

Text: John 6:26-40

Title: It's Personal – I am the Bread of Life

Thesis: Because Jesus is the source of eternal life, we should invest our energy into knowing Him more and following Him more closely by obeying His instruction.

I. Introduction (26-35)

a. NTA: “A major stimulant to creative thinking is focused questions. There is something about a well-worded question that often penetrates to the heart of the matter and triggers new ideas and insights.” (Tracy, Brian. www.briantracy.com blog post, Nov. 26, 2008).

i. Unfortunately in today's world, if we don't ask the right questions, we often will not get the right answers. In the text we're looking at today however, Jesus sees beyond the questions the people ask and gives answers far beyond what they were asking... answers to questions they didn't even know to ask.

II. The Crust - Q & A

a. E – After the miraculous meal on the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee, when the people couldn't find Jesus in the morning, they went over to Capernaum (where the disciples had been headed when they got in the boat – remember the walking on water miracle in the middle of the night). When they saw Jesus, they began asking questions, each of which Jesus answers on a much deeper level than the question was asked. How common it is for us to ask questions of God which reveal how little we truly understand! Jesus' answers push the discussion further, prompting them to understand that He is the revelation of God.

i. When did you get here? (Understood as when, how, etc.)

1. Jesus' reply is that they are only seeking physical food, and have missed the sign (the point of the miracle performed) which would have provided recognition that He is what God was revealing. The “seal” should be understood as God's approval, reminiscent of Jesus' baptism (Matt. 3:17), rather than as the seal which is placed on the believer by the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:13). (Newman, Barclay M., Jr. *United Bible Societies: A Handbook on The Gospel of John*)

ii. What works must we do to be accepted by God?

1. Stop working for acceptance – the work of God is that you believe in the Messiah whom God has sent.

iii. Where is your sign, so that we might believe? Remember Moses' signs? (quoting from Ex. 16:15)

1. You misunderstand Scripture – the subject of that passage is God, and He still gives bread (note the present tense of “...my Father gives...”). This is a demonstration of the continuity of God's work.

iv. We're still interested in food.

1. I am your salvation.

2. My supply is limitless.

a. Eating and drinking is a motif throughout Scripture, and it often refers to more than just physical nourishment. It certainly referred to physical nourishment (Ex. 15-17); but

also religious expression (the golden calf – Ex. 32:6); as well as eschatological hope (Is. 49:10). Paul demonstrates the integral understanding of eating and drinking (1 Cor. 10:1-9). (Borchert, Gerald L. *New American Commentary: John 1-11*)

- b. I –
 - i. Asking the right questions: “And so, my fellow Americans... Ask not what your country can do for you - ask what you can do for your country.” (Kennedy, John F. *US Presidential Inaugural Address, Jan. 20, 1961*)
- c. A – We have to learn the right questions to ask of God, and in the process realize that God has revealed Himself through His word and in the person of His Son, Jesus. We often ask questions like:
 - i. “Why did this happen?” instead of “How is God growing me through this?”
 - ii. “What does God want me to do?” instead of “How has God instructed me to live?”
 - iii. “When will God make this better?” instead of “Who does God want me to minister to with the experiences of this trial?”
 - iv. “Why should I trust God?” instead of “Who is more trustworthy, God or fallen humanity?”

We must learn to look beyond the surface, look past the immediate symptoms, and focus on the signs, see the truth behind what Jesus says, what God reveals. If we only live on the surface of our faith, we will never really know God intimately, intensely. We will have a shallow, “Trust God in the Trials” mentality. Be willing to investigate God’s word deeper, look for connections, put the effort into thinking and contemplating what He says.

III. The Crumb (the inner, fluffy part of bread) (36-40)

- a. E – Any who believe in Christ will receive eternal life, which was His concern throughout the entire dialogue, even while they were pressing Him concerning physical food. “Just as the physical experiences of eating and drinking did not guarantee life, so mere physical seeing of Jesus did not guarantee believing.” (Borchert, *NAC: John 1-11*) He states clearly that many will not believe even if they see signs and miracles, yet those who do believe can be assured that Jesus is doing the will of the Father and will never cast out or lose one who authentically comes to Him. Jesus also refers to the expectation of being raised in the last day, a phrase which gives away the eschatological hope of the passage, reminding them again about the goal of eternal life. John regularly uses the verb form of believe instead of the noun for faith, and in the process reveals the understanding that believing was an action frequently equated with obedience.
- b. I –
 - i. C. H. Spurgeon claimed that 98% of the people he met, including criminals he visited in England’s prisons, told him that they believed the Bible to be true. But, the vast majority had never made a personal, life-changing commitment to Jesus Christ. For them, “believe” was not an

active verb. (C. H. Spurgeon, "Sermon Illustrations",
<http://www.sermonillustrations.com/a-z/b/belief.htm>)

- c. A – Belief must move beyond a superficial participation in religion. True believing in God, true trust in Christ is not accomplished by going through the motions of once a week church attendance. To have the kind of believing which is equal to obedience, you must immerse yourself in God's word and live out the instructions He provides. This week, commit yourself to taking one more step in both areas.
 - i. Commit to spend more time studying Scripture – 5 minutes more a day than you currently do. Open up reliable reference works as you study. See what others have said concerning what you're reading.
 - ii. Do an honest self-evaluation and figure out one command of Christ which you can implement in your life this week.
 - 1. Do you struggle with using words inappropriately? Some are surrounded all week by people who do, and it's easy to slide here – profanity, commit to stop; hurtful words – use your words only to edify; misleading statements – commit to only tell the truth no matter how much it may cost you.
 - 2. Do you struggle with your thought life? Take every thought captive to Christ. Are you buying into a destructive self-image – memorize and recite Scripture which tells you what God thinks of you; overcome with worry – give your concerns to God in prayer and learn to dwell on His provision and sovereignty; inappropriate thoughts concerning others, whether it's lustful, covetous, bitterness – commit to viewing them as God sees them, as people created in His image and worthy of respect.
 - iii. Wherever your next step needs to be, take that next step in being a disciple of Christ.
- IV. Conclusions:
- a. N – Eternal life rests in the person of Jesus Christ. You must have a relationship with Him. Many will refuse to believe in Jesus, but you do not need to. Believe what He has said, believe in what He has done for you, believe that He still wants to give you eternal life.
 - b. B – Take comfort in the assurance Christ gives concerning those who believe, and push your believing beyond mere intellectual assent. What is it that He is calling you to do?