its object. We must believe Jesus is the Son of God, and that life is in Him. We must believe all He has revealed in His Word.
- Believing is for life; it is not just mental assent, but changes desires, motives, actions. An unchanged life is an unbelieving life.
- Believing is relational. It unites us to Christ as a person we come to know, and to everyone who belongs to Him. This shared life brings joy!
- Believing is exclusive. We can't simply add Jesus to the life we already have. Jesus once said wanting the praise of men would rule out believing.
- Believing requires surrender, giving up my right to control and trusting Him. I give myself, not just some time or money or some parts of my life.

Believing in the Lord Jesus Christ gives Life...what a grand invitation! Think about the ways believing in Jesus has changed your life. Where are you looking for life outside of Jesus? How does fellowship with other believers fortify your faith and bring joy?

PRAYER

Dear Lord, we do believe, but help our unbelief. We see ourselves in these misguided people looking for life in the wrong places. We confess together that you are our Life, Lord Jesus, Beautiful Savior. Revive us again for your glory. Amen.

DAY 3

JOHN 6:32-35

Jesus then said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but 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.” They said to him, “Sir, give us this bread always.” Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.”

Let’s start with thinking about a loaf of bread. Good bread that’s warm. Bread. It smells so good. Break off a piece and feel it in your hand. Anticipate how it will taste and assuage your hunger. Even looking at a good loaf of bread can cause our stomachs to grumble. Bread is made to be eaten. And usually if there is a loaf of bread offered, it’s not a chore to eat it.

Jesus says He is the bread of life, and says if we come to him we will not be hungry and if we believe in him we won’t be thirsty. He also makes a point to say that it’s the Father who is giving us this bread (Jesus), and that the bread Moses gave (manna) wasn’t from heaven. This is all great news for us. We don’t even have to comprehend what Jesus-as-the-bread-of-life-from-heaven means in order for it to bless us. We simply go to him, and we’ll experience Jesus as the bread of life: he’ll take care of our hunger in a way that’s very enjoyable and sustains us. As the *ESV Study Bible* says, “Jesus is the ‘bread of life’ in the sense that he nourishes people spiritually and satisfies the deep spiritual longings of their souls. In that sense, those who trust in him shall not hunger; that is, their spiritual longing to know God will be satisfied.”

We’re all hungry and looking for something to eat. Consider even the animals we see around--squirrels, deer, a little mouse, birds--they’re ardently looking for something to eat. They’re keeping their bodies alive by constantly looking for nourishment. Jesus offers us himself as the bread of life from heaven. He says if we go to him that we will not hunger.

PRAYER

*Jesus, how do we go to you? Prayer? Your word? We have very deep longings. Satisfy us with yourself today. We’ll continue our prayer using the lyrics of **Taste and See**.*

Taste and see, taste and see
the goodness of the Lord.
Oh, taste and see, taste and see
the goodness of the Lord, of the Lord.

I will bless the Lord at all times.
Praise shall always be on my lips;
my soul shall glory in the Lord;
for He has been so good to me.

Glorify the Lord with me.
Together let us all praise His name.
I called on the Lord and He answered me;
from all my troubles He set me free.

Worship the Lord, all you people.
You’ll want for nothing if you ask.
Taste and see that the Lord is good;
in Him we need put all our trust.

DAY 4

JOHN 6:37-39, 43-44

³⁷ All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never 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 And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. ... ⁴³ Jesus answered them, “Do not grumble among yourselves. ⁴⁴ No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.

John 6 deals with some themes that have both troubled and comforted believers throughout the ages, centering around the nature of our coming to a relationship with Christ and on what basis we stay in that relationship. The assertion of this passage is that both, coming and staying, are the work of the Lord in our life. In v. 44 Jesus says categorically no one comes to him unless the Father draws him. The actual translation of the term “draws” is closer to “compels.” RC Sproul in his comments on this passage puts it this way, “*Jesus simply wasn’t saying, ‘No one will come to Me unless the Father woos them to Me.’ No, His meaning was much stronger. He used the same Greek word that is used in the book of Acts when Paul was seized and dragged out of the temple at Jerusalem (Acts 21:30). We can be sure those angry Jews did not try to woo Paul to come with them.*” The idea is that none of us comes to Jesus willingly. We all have a reticence that makes it necessary for us to be seized and dragged to the one who will give us life. This of course does not negate human responsibility to believe, surrender, to Jesus, but highlights both the innate posture of our hearts and absolute inability.

Jesus then takes it the next step by saying that he, through his power, will sustain the believer and raise them up on the last day. Just as we are ultimately powerless to come to Christ on our own, so we are totally dependent on the work of Christ to preserve us in that relationship.

These claims of Jesus often trouble folks because they highlight the insufficiency of human agency. We don’t like to think of ourselves as not able to do something. But when we realize just how hopelessly lost we are without the rescue of Jesus, there is tremendous comfort here. What human being, sinking in quicksand, completely unable to rescue themselves, will object to someone from the outside coming and pulling them to freedom? Don’t we all relate to the hymn writer who says “Prone to wander Lord I feel, prone to leave the God I love.”? Aren’t we grateful that He has promised that he will raise us up on the last day? If you have questions on these topics bring them before the Lord with a heart that longs to listen to what He might be telling you. Or perhaps seek out a seasoned believer who may help you sort some things out. But at the very least, rejoice in your rescue, praise Him for the preservation that he has promised.

PRAYER

Lord, we confess that so often we think more highly of ourselves than we ought. We forget just how lost we are without your intervention. Thank you for the promises that you do draw and that you will raise up your people, that none will be lost. Holy Spirit, in the midst of things that we don’t understand or that we struggle with, may this inspired word be a balm to our souls. Today, Jesus, we pray that the reminder of our rescue would bring us great joy and that the promise of our preservation would fill us with confidence. We pray this all in the name of the Bread of Life. Amen.

DAY 5

JOHN 6:47-51

⁴⁷ Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life. ⁴⁸ I am the bread of life. ⁴⁹ Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. ⁵⁰ This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. ⁵¹ I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.”

Bread is not usually something that I would associate with providing long lasting sustenance, much less eternal. When I buy a loaf of bread or make a loaf and it comes out of the oven piping hot, it usually doesn't last long. And sure it fills my stomach for a little while but soon I'm hungry again. Here Jesus offers up his body as our bread, our sustenance but one that doesn't end. Bread that provides eternal life.

How is this possible? All of us suffer the consequences of the Fall. Sin leads to death and the fear of death haunts us and is used to keep us captive. When Jesus offers himself up as the sacrifice for our sin he strips away the cause of death and captivity. Because he was without sin, death had no hold on him and he conquered death through the resurrection. Finally Jesus ascends to the right hand of the Father to throw off the captivity we had to the devil.

Hebrews 2:14,15 Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.

When Jesus ascends to the Father he bears with him the marks of being human like us but also the marks of the sacrifice he made to free us from sin. However, it is no longer a body that will suffer death but a resurrected and indestructible body.

Hebrews 7:15-16 This becomes even more evident when another priest arises in the likeness of Melchizedek, who has become a priest, not on the basis of a legal requirement concerning bodily descent, but by the power of an indestructible life

So Jesus as our great high priest offers to us a bread that will sustain and renew us, because it is his body which freed us from sin and which is eternal. His body is offered to us as the bread of eternal life, a bread which provides freedom from sin and the promise of our own resurrection

PRAYER

Jesus our Savior, thank you for your suffering that I might live. Thank you for providing me with eternal sustenance. Give me wisdom through your Word and Spirit that I might be transformed into the image of your indestructible life. You are the bread of life through which I have the promise of eternal life. Praise your name. Amen