



Believe

JOHN

MESSAGE

STUDY GUIDE

GROUP MATERIAL

SONGS

Examining the text & our hearts:

Bible Reading: John 6:22-51

John 6:22-51

22?The next day, the crowd ... saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, [so] they got into the boats and went to Capernaum looking for Jesus.**25?**When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, “Rabbi, when did you get here?”

26?Jesus answered, “Truly I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate the loaves and were filled.**27?**Don’t work for the food that perishes but for the food that lasts for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set his seal of approval on him.”

28?“What can we do to perform the works of God?” they asked.

29?Jesus replied, “This is the work of God—that you believe in the one he has sent.”

30?“What sign, then, are you going to do so that we may see and believe you?” they asked. “What are you going to perform?**31?**Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, just as it is written: **He gave them bread from heaven to eat.**”

32?Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, Moses didn’t give you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven.**33?**For the bread of God is the one who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”

34?Then they said, “Sir, give us this bread always.”

35?“I am the bread of life,” Jesus told them. “No one who comes to me will ever be hungry, and no one who believes in me will ever be thirsty again.”

36?But as I told you, you’ve seen me, and yet you do not believe. **37?**Everyone the Father gives me will come to me, and the one who comes to me I will never cast out. **38?**For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me. **39?**This is the will of him who sent me: that I should lose none of those he has given me but should raise them up on the last day. **40?**For this is the will of my Father: that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him will have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.”

41?Therefore the Jews started grumbling about him because he said, “I am the bread that came down from heaven.” **42?**They were saying, “Isn’t this Jesus the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, ‘I have come down from heaven’?”

43?Jesus answered them, “Stop grumbling among yourselves. **44?**No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up on the last day. **45?**It is written in the Prophets: **And they will all be taught by God.** Everyone who has listened to and learned from the Father comes to me— **46?**not that anyone has seen the Father except the one who is from God. He has seen the Father.

47?“Truly I tell you, anyone who believes has eternal life. **48?**I am the bread of life. **49?**Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. **50?**This is the bread that comes down from heaven so that anyone may eat of it and not die. **51?**I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread he will live forever. The bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.”

I. Introduction

A. The same people who were fed (5000) follow Jesus to Capernaum

1. They consider Jesus to be “the prophet 6:24

B. Jesus tells them not to work for the food that perishes v. 27

1. They ask what work can they do?
2. The work of God – is to believe in the one He sent v. 29

C. They don’t understand

1. Do a sign to prove you are the prophet like Moses
2. So we can believe.

II. Jesus gives a discourse on the Bread of Life

A. A fresh reading/understanding of “**He gave them bread from heaven.**” (Psa. 78:24)

- “So, the crowds understand the Psalm [Ps. 78:24-5] to say, ‘*Moses long ago gave manna to our ancestors in the wilderness.*’ Jesus uses the same verse to announce, ‘*God, right here & now, is giving you the true bread from heaven.*’ That’s the brief summary of Jesus’ ensuring sermon...” [Robert H. Smith, *Wounded Lord: Reading John*, pp.]

1. Instead of **Moses** it is **My Father** vv. 31b-32

... **He gave them bread from heaven to eat.**

Moses didn't give you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven.

- “He” the subject in 6:31 “The crowd attributes the provision of manna in the original instance to Moses. Their confidence & trust in Moses is ironic since the Israelites in Moses’ day in fact did not follow Moses’ leadership... Jesus proceeds to point out, that the ‘he’ providing the manna was not Moses but God (6:32), the very God who has now sent Jesus as ‘the bread of God... that comes down from heaven & gives life to the world (6:33).” [A. Kostenberger, “John,” in Beale & Carson (eds.) *Commentary on the NT use of the OT*, p. 446]

2. Instead of Moses **gave** it is the Father **gives**

3. Instead of **them** it is **you**

- And to whom was it given? Instead of reading ‘them’ ([their] ancestors of the wilderness generation), Jesus inserts the 2nd person pronoun ‘you’, meaning those who met him the previous day... [Robert H. Smith, *Wounded Lord: Reading John*, pp.]

4. Instead of manna it is true bread – v. 32

- **true bread.** Not manna (vv. 30-31) or physical bread (vv. 5-13, 26-27) but what the Father is now giving: Jesus himself (vv. 35, 48, 51). Jesus fulfills God’s giving manna in the OT by repeating that event at a deeper, climactic level in the history of salvation. NIV Zondervan Study Bible

5. Instead of **manna** it is **bread that gives life to the world** – v. 33

For the bread of God is the one who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”

- And what was given? Manna was surely ‘bread from heaven,’... However, what God really wants to give is ‘true bread from heaven,’ & that bread ‘gives life to the world’ (6:33). Jesus, in 6:58, repeats this assertion concerning Moses & Jesus, wilderness bread... [Robert H. Smith, *Wounded Lord: Reading John*, pp.]

B. What is the Bread of Life?

1. The bread of God is the one who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world (vv. 33, 51b)

For the bread of God is the one who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”

... *The bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.”*

2. Jesus

a. “I am the bread of life” vv. 35, 48;

“I am the bread of life,” Jesus told them. “No one who comes to me will ever be hungry,”

and no one who believes in me will ever be thirsty again?” (6:35)

- “The Bread discourse (6:22-59) is composed of a concentric six-part chiasm with **6:35 as the axis & climax.**” [P. Maritz & G. van Belle, “Imagery of Eating & Drinking in John 6:35,” in J. Frey (ed.) *Imagery in...John*, p. 335]
- “**6:35 is...the theological center** of the narrative. At the same time **6:35 is the literary center** of the narrative; it is the turning point of the plot.” [Dorothy A. Lee, *Symbolic Narratives of the 4th Gospel*, p. 146]

b. “I am the living bread that came down from heaven” v. 51a

“I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread he will live forever. The bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.”

c. “The bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh” v. 51b

- [W]hen the gospel of John presents Jesus as saying, “I am the living bread that came down from heaven” (John 6:51a), the message jolts his hearers, who are looking for him to play the role of Moses by providing them with miraculous bread to eat (6:30-31). Jesus’ striking response refuses the identification with Moses and posits instead a metaphorical conjunction between himself and the manna that fed the Israelites in the wilderness. Richard B. Hays, *The Moral Vision of the NT*, p. 301
- The “bread” Jesus gives is his flesh (a reference to Jesus’ death on the cross). Jesus’ statement intermingles physical and spiritual truth. Jesus is not talking about literal “bread,” but he is the true “living bread” in the sense that those who believe in him have their spiritual hunger satisfied. He becomes this spiritually satisfying “bread” by sacrificing his own physical body in his death on the cross, and in that sense, he can say that this spiritual bread is *my flesh*. *ESV Study Bible*
- “Here too the reader knows – even though ‘the Jews’ do not – that Jesus’ flesh for the life of the world is his redemptive death. There have been intimations of this already (1:29, 367; 2:17, 19; 3:14, 16), and they will become more and more explicit often with the same preposition ‘for’ or ‘on behalf of’ (see 10:11, 15; 11:52; 15:13; 17:19). Within the present discourse, the phrase ‘for the life of the world’ explains and personalizes the earlier promise of bread that ‘gives life to the world’ (v. 33). Jesus will personally give ‘life’ to ‘the world’ by giving his own ‘flesh’ over to death, so that (as he said earlier), ‘everyone who believes in him might not be lost but have eternal life’ (3:16), or ‘so that the world might be saved through him’ (3:17).’ J. Ramsey Michaels, *The Gospel of John*, p. 393
- “The interpretation of the manna motif by the Johannine Jesus shifts the locus of import from that which is given [bread] to the one who gives... The significance of Jesus’ ministry is not that he provides barley loaves for the crowds but that he is sent from above, & the nourishment he provides has been attested by the Father (6:27).” [Paul Anderson, *Christology of the 4th Gospel*, p. 203]

III. How to receive this bread

A. Our role

1. Come – believe, never hunger, never thirst – v. 35

“I am the bread of life,” Jesus told them. “No one who comes to me will ever be hungry, and no one who believes in me will ever be thirsty again.”

2. See the Son and believe, will receive eternal life – v. 40
For this is the will of my Father: that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him will have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.

B. The Father's role

1. Those the Father gives to the Son will come v. 37
Everyone the Father gives me will come to me, and the one who comes to me I will never cast out.
2. Those the Father gives, the Son will not lose v. 39
This is the will of him who sent me: that I should lose none of those he has given me but should raise them up on the last day.
3. The Father draws v. 44
No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him,...

IV. Application

A. Don't work for the food that perishes.

1. The physical "bread" is never enough
2. Learn to be content

B. What do you value? Where do you find your delight?

C. "Take more delight in the Saviour than your service" John Piper re Tim Keller