

John 6:22-58 – Jesus, the bread of life

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Sermon audio and text available at www.waitaraanglican.com.au

February 10th, 2013

Bread!

Have you ever noticed how many different kinds of bread you can buy these days?

Multi grain, 5 grain, white bread, brown bread, whole meal bread, flat bread, bread rolls, Gluten free bread, raisin toast bread, sandwich bread...

Bread is a staple for our diet. For most people, bread is an essential. It is a need. Imagine life without bread!

But what else is our "bread" today? I think today's bread is money. It's our basic need to buy things like...bread!

You could say that money is our bread of life in the Western world. It's what we "live" on. But for many people, bread is more than an essential. For many, money means "satisfaction in life".

These days, you can "buy" experiences to satisfy your deepest desires... you can drive a V8 race car for \$398. You can skydive for \$339. Swim with dolphins for \$125. Swim with sharks for \$270.

So often, the bread of life, money, which buys us what we need, becomes our source of satisfaction in life. But Jesus wants us to know that it is not the bread of *real* life.

Jesus said, verse 35: *"I am the bread of life."*

Jesus says: I am what you need.

Earlier in this chapter, Jesus has done a miracle – feeding 5000 men, plus women and children, with just 5 loaves of bread and 2 small fish. And people are chasing after him because this miracle feeding was pretty amazing. And so the people chase him down and find Jesus in Capernaum. And when they find him, verse 26:

"26Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw the signs I performed but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. 27Do not

work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you.

Jesus says: 'Don't chase me to get food that spoils. Come after me to get food that lasts forever!

There is a comparison in this chapter between two people. **Jesus and Moses.** Remember when the Israelites wandered in the desert for 40 years, after being slaves in Egypt? God sent down manna from heaven – food fell from the sky – to feed them. God sent them exactly as much as they needed. If anyone collected too much, it went rotten overnight. It did not last. It taught the Israelites that they needed to depend on God every single day. They had to trust that he would provide their daily bread. We pray, in the Lord's Prayer, "give us today our daily bread". We trust God to provide what we need **day by day**.

But do we mean that when we pray those words? Do we really mean: "Give us today our **daily** bread"? Or do we mean "Give us today our daily bread, plus a bit extra in case we need it, plus something for our retirement, plus a little something to leave for the kids when I pass on, plus a little extra for some fun and entertainment...

You see, the lesson the Israelites learned in the desert was a lesson of dependence on God DAY BY DAY. And now they see Jesus doing this great miracle of feeding thousands of people in the middle of nowhere with a few loaves of bread and a couple of fish. And they see that he is possibly even better than Moses.

And what does Jesus do with this? He points to God. He wants them to see that it was God who sent down that manna from heaven in the desert, but those who ate it **died** in the desert. It was just bread. It didn't last. It went off overnight. But now, God has sent down JESUS from heaven. Jesus is the new manna, the new bread, that God has sent down. And Jesus does not "go off". THIS bread, this Jesus, is life giving bread. Whoever shares in THIS bread will not die.

Now, these are big statements, for 2 reasons:

1. First Jesus says he is the bread that **came from heaven**.

This was a claim to be God. The Jews didn't like this. Because only **God** comes from heaven. And the Jews say, verse 42 –

"Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph?" He's not from heaven. He's not the Messiah. He's not God's King.

2. The second thing is that Jesus is saying **HE can offer eternal life**.

Again, this is a claim to be God. Because only **God** can offer eternal life. Verse 51: ***51**I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."* "

Jesus is claiming to be sent from God. He's claiming to be the savior, the Messiah, the Christ, the King. He's claiming to have the authority to offer eternal life. And although he's able to feed thousands of people with a few bits of bread and fish, he's also able to feed them much more – the bread of eternal life.

And so Jesus goes on to explain that those who want eternal life must, verse 53:
"eat the flesh of the son of man, and drink his blood."

In fact, in the early church, Christians were often accused of being cannibals for reciting these words. But, just like in chapter 4 last week, Jesus is talking **spiritually**. Eating his flesh and drinking his blood means that we are to come to Jesus as our bread of life. We are to come to Jesus as the one who satisfies all of our needs. We are to come to his flesh, the perfect life he lived, and to his blood, the sacrificial death he died, in order to be saved.

And here's the big statement he makes, verse 53:
"Very truly I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you."

No Jesus. No life. If you do not come to Jesus, you will not have eternal life.

And in fact, in the very next passage we are told that many disciples deserted Jesus because they could not accept this teaching. They could not accept that he was from God, and that he is the only one who can offer eternal life.

We must come to **Jesus** if we want to come to God. Because he is God. Trust in Him. Trust him to provide our daily bread. It's not that hard is it? Or is it?

DO WE trust God for our daily bread?

Let's go back to verse 27:

27*Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you."*

What are you working for? Think of all the work you do on this earth. As an employee to earn a wage, as a father, a mother, a child, your work in ministries here, time with friends – all the "work" that you're involved in. What do you do it for? Are you working for food that does not spoil?

28*Then they asked him, "What must we do to do the works God requires?"*

29*Jesus answered, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent."*

This is the food that does not spoil. To believe in the one God has sent. It seems so simple doesn't it? All Jesus asks of us, all he expects is that we would believe in him. In other words, to put our trust in him daily, for life on earth and for eternal life.

Our "work" is to trust in the work of Jesus. Our work is to **trust** and **believe** in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. Our work is to have faith that He provides all our needs and we can find our complete satisfaction in him.

Here's a question to finish with: What do people expect of you?

Just think for a moment of the expectations people have of you in life. What they expect you to do, how they expect you to act. And think of what you expect from other people.

For example, we are often expected to pick up the phone when it rings. To answer an email when we receive it, to buy a birthday present for someone, to turn up to work on a Monday, to visit our parents or children, to work hard.

A lot of the expectations that are on us, and that we put on others, are about satisfying people. Pleasing them. About people thinking well of us. About meeting our responsibilities and being seen as valuable people. And these things are important. If we say we're going to do something, it's important to be faithful with our word, and not fall back on excuses like "I forgot" or "I didn't put it in my diary", or "I thought our anniversary was next week".

But as we meet the expectations of people each and every day, let's not forget that we are called to meet the expectations of God. What is our work? What does He expect from us? "What must we do to do the works of God?" Believe in the one he has sent.

So when we pray "Give us today our daily bread", we mean it. We depend on God for our **daily** bread. We depend on the work that he has done through Jesus on the cross. And we work for food that does **not** spoil.

Let's pray.