

Sermon Series: “From Bethlehem to Calvary to Heaven”—Lord of Life Lutheran Church, Westfield, IN—
1/25/04

Title: “Jesus: The Bread of Life”

Text: John 6: 25-35

Intro.: *Ills.: Not by bread alone*

Theme: When we boil our life down to its basic needs, Jesus wants to be the object of our search and the source of our fullness.

Bird’s eye view of the Gospel of John

- To prove that Jesus is the Son of God – “*These have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and that believing you may have life in His name.*” John 20: 31
- Collection of Jesus’ world-view and sayings — collection of his “I am” statements and teachings
- Personal testimony of John — my story + his story = witness

Recognizing the warning signs of a malnourished spiritual diet

- Settling for desert rather than the meat and potatoes of faith
 1. **Ills.: Children’s dietary habits are established early**
 2. People sought Jesus not to confirm faith by his words but selfishly get physical wants filled (26)
 3. We “work for” (continually strive after) “bread” which perishes (27)
 1. Getting the extra possession to satisfy our thirst for pleasure
 2. Getting that extra degree, paycheck, promotion to quench our thirst for self-worth
 3. Carelessly trashing relationships or acquiring bad ones to quench thirst for wanting to be loved
 4. “*Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the richest of fare.*” Isaiah 55: 2
 4. We avoid daily spiritual “bread” because it gets in the way and we want quick “spiritual fill-ups” on Sunday morning
- Christianity becomes our religion rather than our life
 5. Substituting what we do rather than who we are
 1. Rejecting a commitment to a Savior but keeping a Sugar Daddy on the string (*what do we have to do to get you to respond*” vs. 28)
 2. **Ills.: A “religion” that works**
 3. Have we made our Christianity nothing more than dues, obligations, rituals, hoops we jump thru to look religious?
 6. Is Jesus really the bread of your life?
 1. Not just an intellectual faith but a deep seated thirst and hunger for him
 2. “*I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty.*”(35)
- Making faith a roller coaster of emotional, spiritual highs
 7. The people wanted more signs from Jesus to keep their attention (30) even after feeding of 5,000 (John 6)
 8. We want a critical sickness healed; job lay-off put off; miraculous marital reconciliation and promise to really believe if he will only do this
 9. But for Jesus to really work eternal life which endures in our heart, we must be willing to surrender all of our life and our happiness over to him so that he can fill it with his “bread which endures”
 10. **Ills. Have you anything left?**

Recognizing the bread Jesus brings as the only life sustaining thing we have

- Jesus’ bread of life only comes through believing and being
 11. Careful not to settle for counterfeit bread **TO SUSTAIN** our spiritual life
 1. It is interesting that Jesus contrasts/no compares himself to manna (32)
 2. Both from God (*not Moses [represent law] as some thought—31*)

3. Unlike manna which daily perished if not eaten, Jesus is “genuine/true” bread lasting forever
12. Christianity is not a bunch of “*doing*” but is ground in “*being*” (both Jesus and us – *I am the bread of life*” [35])
 1. “*Faith comes from hearing and hearing from the Word of Christ.*” *Romans 10: 17*
- Jesus’ bread of life is the only way sanctioned by God
 13. Declared as the only bread “*the Father...gives out of heaven*” (33)
 14. Sealed by God to authenticate and protect (all the new packaging on food and medicines)
 15. Filling us up with *forgiveness* for no more guilt and *purpose* so we have self-worth and *life* so that we have hope

Not by bread alone

My four-year-old was standing on a kitchen chair pulled close to the wall, intensely staring at the familiar "Our Daily Bread" painting of the older man praying over a small loaf.

"What are you doing, Honey?" I asked.

"Looking," she said with a catch in her voice.

Noticing tears under her dark lashes, I probed deeper. "What are you thinking?"

With a heartfelt sigh, she replied, "He doesn't have any peanut butter."

Citation: H.J. Duffy, Livingston, Texas. *Christian Reader*, "Kids of the Kingdom."

A Religion that Works

The story is told about a man who claimed that he “got religion.” An old crony who knew about his shameful past heard the news, called him on the phone, and said, “Joe, they tell me you’ve got religion.” “I sure have,” came the reply. His friend responded, “Then I suppose you’ll be going to church every Sunday.” “That’s right,” Joe affirmed, “I started 5 weeks ago and haven’t missed a service since.” “And I suppose you’re going to quit smoking and drinking.” “Already have,” Joe replied. “In fact, I haven’t smoked a cigarette or touched a drop of liquor since.” His friend paused for a moment. Finally, remembering how much money Joe owed him, he said with an intended jab, “I suppose too, now that you’ve got religion, you’re going to pay up all your old debts.” At that point Joe exploded and exclaimed, “Now wait a minute! That’s not religion you’re talking about; that business!”

Have you anything left?

The sign above the motel clerk’s desk read: HAVE YOU LEFT ANYTHING? It was an obvious reminder for those checking out to take one last look. The couple about to leave had received their bill for the night’s lodging (plus phone calls, restaurant charges, taxes, tips). As the husband figured up the total, he turned to his wife and said, “They should change their sign to read: HAVE YOU ANYTHING LEFT?”

John 6:25-35

²⁵When they found him on the other side of the lake, they asked him, "Rabbi, when did you get here?" ²⁶Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, you are looking for me, not because you saw miraculous signs 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. On him God the Father has placed his seal of approval." ²⁸Then they asked him, "What must we do to do the works God requires?" ²⁹Jesus answered, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent." ³⁰So they asked him, "What miraculous sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do?" ³¹Our forefathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written: 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'" ³²Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. ³³For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." ³⁴"Sir," they said, "from now on give us this bread." ³⁵Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty." [NIV]