

## 57. The Gospel of John—6:30-34

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### *“The Bread of Life” Pt.3*

(1/13/19)

As we entered into John chapter 6, we have entered into one of the greatest chapters in the Bible, containing one of the greatest teachings in the Bible—the Bread of Life discourse.

When I say that chapter 6 is one of the most important chapters in John’s gospel, and possibly in the entire Bible, don’t take my word for it—listen to Jesus Himself.

As we noted last time, whenever Jesus said, “**Most assuredly, I say to you**”—that means, *“what I’m about to say is vitally important, so listen carefully.”*

And in fact, four times in this discourse Jesus emphasizes the importance of what He is saying with the words—“**Most assuredly, I say to you.**”

And what was so important, what was the topic of His teaching that four times the Lord had to stop and tell them it was very important so, *‘listen carefully!?’*—“**eternal life**”!

The subject of eternal life is THE main topic of John’s entire gospel (20:30-31), where the phrase ‘eternal’ or ‘everlasting’ life appears over fifty times.

What makes the Bread of Life discourse one of the greatest in the Bible is found in its core message—eternal life.

In fact, eight times in this discourse Jesus mentions eternal life (verses 40, 47, 50, 51, 54, 57, 58 and 68).

As we said last time the number 8 in the Bible is the number of '*new beginnings*'—and receiving eternal life and becoming a 'new creation' in Christ is the ultimate new beginning!

I have divided verses 22 thru 71 of John 6 this way:

- I. The Physical Preoccupation of the Multitudes—v.22-34**
- II. The Divine Declaration of the Savior—v.35-40**
- III. The Carnal Condemnation of the Jewish Leaders—v.41-59**
- IV. The Strategic Separation of the True Disciples from the False—v.60-71**

## **I. The Physical Preoccupation of the Multitudes—v.22-34**

And by saying this I mean that—this great multitude of people (twenty-thousand) were more interested in their physical stomachs than they were in their eternal souls.

We know this because of how the Lord addresses their desire to be near Him in v.26—"**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.**"

The whole issue that Jesus will be addressing in this chapter is those who seek Him and even follow Him for the wrong reasons—for selfish reasons.

These people sought Him purely for what He could give them and do for them.

He is going to use this ‘interactive’ sermon (question and answer format) to try to elevate their thinking and perception of life from the physical to the spiritual.

**John 6:22-25 (NKJV)**

**<sup>22</sup> On the following day...[after the feeding of the five-thousand] <sup>24</sup> when the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, nor His disciples, they also got into boats and came to Capernaum, seeking Jesus. <sup>25</sup> And when they found Him on the other side of the sea, they said to Him, "Rabbi, when did You come here?"**

This question is the first of three that the multitudes asked Jesus that day that served to launch the important discourse He delivered in chapter six—

- A. *“Rabbi, when did You come here?”* (v.25)
- B. *“What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?”* (v.28)
- C. *“What sign will You perform then, that we may see it and believe You? What work will You do?”* (one question not two—v.30)

**A. “Rabbi, when did You come here?” (v.25)**

Let me paraphrase what I believe the people actually meant by this—

*“Why did you leave without telling us? When did You get here and why didn’t You take us with You? You fed us with bread yesterday evening, but when we were hungry for breakfast You were nowhere to be found. That’s no way for You to act seeing as we’ve put our faith in You to be our welfare state!”*—that in essence was their thinking behind this question.

However, I want you to notice that Jesus doesn’t even answer their question but instead gets right to the issue that was on their minds.

All they were thinking about was “FREE FOOD”!! *“It’s breakfast time—let’s go find Jesus and see what He’s got for us this morning!”*

In this discourse, the Lord challenged them not to be so focused on the physical that they miss the spiritual—why He had really come into the world (and it wasn't to feed hungry stomachs)—

**John 6:27 (NKJV)**

**<sup>27</sup> Do not labor 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."**

The Greek comes thru this way—*"Stop laboring for the food that is in the process of perishing, but instead labor for the food that is in the present state of enduring."* (Comment)

By saying this Jesus wasn't telling them that they were to stop working for the physical food needed to feed their bodies and just depend on the generosity of others to feed them.  
(2Thess.3:10)

Nor was He saying that they needed to work to *earn* eternal life.

We know that the Bible clearly teaches that eternal life is a free gift to any who believe in Jesus Christ and ask God for it by faith—as Jesus went on to imply: **"which [eternal life] the Son of Man will give you". (v.27)**

However, the crowd seems to have interpreted what Jesus said as a command to work hard so as to earn eternal life—which caused them to ask the second question they asked Jesus that day:

**B. "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?" (v.28)**

It shouldn't surprise us that these people, steeped in a legalistic religious system known as Judaism, would think that they needed to work for God's approval and earn His blessings—including and especially the blessing of eternal life.

And so, these people wanted to know what works they could do that would please God enough so that He would grant them eternal life—

**John 6:28-29 (NKJV)**

<sup>28</sup> Then they said to Him, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?" <sup>29</sup> **Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent."**

Jesus made it clear that only one “work” was necessary for a person to be saved—to believe on the Savior, the One sent from the Father, the Lord Jesus Christ (Eph. 2:8-9).

Not believe *and*—go to church, pray the rosary, light candles, keep religious rituals, ceremonies and holy days...(Elaborate)

This then led to the third question the crowd asked Jesus that day—

**C. “What sign will You perform then, that we may see it and believe You? What work will You do?” (v.30)**

Again, this is one question not two—and came in response to what Jesus said in v.29—*‘don’t work for eternal life, just believe in Me.’*

Let me paraphrase what they were asking Jesus,

*“You claim to be the Messiah, okay, what sign will you do for us to get our ‘vote’? What miracle will You do that will prove to us, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that You are in fact the Messiah, the One that God said to Moses He would someday send?”* (Deut.18:18)

It’s interesting that they were essentially asking Jesus to *buy* or *bride* them for their faith—in other words they were saying, *“We’ll believe in You, but only if You give us this or do for us that.”* (Elaborate)

And so their ‘faith’ came at a price—*“If we believe, what will you give us in return?”*

They suggested that producing bread *from heaven* as Moses did might convince them.

We know they had Moses on their minds, and we know the miracle they had in mind when they said this because they went on to tell us—

**John 6:31 (NKJV)**

<sup>31</sup> **Our fathers ate the manna in the desert** [during the days of Moses]; **as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'** " (Ps.78:24)

Apparently, these people were challenging Jesus' challenge (v.29) for them to put their faith in Him as Messiah—they however were not inclined to do so without Him giving them a 'sign' (miracle).

You see, the rabbis taught that, when Messiah came, He would duplicate the miracle of the manna (see Ex. 16).

If Jesus was truly sent by God as Messiah—then let Him prove it by causing manna to fall from heaven.

They reasoned that if Jesus was really who He claimed to be—He would at least do miracles equal to that of Moses.

And as of this point, even though Jesus had just multiplied a small amount of food to feed twenty-thousand hungry people—“big deal!”

He only multiplied *existing* food, whereas Moses '*created*' food by causing bread to fall from heaven, not once (like Jesus)—but every day for 40 years!!

Could Jesus do that?!—if not He wasn't even *as* great, let alone *greater* than Moses.

Now listen, Jesus will never buy our ‘faith’—He won’t ever bribe us to believe in Him.

First of all, because He doesn’t need us, we need Him (He’s not a politician looking to buy votes!)—and second because a bribed faith is a bogus faith! (Comment)

And besides all of that—they had their ‘facts’ wrong, which the Lord now seeks to correct:

**John 6:32-33 (NKJV)**

**<sup>32</sup> 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. <sup>33</sup> For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."**

The Lord’s answer conveys at least two thoughts.

First of all, it was not Moses who gave them the manna—it was God.

As Jesus taught us in the model prayer we call the “Our Father”—“*Father...give us this day our daily bread*”.

It is God who takes care of us and supplies all of our physical needs—not any man (or woman).

Understanding that, and looking to God every day for all you need to live constitutes a life of faith, and without faith—“*it is impossible to please God* (or to even receive from God)” (Heb. 11:6)

So, their first mistake was that Moses gave them bread from heaven—their second mistake was to put such a big emphasis on the manna in the wilderness.

Manna was *literal* food, designed for the *physical* body—but it had no value beyond this life.

Jesus is telling this Jewish multitude that the *manna* (God never called it ‘manna’ (‘what is it!?’)—He called it *bread* from heaven)—was really a type of another ‘Bread’ that the Father would someday send from heaven.

And just as the manna in the wilderness fed the body and sustained *physical* life—this true ‘Bread’ would ‘feed the soul’ and impart *eternal* life.

One writer put it well—

*“The Lord Jesus revealed Himself as **the Bread of God** which came down from heaven and gives life. He was showing the superiority of **the Bread of God** to the manna in the wilderness. The manna did not impart life but only sustained physical life. It was not intended for the whole world but only for Israel. The **True Bread** comes down from heaven and gives life to men—not just to one nation but to all the world!”*

So, the manna (Exodus 16) was a *type* of Christ—

- 1. Manna, like Christ, came down from heaven—it was not a product of the earth.*
- 2. Manna was a free gift from God—it was not the result of man’s labor.*
- 3. It fell each morning all around the camp and around every tent which meant you either got on your knees to gather it—or you trampled it under foot. (Hebrews 10:29)*
- 4. It fell in abundance and was available for anyone—but you had to gather it or you starved.*

God won’t force you to have your devotions and feed on Jesus and His Word—you can spiritually starve if you want to.

- 5. You had to gather it every day—you couldn’t gather an abundance one day and then take the next 4 or 5 days off—you needed to gather a fresh supply each day or it would stink.*



If we try to get a lot of Jesus one day and think we can sleep in and live off of that for the next few days—it stinks!

The person who says, *“I usually spend 15 minutes reading the Bible in the morning but today I spent an hour so I don’t have to get up early to read it for the next 4 or 5 days”*—what is that?!

But that’s how we often think about Jesus and His Word—we’re lazy and often looking for short cuts in our relationship with Him.

One pastor put it this way, “Guys what do you think your wife would say if you tried that with her—*‘Honey let’s talk today for a couple hours today and then leave me alone for the rest of the week.’*”

6. *Manna was white in color (Christ’s righteousness) and sweet to the taste (fellowship with Jesus).*

7. *Manna was despised by those who were not the Lord’s covenant people (the mixed multitude).*

Beware of those who call themselves Christians but are tired of Bible studies and instead crave ‘leeks and garlic’—those things that grow out of the earth and are of the world:

**Colossians 2:8-10 (NLT)**

<sup>8</sup> Don’t let anyone capture you with empty philosophies and high-sounding nonsense that come from human thinking and from the spiritual powers of this world, rather than from Christ. <sup>9</sup> For in Christ lives all the fullness of God in a human body. <sup>10</sup> So you also are complete through your union with Christ, who is the head over every ruler and authority.

God’s Word is bread from heaven and it alone can feed our soul and produce health, strength and growth for our spiritual man.

When all that is of the earth is destroyed—the Word of God will live and abide forever (1Peter 1:25).

8. *You had to gather it early—once the sun got hot it melted.*

There's something about doing your devotions in the morning—is that what the Holy Spirit is teaching us through the fact they had to gather the manna early?

The mixed-multitude grew tired of the manna—but for those of us who are truly born again and filled with the Holy Spirit, we never get tired of feeding on God's Word.

After all these years I've never grown tired of it—I still crave it and it still satisfies me.

**John 6:34 (NKJV)**

**<sup>34</sup> Then they said to Him, "Lord, give us this bread always."**

As of this point, the multitudes didn't realize that Jesus was speaking to them about Himself.

They thought He was talking about *physical* bread instead of *spiritual* bread (the Bread of Life) who would give to them eternal life.

Much like the woman in John 4 thought Jesus was talking about physical water when Jesus offered her 'Living Water' in John 4:13-15—(Explain).

The main message of this "Bread of Life" discourse is that—Jesus is the true Manna, the spiritual Bread Who came down from heaven, which if a person "eats" (believes in) he or she will live forever.

This message wasn't received as enthusiastically by the multitudes as was the literal bread Jesus provided for them the day before that filled their stomachs.

The day before, the people were willing to receive the *physical* bread, but they were reluctant to receive the *spiritual* Bread (Jesus Himself).

People today are only too willing to let God meet their physical needs, but not their spiritual needs—especially if it means having to repent and change the way they’re living. (Elaborate)

Jesus is the Bread of Life, and only He can satisfy the spiritual hunger in a person’s heart.

The bottom line to this message so far—

**Isaiah 55:2-3a (NASB)**

<sup>2</sup> "Why do you spend money for what is not bread, And your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, And delight yourself in abundance. <sup>3</sup> "Incline your ear and come to Me...

Today people are frantically searching for happiness and fulfillment in life—and they think they’ll find those things in material possessions and physical pleasures.

If outward circumstances truly make a person happy then Solomon should've been the happiest man on the face of the earth.

But instead we see him write in the book of Ecclesiastes over and over again, "*Vanity, vanity everything in life is emptiness and vanity.*" (summarize the book of Ecclesiastes).

Jesus put it this way, "*A man's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.*"

We would do well to listen to Jesus after all—He made us and knows what will make us happy.

And through the Beatitudes (Sermon on the Mount) He basically told us that it's pure foolishness to think you can fill up the void in your soul with the junk of this world—and yet how many people are feverishly trying to do that very thing.

*“If your marriage is lousy go buy a new car. If you're unhappy at your job go shopping, you'll feel better.”*

The whole advertising industry is based on this principle that if you're unhappy in any area of your life—product ‘XYZ’ will bring you that happiness.

And on and on it goes as so many are pursuing so feverishly the elusive concept of happiness when all the while true happiness is not found in a *possession* or in a *pleasure* it's found in a Person—Jesus Christ!

Because true happiness is the filling up of an empty heart and you can't fill an empty heart with anything this fallen world has to offer—

As one author put it, *“Jesus has come into the world to announce to man that the tree of happiness doesn't grow in the cursed earth.”*

And so once again—*“Why do you spend money for what is not bread, and your wages for what does not satisfy?... come to Me”* (Isa. 55:1-3)

Only Jesus can fill the emptiness inside, only Jesus can satisfy the hunger in the soul—because He alone is the “Bread of Life” who came down from heaven (God in human form)!