

Jesus, the Bread of Life

John 6:22–36.

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Thematic Statement: *The crowd says, “I’m hungry.” Jesus says, “I AM the bread of life.”*

Introduction:

John’s Gospel goal: God became flesh.

Christmas season around the corner. People don’t understand it.

Miracle of the bread in the past. People don’t understand it.

Jesus walks on the water. The disciples don’t understand it.

Now Jesus speaks plainly: I am the bread of life. People don’t understand it.

First Q&A – The intent question (John 6:25-27).

The fake question vs the real answer. (Seal)

Second Q&A – The ignorance question (John 6:28,29).

The universal ignorant question vs the Christian correct answer.

Third Q&A – The sign question (John 6:30-33).

The combo (falsehood + ignorance) question vs the directive answer.

Fourth Q&A – The carnal request (John 6:34-36).

The carnal request vs the spiritual answer.

Conclusion.

Final Refrain: *The crowd says, “I’m hungry.” Jesus says, “I AM the bread of life.”
Which voice will we follow?*

Illustration: The lady thirsty at the well vs the multitude hungry in the desert.

Introduction (John 6:22-24).

Christmas season is around the corner and that means we celebrate the greatest miracle of all time: God became flesh and dwelt among us. Today's sermon, Jesus the bread of life fits this season well. It is interesting that everybody benefits from Christmas season – the holidays and the food – but not everyone understands the meaning of Christmas. Some think about food (stomach), some think about eternal life (heart).

A couple of weeks ago, you have seen that Jesus multiplied the bread and fed 20,000 people; the multitude rejoiced with the miracle, yet they did not understand the meaning of the miracle. Jesus was trying to prove his divinity and lordship; the multitude wanted to make him a political king by force.

Last week, you have seen Jesus' walking on the water to meet his disciples in the midst of a storm. The Gospel of Mark tells you that the "disciple's hearts were hardened, that they too had not understood the miracle of the multiplication of the bread." When Jesus walks on the water, he was expecting his disciples to finally grasp that he is God – "in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth [...] and the Spirit of God was walking on the water." Yet, even his disciples were slow to get that as well.

Now Jesus will speak to all of them in plain English: "I AM the Bread of Life."

This text is easy to organize, because it is a Q&A between Jesus and the multitude:

First Q&A – The intent question (John 6:25-27).

The multitude asked "Rabbi, when did you get to the other side of the lake?" They seem to "miss" Jesus, they seem to "pursue" him – but they don't. It amazes me that Jesus did not answer their question, he just reveals their corrupt heart by saying "you are not seeking me for the sake of who I am, you are seeking me for the sake of what I can give."

Very quickly Jesus diagnosed their hearts (like a spiritual X-ray machine), and the obvious conclusion he makes is that their god is their stomach, not the Lord himself.

Jesus kindly gives them the medicine for their hearts: look for me for who I am, not for what I can give. God the Father has approved me, I am his Son, I have his Seal of approval. The seal talks about three things:

- Authority: Jesus has authority to perform miracles, preach, and save.
- Ownership: Jesus comes from Heaven, just as the Father is from above.
- Authenticity: Jesus is not a false prophet; he is the true God.

But that wasn't enough... The multitude had more questions.

Second Q&A – The ignorance question (John 6:28,29).

The multitude asked “what shall we do to be saved?” This ignorant question is a question that many still ask nowadays, how can I earn, buy, or deserve salvation?

Jesus corrects their theology by clarifying to them, salvation can't be earned, bought, or deserved; salvation is a gift – just believe in me, and you will be saved.

But that wasn't enough... The multitude had more questions.

Third Q&A – The sign question (John 6:30-33).

This particular question almost makes you laugh, because it is a combination of wrong intent mixed with ignorance: Why are they asking for a sign, if they already had one? Why are they comparing Jesus to Moses, when they know they performed similar signs?

- The text reveals that to us. They want a sign, because that means they will have their stomach filled once again. They do not want a miracle to believe in Jesus; they want a miracle to benefit from Jesus – because their god is their stomach.
- Jesus clarifies to them their ignorance. Moses did not give them bread from Heaven, that was God's job. Moses only mediated and organized the people so that they would benefit from the miracle. It is different with Jesus; when he multiplied the bread and fish, his own hand performed the miracle, which already make clear that he is greater than Moses – he is God.

Moreover, Jesus uses that same question to introduce to them what he really wants to tell them: He is the bread of life. Which is indeed their next question.

Fourth Q&A – The carnal request (John 6:34-36).

DO NOT MISS THIS DETAIL: They called him “sir.”

You can explicitly see the confused heart of the multitude right here; because even the Pharisees would address Jesus as a Rabbi – as a matter of fact, that was the way they approached Jesus in the beginning of the text itself. Now that Jesus is not willing to give the multitude what they want, they are changing their tone.

Upon their carnal request, Jesus makes the spiritual claim of this whole chapter: “*I AM* the Bread of Life! But you don’t believe in me.” This statement is the Apex of this whole conversation.

The people were looking for Jesus with their stomach and he wants to feed their hearts.

They come to Jesus saying they are hungry; Jesus is saying I am the bread of life, which is a sign of his divinity. The combination of these two – I AM & Bread, once united, carries a powerful message.

The bread – Human basic need.

I AM – God’s exclusive name, which is a sign of both provision and eternity:

- Provision – you need a saviour, he is; you need forgiveness, he is; you need eternity, he is; you need the good shepherd, he is... His resource is unlimited.
- Eternity – He has no beginning, nor end. He is the same yesterday, today, and forevermore.

Unfortunately, in the very last verse Jesus makes clear that he knows people will not believe him, even though he is being very plain and clear about who he is and his mission.

Conclusion –

What does this passage teach you? There is a great discrepancy between the human’ “I AM” versus the Jesus’ “I AM”.

- EVERYONE, we are limited! All that we can say is “I am” hungry. In the bottom of our hearts, we have this massive God size void that only God can fill.
- Jesus’ statement, I AM the Bread of Life, tells you that he is that God size “bread” that fulfills your soul eternally.

To help to illustrate this, you can make a clear comparison between this multitude hungry for physical bread, but not for spiritual bread; and the thirsty lady on the well (John 4) who believed in Jesus: both of them had similar needs and made similar requests, yet one rejected Christ and the lady believed in him. Why?

The answer: It is about the hunger. It is important to understand that Jesus is the bread of life, yes indeed. However, it is very important that you also understand the statement, “I am hungry.”

The lady at the well, did not pursue Jesus because her stomach was empty; she actually never pursued Jesus at all, she “happened” to meet Jesus at the well. There Jesus revealed to her that he had living water to give her, and she realized that she was thirsty – not physically, but spiritually. She believed in Jesus to quench her spiritual thirst.

The multitude on the other hand, pursued Jesus because their stomach was empty. Thus, once Jesus offered them to satisfy their spiritual need, they never wanted him – all they were worried about was their stomach. They ended up not believing in Jesus – they actually deserted him.