

## John 6:25-59 – Bread of Life

To help our understanding of this saying of Jesus, we need to be aware of the context in which he said “I am the bread of life.” It follows on from the feeding of the 5,000. The people on that occasion recognised the symbolism of what Jesus did. It was coming up to Passover time, the second mentioned by John. The people had been fed in a desert place, they knew that a Prophet like Moses had been promised and they longed to be free from Gentile domination. They recognised the symbolism but misread the sign, so wanted to force Jesus to be their King, a political messiah. That's why Jesus had withdrawn from the crowd and sent the disciples away back across the Sea of Galilee.

His disciples had then witnessed Jesus coming to them on the water, as they were fighting a losing battle with the wind and waves. They had arrived instantly on the other side of the lake as soon as Jesus was welcomed into the boat. The crowd, however, just knew that the disciples had left in the one boat without Jesus, but somehow Jesus had arrived back in Capernaum. The people were expecting a second Moses and here was Jesus, who had fed a multitude and, in some unexplained way, gone through the sea. “As you read this second Passover narrative, you find Jesus functioning as the expected “prophet like [Moses]” (Deut 18:18) as he feeds the multitude and then offers them the bread of life. Playing on the Exodus theme of *bread from heaven*, which Jews expected to be renewed in the messianic age, Jesus offers himself as that bread, by offering them his “flesh” and his “blood” (John 6:48–58), thus anticipating the final Passover (chs. 13–20).<sup>1</sup>

As we study this passage, we will hear Jesus challenging the limited views and understanding that his hearers had of the Messiah and the age he was to bring in. At the same time we will hear his wonderful offer of no more hunger, no more thirst, eternal life and future resurrection to those who will believe in him. “I am the bread of life” Jesus declared, let us feed on him.

Open

- “The wonderful world of bread I'm still really mad about bread – I love it. It's so exciting.”<sup>2</sup> How do you feel about bread?

### Study

Read together : John 6:25-59

1. What is motivating the crowd in their search for Jesus and where are they going wrong? (John 6:25-27, cf John 6:14-15)

---

<sup>1</sup> Fee, G. D., & Stuart, D. K. (2002). *How to read the Bible book by book : A guided tour* (310). Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan.

<sup>2</sup> Jamie Oliver, 2001, *Happy Days with the Naked Chef*, Michael Joseph, Penguin

## The "I am" sayings of Jesus

2. The crowd thought that having free food and a leader able to free them from the Romans was what they needed. What does Jesus say that people need? (John 6: 27-29)

### Consider

3. "Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you." – How much of our life is spent working to provide for our basic needs of food, drink, clothing, and shelter? How much of our life is given to receiving "food that endures for eternal life"? How do we get the balance right?
4. "What must we do....?", "What will you do?" What was the problem with both these questions? How does Jesus challenge the way the people think with his answers? (John 6:28-33)
5. What do you think Jesus meant when he said, "I am the bread of life." (John 6:35, 48)

### Consider

6. What does the Father do for the Son? What has the Son done for the Father? What does this mean for you? How should you respond? (John 6:35-48)

## The “I am” sayings of Jesus

7. Compare verse 40 with verse 54, what do we need to be doing to have eternal life now and resurrection on the last day? What do you think looking, eating, drinking involves? (John 6:40-58)

### Consider

8. “Our forefathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written: ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’” In what way was the manna in the desert like Jesus and in what way was Jesus far superior? (John 6:31-32, 49-51, 58)
9. “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?” How would you answer that question?

### To chew over until the next study:

David would not drink the water from the well at Bethlehem because his three mighty men risked their lives to get it. “Far be it from me, O Lord, to do this!...Is it not the blood of the men who risked their lives.”(2 Sam 23:17) Jesus said...”unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.” David “refused to ‘drink the blood’ of his comrades—that is, to profit from the risk of their lives. Jesus, as the true **Messiah**, is going one better again. *He* will put his own life at risk—indeed, he will actually lose it; and *his* comrades will profit from that death. They will ‘drink his blood’. They will have their thirst quenched by his death and all that it means.”<sup>3</sup>

“Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, ‘I came down from heaven’?” How often do we miss out on what God is doing because we think we know?

“I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.” (John 6:51)

---

<sup>3</sup> Wright, T. (2004). *John for Everyone, Part 1: Chapters 1-10* (86). London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.