

John 6:30-36

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## 1. What is this bread?

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Good morning.

In 2016 Mark and I went on a cruise to some of the pacific islands and New Zealand, On a cruise you don't have to worry about cooking or cleaning, you eat whenever you want, you are entertained whenever you want, relax whenever you want, you get to see amazing places. On this trip there were a couple of times when I said to myself, sigh this is the life. Have you ever said that?, Or perhaps you can imagine that kind of a moment. But of course that kind of a life ends, I'm no longer on a cruise. Perhaps we never achieve our this is the life moment. Well in our passage today, if we listen to Jesus carefully he offers to everyone a This is the Life moment, but it's even better than what we can imagine.

So What's happened so far in John chapter 6?

we've seen Jesus miraculously feed to the full over 5000 men, women and children from just 5 small loaves and 2 fish, Jesus has walked on water, The crowds that were with him are searching for Jesus and they find him across the lake and they begin to have conversation with Jesus.

Jesus exposes their wrong motivations when they find him - He says that you are searching for me because I'm the guy that can give you bread so that your stomachs can stay full. Look for the bread that doesn't spoil.

Then the next question they asked was what are the works that God requires so that we can have this bread? And the answer Jesus gave was to believe in the one he has sent.

So in response to what Jesus said, the crowd pretty much says to him, in verse 30 and 31 Jesus PROVE it. You are claiming to be this amazing guy who you want us to believe in, prove it to us. And the crowd brings up an event that happened in the history of God's people. It's helpful for us to understand this event, because it's kind of like listening to a conversation between two people about a movie that you haven't watched, it's hard to fully appreciate what is being said and understand what's happening.

So the event they talk about is found in the book of Exodus, God's people have grown, and they are in slavery in Egypt and they cry out to God. God hears their cries and sends his servant Moses, and he brings them out through the waters of the red sea and into the wilderness. But they're worried, they're in the desert with no food and they're going to starve to death. But God provides, God sends bread from heaven. Called manna. He sends enough bread for every person every day for 40 years.

So when we hear the crowd say to JESUS prove that you are the one that God has sent. They're saying What are you going to do? Hint hint (can you beat this guy Moses??) Our ancestors were given bread to eat in the wilderness for 40 years. Imagine not having to go to Coles or Woollies or any supermarket for 40 years!!

They're saying Jesus you've given us bread for 1 day, if you're really the one God has sent, let's see some more bread and then we'll believe.

Jesus responds to the crowd. He firstly explains that the context of their request is wrong and secondly they're not understanding what the bread is signifying.

So what does Jesus say?

First of all- remember who it is that gave you this bread. Jesus corrects them by saying It was not MOSES but it is GOD the FATHER who gives you the bread of heaven. He was the one that you depend upon for your food each day. And he provides it for you. Don't forget that it is God the Father who gives you everything you need in life.

And you know, this is something that we need to remember today too. We like to be independent people. Our incomes makes it possible for us to have full cupboards, full closets, cars, tvs, good education to get the good incomes, and we have a pretty good life, and sometimes we forget the fact that everything we have is from God. Do we spend time each day thanking God for the things that he gives us?

The second thing that Jesus says is about the bread in verse 32. the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.

When Mark and I were organising what kind of food that we wanted to have for our wedding. We both decided that we needed to have Peking duck pancakes as part of the meal. So we looked and looked for the perfect Peking duck pancake. Of course, although we had decided it was a necessity for our reception, Peking duck pancakes are not a necessity to have in life. But as we think about bread in our passage today, we need to remember that bread was a necessary part of life

for a 1st Century Palestine. It was the centre of every meal. It was the basic food of life.

For people in developing countries or who are living in poverty,- bread or basic food means LIFE. If they are able to have food to eat, it means that they can live that extra day longer. It's what we might call an every day food. In some countries the basic food may not be bread, Jesus may have said I am the RICE of life or I am the YAM of life. Whatever the basic food, it is able to give LIFE. According to survival guides, without food, if we're lucky, we'd have only a couple of months to live. And so for humans food is necessary for LIFE, we can't live without it.

So that's what we need to remember bread to a 1<sup>st</sup> Century Palestine was necessary for LIFE, They've seen Jesus give them free food and did you know that 85% of their income was spent on buying food, so Jesus represents the good LIFE, a life of blessings, it was like Jesus was offering them a 40 year or more cruise, it will be manna 2.0 version and this is the kind of LIFE these crowds are searching for.

But they're still not understanding Jesus. Although he is offering the good life a life of blessings, it's not what they think it is. The crowd is still searching for the wrong thing even if it's from the right source, Jesus.

## 2. Are you hungry?

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Just like the crowd was searching for Jesus who had life, Don't we all also go searching for a good life? Are we just as hungry?

Do you ever think - I'd be happy and content if only... I would be happy and content if I had this kind of a job, I would be happy and content if only I had 2 million dollars, or I would be happy and satisfied if I was in a loving relationship,

or I would be happy and satisfied if my wife or husband was a little bit more like that, or I would be happy and content if I had children, and then I'd be happy if they were always obedient, I will be happy and content if only I had this kind of experience. I would be happy and content if life was like this - you put in however you want to answer.

There is a hunger for life within every human being. The question is, what do we eat, how do we satisfy our hunger? Some of our individual pursuits may meet some of these hungers. Education may bring knowledge. Romance may bring a sense of belonging. Accomplishments may bring significance. Wealth brings some of the things within reach. But as we've already heard Jesus say to us in verse 27, those things are temporary and will fade away. It will not satisfy us.

And you know what, even if we could keep pursuing our hungers with all these things, the reality is, is that there is going to be an end to our physical life. There will be a time when our bodies decide to no longer use the food we eat to nourish us. One day we will die. There is no way we can escape this no matter how hard you might try.

This is the need that Jesus is exposing to the crowd, he says you have an eternal hunger that you are trying to fill with material temporary solutions. It will never satisfy you. So what does Jesus have to offer us?

### 3. Jesus' extreme claim - "I AM the BREAD of LIFE"

Well, Here is the climax of the chapter, the words where Jesus clearly states who he is. he declares "I Am the BREAD of LIFE" Whoever comes to me will never go hungry and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. It's at this statement where things begin to fall apart for the crowd, they don't like what he says and they begin to grumble and we'll see that in detail later on in this chapter.

This is a big statement for the following reasons.

1. Jesus says that HE is the bread that came from heaven. The Jews didn't like this because only God can come from heaven. It was a claim to be God.
2. The second thing is that Jesus is saying that He is the one to offer LIFE, and not just life but ETERNAL life, only God can offer eternal Life, so Jesus is again saying something that they don't like.

We actually don't see it in the English language, because we use the word life in many different ways, for example in a panic and I could say Does she have life? Or I could casually say How's life going? The same root word, but very different meaning.

In greek, they have 3 words for life and the LIFE word that Jesus uses in this passage is the word zoe. Zoe signifies your life(as in dead or alive) but it also signifies the life that goes beyond death. It is life in the absolute and fullest sense and forever. Jesus confirms it in verse 40 where he says for my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal zoe eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day".

3. The third thing that Jesus is offering is complete satisfaction. If you come to Jesus you will never hunger or thirst. This is what humans are longing for. It's not that in this world we will never hunger or thirst again, I mean I thirst and hunger every day, even after I've gone to an all you can eat buffet. As a Christian we're told to thirst and hunger for God's word, for his righteousness. Jesus isn't talking about this kind of satisfaction in this passage. He's dealing with the deepest satisfaction, it's that you no longer need to go searching to fill that hunger. Everything else that you've been searching for pales in comparison to knowing Jesus. You are able to be content. That's the satisfaction that Jesus is talking about here.

This is what Jesus is offering for free and he gives it to the whole world. He offers eternal life to everyone, to you, to me, to your next door neighbour. He is offering an eternal solution to your eternal need.

#### 4. What is our response to Jesus?

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So what is our response? Well I think there's 3 possible responses for everyone in here today, and if I've missed one, please come and speak to me about it. Our response depends on where we stand in our relationship with Jesus. So let's have a look at the first possible response, and we get that from verse 36.

1. Jesus can still see the hearts of the crowd, and we see that though the crowd has seen they still don't believe. They've seen all the miracles that Jesus has been doing over the past 3 years, healing the sick, turning water into wine, feeding the thousands. They've seen all this and yet they don't believe. Perhaps you are someone who doesn't want to believe that Jesus has THE answer. Perhaps you don't want to believe that there can only be ONE answer. Perhaps you don't want to lose this desire, perhaps you say I'm going to keep trying life my own way to satisfy my hungers. I like my life as it is. Just like Marty reminded us two weeks ago, if all we know is the fun playing in mud pies then we won't ever want to leave it.

We humans can be blind to the absolute truth. We saw many examples last week in Marty's sermon didn't we. There are many people trying to search for meaning and satisfaction, for a life eternal, but not able to grasp it because they are blinded as to where you can get real satisfaction.

What bread are you holding in your hand. If it's not Jesus Do you understand that it is bread that will never truly satisfy you? Well Jesus is asking you to take him,

the bread sent from heaven, who was there at the beginning when the world and everything in it was created, and he is saying I have what you are searching for. All you need to do is COME to JESUS. Believe in ME. I encourage you today to think about what it is that you are eating, and think about what Jesus offers and to make a decision.

This brings me to the second group - you may have been searching for meaning in life, you may be learning about all the different religions, you may be finding out about who Jesus is and you've made a decision that he is what you want in your life. You believe in the offer of eternal life that Jesus gives and you want to receive it.

Well, all Jesus requires of you is to come to him, to believe that he is the Messiah, and is sent by God. Now, these words are action words. When you have bread in your hand, what do you do with it? You don't just believe it's there and put it away in your cupboard and leave it there. No what you do with bread is you eat it. it's an action. Trusting in Jesus means following him and listening to what he says. Knowing Jesus changes you. SO if you are here today I would like to encourage you to act, to tell someone that you want to come to Jesus, that you want to believe in Jesus, do it today. I would be delighted for you to come and speak with me, to hear you say that you came to Jesus today. Or find another person that you feel comfortable in saying it to. Another way you can take action is with the cards that are in front of you under the chair. Grab one of them, fill in your details, and let us know that you found Jesus today and you want to trust in him. And from today on, it is a life about getting to know Jesus. We are all here to help you meet Jesus and grow to be more like him. So please fill in these cards and during the next song place your filled cards into the collection bag as it goes past you, or you can place the card in the mailbox at the inside of our front door.



And what I want to say to you is yay!! This is exciting. Trusting in Jesus is an joyful thing.

And this brings me to the third group of people. If you know and trust Jesus. I want to encourage you with three things today.

The first is that we can be JOYFUL. We are reminded today that knowing JESUS has given us eternal life, he satisfies our deepest desires completely. He reminds us that all that is good flows from him. Knowing Jesus brings contentment in this life. It means we can enjoy the best of this world without clinging too tightly to it because our security is found in our relationship with Jesus instead of the things that he has made. It means we can face the worst of this world without despair because we know that this life is not as good as it gets. We are waiting for a better home, a home with JESUS. So be joyful in remembering that we have life eternal with JESUS and with each other. When this world and everyone in it has gone, those who trust in Jesus will be together with him forever. That's something to rejoice in.

The second thing to encourage you is sometimes we can be caught up in this life and although we say I believe in Jesus we also say I'll be happy and content when... When Jesus says whoever comes to me will never be hungry or thirsty, the Greek translation actually says whoever comes to me - and no one else - will never be hungry or thirsty. So what are you still holding on to that is temporary. Now some of these things are ok to want, but if they begin to become the thing that we think will satisfy and make us happy, then I encourage you to bring it before God. Only you and he know your thoughts and desires. Let's be reminded today that Jesus is what you need in the centre of your life, not on the side. When we come to him, come to him in all of our life.

The last thing that I want us to be encouraged by is this.. If Jesus is the one we go to for eternal life, and if we know that there are people around us who are searching for this LIFE, we would want to do anything we could to bring them this good news. Wouldn't we?

Here's a challenging quote by Matthew Parris he is a political sketch writer for The Times, and he is not a Christian, but listen to what he says..

The New Testament offers a picture of a God who does not sound at all vague to me. He has sent his son to Earth. He has distinct plans both for his son and for mankind. He knows each of us personally and can communicate directly with us. We are capable of forming a direct relationship, individually with him, and are commanded to try. We are told this can be done only through his son. And we are offered the prospect of eternal life - an afterlife of happy, blissful or glorious circumstances - if we live this life in a certain manner.

Friends, if I believe that, or even a tenth of that, how could I care which version of the prayer book was being used? I would drop my job, sell my house, throw away my possessions, leave my acquaintances and set out into the world burning with the desire to know more and, when I had found out more, to act upon it and tell others.

I want to encourage you to share your LIFE, share the satisfaction that you find in JESUS. We don't want to be asked the question by our friends and family, why didn't you tell me about him, why didn't you share with me the Eternal Life.

JESUS in our passage today offers us ETERNAL LIFE, what is your response? TO reject him, to come to him, and to receive joy, peace, contentment and satisfaction in knowing him. I pray that you will come to JESUS and have everlasting JOY in him. Let me pray.

Heavenly Father, you are good and you are loving. We thank you for sending your son Jesus to be the bread of heaven that gives LIFE to the world. Lord we pray that you might help us to turn away from the desires of this world and realise that they will not satisfy us. Help us to understand that only coming to you and no one else brings us deep satisfaction. We thank you that we can come to you and receive eternal life. Lord please help us to trust in you, help us to know you more, help our relationship with you to grow closer, help us to be more like you in the way that we live. Help us also to have this joy overflow in us, so that as we go about our daily lives, people we see the contentment and satisfaction we have in you, help us to be bold in sharing our trust in you. We pray all these things, in your wonderful and powerful name Jesus Christ, AMEN