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The Bread of Life
John 6:22-40

May 1, 2016

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–{1}. John 6:22-40. . . . . The Bread of Life

A. Introduction
   1. A Simple Subject, A Deep Meaning
      a. What could be a more common topic than that of bread?
         (A) most of us, unless restricted in diet, eat it every day
         (B) it comes in many forms: white, brown, rye, fruit, egg, and so on
         (C) but still it comes down to the same basic ingredient – flour from the seed of a grain
         (D) and in one of its various forms, it is the staff of life for much of the world
      b. this is the item that Jesus uses to illustrate deep spiritual truth
         (A) the words used are simple: bread, food, give, eat
         (B) in reading the Greek I think I only had to check the meaning of one, maybe two words – so translations do not vary greatly
         (C) I'll reverse my normal order, and first read these verses through in the; then use the NKJV as we examine them verse by verse

« Scripture Reading . . . . . John 6:22-40 (NASB) »

   2. Part One of Jesus' Discourse
      a. next week we shall look at the second part when our title would be, "The Bread from Heaven"
      b. we could reverse these two titles because the subject is the same
      c. but as the first part seems to me to give greater emphasis to Life and the second part to the source of that Life, let's look at it that way

B. The Gathering Audience. 6:22-25
   1. The People Seek Jesus (v 22)
      a. "On the following day, when the people who were standing on the other side of the sea saw that there was no other boat there, except that one which His disciples had entered, and that Jesus had not entered the boat with His disciples, but His disciples had gone away alone–"
      b. Let's summarise what has happened
         (A) yesterday, Jesus fed 5,000 men as well as women and children from 5 barley loaves and 2 small fish contributed by a young lad

(B) the people seeing this, recognised Jesus to be that Prophet who is to come into the world
(C) they sought to take him by force & to make Him king
(D) Jesus perceived their intentions,
(1) sent them away,
(2) sent his disciples westward across the sea,
(3) and went up in the mountain to pray
(E) in the night, He walked on the sea and joined His disciples

c. the people this next day had not given up and they went looking for Him, knowing that He had not left with the disciples
(A) "however, other boats came from Tiberias, near [to] the place where they ate bread after the Lord had given thanks–" (John 6:23)
(B) they are joined by others who arrive by boat on the same mission

d. "when the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, nor His disciples, they also got into boats and came to Capernaum, seeking Jesus." (John 6:24)
(A) they cannot find Jesus on the eastern side of Galilee
(B) so despite all evidence to the contrary they conclude that He must be with His disciples
(C) taking advantage of the boats gathered there, they head west

2. It Is Good to Seek Jesus
a. it's a commendable pursuit to seek Jesus
(A) there seem to have been a large number of them, so they looked high and low – they were persistent in their search
(B) but we may have reason to question their motives in a moment
(C) we touched on that two weeks ago
(D) but in this sense, their search was rewarded

b. "And when they found Him on the other side of the sea, they said to Him, "Rabbi, when did You come here?"" (John 6:25)
(A) they find Jesus, and ask the obvious question – which, you will notice, Jesus does not answer
(1) in fact, as you read the gospels, Jesus often doesn't answer the questions that people throw at Him
(2) so God often doesn't answer our questions (and prayers) in the way we expect, for faith is trusting Him regardless

c. Let us look at the first part Jesus' discussion with this audience

C. The Discussion, part I 6:26-40

1. Food that Abides (vv 26-27)
   a. 'Jesus answered them and said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. Do not labour for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him."'
   b. their seeking, as we have said, was ill-motivated
      (A) they sought for a day's meal, whose benefit was soon over
      (B) there is an imperishable food that is preferable to the perishable
         (1) God made man to have fellowship with himself
         (2) sin destroyed that perfect arrangement
         (3) so in the highest sense, man's chief business in life is to find the salvation that restores fellowship, and then tell others
      (C) this involves reversing the world's values
         (1) Jesus said, what shall it profit a man if he should gain the whole world and lose his own sould
         (2) Illustration: in excavating the ruins of Pompeii, a woman was discovered in the act gathering jewellery in her apron
      (D) labouring for this "food" is assured of success because it depends on Christ as we shall see
   c. the health of the soul is far preferable to health of the body
      (A) though care for interests of body is needful
         (1) Paul said, 'bodily exercise profits a little'
         (2) James, 'God giveth all things richly to enjoy'
      (B) the soul's everlasting existence means that it should have priority
      (C) labour to the benefit of our soul is what really matters
   d. in such a labour, leading to eternal life, we have a promise here
      (A) the Son of Man has that food that provides such life
      (B) for He has the Father's seal of approval
      (C) that means Jesus' spiritual food – His teachings – is far superior to any material food with Good Housekeeping's seal of approval!

2. The Works of God (vv 28-29)
   a. Their question

(A) ‘Then they said to Him, “What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?”’ (John 6:28)
(B) this a question that a true seeker of God can and should ask
(C) for it voices a recognition that
(1) God is worthy of our efforts to seek for Him, to serve Him
(2) man can have a relationship with God
(3) such a relationship does not exist automatically

b. Jesus’ answer
(A) ‘Jesus answered and said to them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.”’ (John 6:29)
(B) implied in this answer is that Jesus is the One whom God has sent
(C) this is literally, “believe into Him” and students of the use of this phrase in NT times tell us that this is not mere mental agreement to Jesus’ claims, but rather ‘surrender or submission’ to Him —{2}.
(D) this is the work of God in which Jesus says we should labour

« (The message ended here due to time, the rest left for next Sunday.) »

3. The Bread of Life (vv 30-40)
a. “We Want a Class A Moses Sign!” (30-31)
(A) ‘Therefore they said to Him, “What sign will You perform then, that we may see it and believe You? What work will You do? Our fathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written, ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’”’
(B) for them yesterday’s sign not sufficient, feeding a mere 5,000
(1) Moses fed them with Manna, over 2 million for 40 years
(2) implication of statement: show yourself as great as Moses
(3) “… Through Thy servant Moses. Thou didst provide bread from heaven for them for their hunger, …” (Nehemiah 9:14b-15a)
(C) but in asking this question, they forgot the related question
(D) where are all those who ate of the manna?
(E) so Jesus tells them about

b. A Better Bread; A Better Sign (32-33)
(A) ‘Then Jesus said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give 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."' (John 6:32-33)

(B) it is "My Father" who gives this – with this intimate term Jesus claims a very special relationship with God – like the vernacular "Father of mine" it shows a distinct possessiveness

(C) it is God who both gave the manna and who gives the better Bread – Moses was only God's instrument

(D) the better Bread is out of heaven and is the true, the real Bread, the genuine Bread – of which manna and all other breads are only types

(E) bread as we have said

(1) is the staff of life – made from seed of grain, in which there is innate life although it appears dead

(2) manna only sustained life to only 2 million for a short time

(3) this true Bread gives life to the world – it has greater scope than manna – it gives greater life than manna

c. "Ever Give Us This Bread" (34)

(A) 'Then they said to Him, "Lord, give us this bread always."' (John 6:34)

(B) that is commendable request on their part

(1) they are aware of a universal need and their particular need

(2) this is a prayer to Jesus, & prayer is the language of need

(3) they are asking the right Person

(C) but they are still thinking of manna – of physical bread

(1) didn't perceive its character of life this Bread gives

(2) didn't perceive the nature of its source of this Bread; for

d. Jesus is That bread (35-36)

(A) '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. But I said to you that you have seen Me and yet do not believe."'

(B) the non-spiritual cannot satisfy the soul's hunger and thirst

(1) why cannot mere material blessing satisfy? – it gets used up

(2) why cannot mere physical blessing? – it passes away

(C) But spiritual blessing can satisfy – for it is boundless, endless

I'm feeding on the living bread,
I'm drinking at the fountainhead;
And whoso drinketh, Jesus said,
Shall never, never thirst again.
What, never thirst again? No, never thirst again!

What, never thirst again? No, never thirst again!
And whoso drinketh, Jesus said,
Shall never, never thirst again! —{3}.

(D) they see the Bread (the Living Bread, Jesus), but did not benefit
(1) these people saw, heard His words, yet failed to be blessed
(2) they asked for a sign: their motto, "seeing is believing"
(3) but Jesus says in effect "believing is seeing"
(4) unless you believe, you can never benefit by merely seeing – knowing about – Jesus

e. The assured blessing to those who believe in Jesus (37-40)
(A) "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. 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. 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."
(B) assured by Jesus promise, that if we come to Jesus – we are by this known to be the Father's gift to the Son – He will take us
(C) assured, not by our obedience but by Jesus' obedience
(D) assured by the Father's plan that salvation be eternal
(E) assured because death cannot disturb this salvation –there will be the resurrection to life for those who are Jesus Christ's
(F) assured because the condition does not rest upon our own works and strength and power,
(1) but in trusting in Jesus' work and strength and power
(2) that He who was raised from the dead will raise us from death

D. Conclusion
1. if there be one here who has never believed in this Jesus – surrendered to His love, submitted to being His disciple
a. what could be more important?
b. and if you have, rejoice that you have this testimony

I came to Jesus, and I drank
Of that life-giving stream,
My thirst was quenched, my soul revived,
And now I live in Him. —{4}.

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Explanatory additions to the Bible text are shown in {*braces*}. Version identifiers are:

AV Authorized (King James) Version of 1769
NAS New American Standard version © 1960, 1995 The Lockman Foundation (usually the 1995 edition)
NIV New International Version © 1984 by the International Bible Society
NLT New Living Translation © 1996 Tyndale Charitable Trust
NKJV New King James Version © 1979 Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers

Some of the commentaries and resources used in the preparation of this message are identified as follow:

BM – *Biblical Museum*, Editor James Comper Gray, ca 1870
NICNT – *The New International Commentary on the New Testament*
The Gospel according to John, by Leon Morris
NTC – *New Testament Commentary*, by William Hendrickson; Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI; 1954
RWP – *Robertson's Word Pictures of the New Testament,* by Dr. A. T. Robertson

2. *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, Dana & Mantey, p. 105

3. *'I'm feeding on the living bread,'* Pinebrook Choruses, #46, Pinebrook Press, PA, 1946.

4. *'I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say,'* by Horatius Bonar