

I Am the Bread of Life

Our Gospel lesson sets forth three ways that hungry hearts feast on Jesus Christ.

²⁵ When they found Him on the other side of the sea, they said to Him, “Rabbi, when did You get here?”

²⁶ Jesus answered them and said, “Truly, truly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled.

²⁷ Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you, for on Him the Father, God, has set His seal.”

²⁸ Therefore they said to Him, “What shall we do, so that we may work the works of God?”

²⁹ Jesus answered and said to them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent.”

³⁰ So they said to Him, “What then do You do for a sign, so 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 out of heaven to eat.’”

³² Jesus then said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread out of heaven, but it is My Father who gives you the true bread out of heaven.

³³ For the bread of God is that which comes down out of heaven, and gives life to the world.”

³⁴ Then they said to Him, “Lord, always give us this bread.”

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.”

Introduction:

1. Back in 1980, a troubadour sang: “Everybody’s got a hungry heart.” Bruce Springsteen and his E Street Band diagnose the true condition of all of our hearts. He sings about how our heart hunger can lead us to make very poor decisions that destroy our lives and harm the lives of others. All of us have a hunger for God, for justice, for truth, for love, for security, for significance, and for life.
2. Here is the challenge: According to Ecclesiastes 3:11, God has set eternity in our hungry hearts and the things of time cannot fully or permanently satisfy our hearts. Therefore, there is an emptiness and deep dissatisfaction that mark our lives in this broken and fallen world.
3. Enter Tom Brady, the quarterback for the World Champion New England Patriots. Brady has five Super Bowl rings, four Super Bowl MVPs, two League MVPs, all kinds of endorsements, and a

beautiful wife and family. This man seems to have it all.

4. However, CNN interviewed Brady a few years ago and he candidly admitted: “Why do I have all these Super Bowl rings and still think there's something greater out there for me? A lot of people would say, ‘Hey man, this is it. You reached your goal and fulfilled your dreams.’ Me, I think, God, there’s got to be more than this. This isn’t all that it’s cracked up to be.”
5. The interviewer asked Brady: “What’s the answer?” Tom: “I wish I knew. I wish I knew.”
6. What would you say to Tom? If Blaise Pascal were to speak to Tom Brady, he would say: “There is a God-shaped vacuum in the heart of every person which cannot be filled by any created thing but only by the Creator made known through Jesus Christ.”
7. If Augustine could speak to Brady, he might say: “Tom, God made you for Himself, and your heart will be restless until it finds its rest in Him.”
8. What would Jesus say? Tom, you have a hungry heart and nothing in this earth will ever fully satisfy, but “I am the bread of life and whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.” I am the answer to every need that you will ever have. Come and feast on me!
9. This is the essence of our sermon text this morning. Through it, we learn that **hungry hearts feast on Jesus Christ in three ways: by embracing His identity, trusting His promise, and heeding His invitation.**

I. **Hungry hearts feast on Jesus by embracing His identity (6:35, 41, 48, 51).**

- A. In His person, Jesus is divine.
 1. His divine name — Jesus reveals Himself to be the eternal God by using the divine name - YHWH (I Am) from Exodus 3:14.
 2. His heavenly home (vv. 32, 33, 38)
 3. His divine relationship with His Father (vv.27, 32) .
- B. In His work, Jesus gives life by dying (v. 51).
- C. Implication: Why are you seeking Jesus? How prone we are to seek Jesus for what He can do for us, rather than for who He is? Why have you come today? Is it to get something from Jesus or to get Jesus Himself? Notice in the text why Jesus says most people come! Most people come to Jesus to fill their tummies rather than for Him to fill their souls with Himself. Religious people find Jesus useful. Christians find Him beautiful. How about you?

II. **Hungry hearts feast on Jesus by trusting His promise (v.35).** *In a world where many are crushed by pessimism and despair, Jesus promises you life...abundant, spiritual, and eternal life.*

- A. What do you do when your body needs energy? You eat food. What do you do when your soul needs hope? You feed your soul Jesus’ promises. Verse 35 contains one of His precious and very great promises.
- B. In verse 35, Jesus promises: “**whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.**” Jesus says: “I am the only one who can permanently and fully satisfy your hungry heart.”
- C. How is it that those who come to Christ will never hunger again? The life Jesus grants and sustains is eternal life which begins now and is not interrupted by physical death (v. 35, 40, 47, 54).

- D. Application: Are you living in light of what Jesus promises? Or are you allowing your circumstances and emotions to dictate to you? Has your labor for the physical bread that perishes distracted you from seeking the true bread that endures to eternal life (v.27)? Where are you looking to fill the inner emptiness of your heart? Where are you eating the bread of anxious toil... the bread that does not satisfy? Blaise Pascal counsels us: "It is good to be weary and frustrated with the fruitless search for the good (life) so that you can reach out your arms instead to the Redeemer."

III. Hungry hearts feast on Jesus by heeding His invitation (vv.36-40). How do you heed His invitation?

- A. Look on Him and live.
1. The danger of seeing and not believing (v. 36).
 2. The privilege of seeing and believing (v.40). The word for "look" means to look thoughtfully, gaze intently, and scrutinize carefully.
- B. Come to Him and live (vv. 35, 37, 44, 65)
1. How is it that you are enabled to come? 6:37 - "All that the Father gives me will come to me and whoever comes to me I will never cast out." 6:44 - You and I will never come unless the Father first draws us to trust in Jesus.
 2. All who are chosen will come. "All that the Father gives me will come to me."
 3. All who come are welcomed: "He who comes to me I will never cast out."
 4. All who come are eternally secure. He loses none of those He receives. "Everyone who sees the Son and believes on him has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day." (6:40, 44, 47, 50-51).
- C. Believe in Him and live.
4. The necessity of saving faith (vv. 35, 40, 47).
 5. The nature of saving faith. What is faith in Jesus Christ? Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon Him alone for salvation, as He is offered to us in the Gospel.
 6. The mystery of saving faith (v. 29). It is God's work, but you are morally responsible to place your faith in Him. The mystery of divine sovereignty/our responsibility.
 7. The result of saving faith. Eternal life now and the hope of resurrection on the last day (vv.49-50, 44, 54).
- D. Feed on Him and live (vv. 53, 54, 56, 58). Eternal life is not just a divine gift, but an actual participation in the life of Jesus through His sacrificial death. To eat of this bread means to accept His sacrifice for you and take Him as your life. You are being called to a total, intimate, involved, and on-going relationship with Jesus.

Discussion Questions

1. What motivated the crowds to follow Jesus (6:26-27)? Do you think these same things motivate people today in seeking Jesus? In what ways have you seen this religious impulse alive in your heart and in the hearts of others?
2. How would you describe the difference between a religious person and a Christian?
3. How did Jesus respond to these people (6:26-29)? What do you think Jesus was really trying to teach the crowd when He fed them (6:27)?

4. What do you think Jesus Christ is actually claiming when He says that he is “the bread of life” (John 6:35,51)?
5. In verse 35, how does Jesus expand the promise He makes to the Samaritan woman (John 4:10, 13-14)?
6. To what do most people tend to look to satisfy their hungry hearts? Think about the encounters that Jesus has in the Gospel of John. How about you? Where do you tend to look?
7. What one way would you live differently if you really derived your satisfaction in life from knowing Jesus as your bread?
8. How should God’s sovereignty in our salvation affect us practically? How could you use John 6:37, 39, and 44 to help a friend who’s struggling with the assurance of their salvation?
9. What part of Jesus’s four-fold invitation in John 6 do you find most challenging (gazing, coming, believing, or feeding)? Is He describing a one-time event or a process that continues throughout your life?

Going Deeper

1. What particular teachings of God’s sovereign grace are set forth in John 6:37, 39 and 44? How would you live differently if you remembered regularly the drawing ministry of the Father in salvation and the keeping ministry of the Son in your salvation?
2. What do you think Derek Kidner means when he says: “God’s beautiful but tantalizing world is too big for us, yet its satisfactions are too small. Since we were made for eternity, the things of time cannot fully and permanently satisfy”? How would you live differently if you took his words to heart?