

THE BREAD OF LIFE**John 6:25-58****(Read John 6:25-58)**

INTRO: There's nothing like fresh homemade bread! I was raised on it. My mother made lots and lots of it. As I wrote this I tried to figure out how many loaves she may have made in a week and simply cannot recall – I just know it was lots. Some of our favorite meals in summertime revolved around that homemade bread and have spoiled us so that for us to make those same meals in adulthood, we have to have homemade bread to do it. Two in particular require it:

In the summer when we have fresh tomatoes, my family especially enjoys a Kathryn Tyson delicacy that is as simple as it is delicious. It is a slice of homemade bread, slightly toasted, with, in this order, a thick slice of fresh tomato, three or four half slices of bacon, and topped with a slice of Colby-Jack or cheddar cheese, and then broiled to perfection. This could be considered a light summer meal if it didn't engender the shameless gluttony that DARES you to try and stop after just two or three. It can be made with any kind of bread, but it is only best when it is made with homemade bread.

The other family favorite is when our preferred applesauce apple varieties ripen as the summer progresses. We make gallons of applesauce to be frozen, but only quarts of it actually makes it to the freezer. This is because fresh applesauce is THE BEST! And it is THE BEST served over fresh-out-of-the-oven homemade bread with copious amounts of butter slathered on it. OH MAN!!! This family favorite has spanned generations of Tysons and it is only to be done with homemade, preferably still hot from the oven, bread.

Yes, homemade bread is wonderful. But, do you know what happens to it if, by some miracle, it survives for more than a couple days without being eaten? Take a guess. Yes, what was once so very glorious as it was pulled from the oven, becomes moldy and disgusting and decidedly NOT edible.

The people Jesus was speaking to in John 6 brought to his attention the manna their ancestors ate in the wilderness (John 6:31). Perhaps you remember how, in the accounts of the Israelites coming out of Egypt, they were fed by the bread of heaven called manna. They were to gather enough for each day and if there was any leftover it spoiled. The point was, God provided for them daily and they were to have faith in him to do it. It was, truly, daily bread and it cared for their physical need for sustenance.

Jesus countered that the bread they needed was not the five loaves he had just made into a meal for 5,000 plus people, or the manna of their ancestors, or my mom's delicious homemade bread, the bread they needed and the bread we need, is the **bread of life**. He boldly proclaimed our I AM statement for today, **I AM the bread of life**.

Let's look at it. First . . .

What motivates us?

- Is it our physical appetite or our spiritual need?
 - You know me – I love food. My opening ode to homemade bread is an indication what kind of appetite I have. Others do too. Tuesdays in Ashland have witnessed the arrival of the Chick-fil-A, truck. I don't understand it, but people wait in line for it!!!! Even through a blinding thunderstorm they waited for it. It's crazy! But there are other appetites besides food.
 - Pornography is one of the top money makers in the U.S. economy and there are millions upon millions of views on online pornographic sites each day shows what another huge appetite is.
 - The fact that stadiums and arenas are full on any given day for football, soccer, basketball or any number of other sports what kind of an appetite we have for that.
 - The latest Star Wars or Marvel superhero movie comes out and people go to the opening of them at MIDNIGHT!!!! That's three hours past my preferred bedtime!!!!
- We have an appetite for entertainment that's insatiable! But what does it do? A few weeks ago we talked about the Woman at the Well where Jesus told her a very similar thing to what he is telling the people here in our text: the bread, the water, and the other things this world craves, will not satisfy. Food satisfies for a short while, water quenches for a short while, entertainment gets old and pornography numbs the spirit. This world will not satiate the ravenous appetite of humanity. Mick Jagger's words from 50+ years ago, I can't get no satisfaction, only ring more true that what they did in 1965. Only Jesus can satisfy.

- We need to be motivated by our spiritual need – and the only way it can be met is in Jesus Christ, the Bread of Life, because . . .

In the Bread of Life every need is met

- Our text from John, follows The Feeding of the 5,000. He took a boy’s small lunch of five small barley biscuits and two fish and fed between 5,000 and 10,000 people and still had leftovers. He took care of the nutritional needs of a huge crowd – he can do that. But that doesn’t last.
- What Jesus promises is that he WILL satisfy the longings of our hearts. Sometimes that’s why people eat too much – they are trying to stuff a Jesus shaped void in their soul with food. Jesus can take care of that.
- Jesus promises to fill our deepest joy and pleasure. Why is the pornography industry so huge? Because people are trying to fill a Jesus shaped void in their soul with smut. Only Jesus can fill a Jesus shaped hole in a lost soul.
- Drug abuse and all the tragedy that comes with it is at epidemic proportions. Probably all of us know someone who has been sucked into it. For several of us, it has even hit our families with its hellish attack. Victims of drugs and alcohol abuse are seeking a satisfaction or even an escape that can only be assuaged by Jesus.
- Sometimes it’s not a physical, sexual, or emotional need that is needed but relief from the gut wrenching void left by the loss of a loved one. The bread of Life even consoles us in our lowest grief and brings a sense of hope in the midst of tragedy and loss.
- Here’s the point, without Jesus, even the most awesome delicacy or the most satisfying ecstasy proves to be empty and unsatisfying. So, let’s ask what the people did here in John 6 . . .

What must we do?

- And the answer is simple – Jesus says, in effect, **BELIEVE!** His exact words are “*The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.*” John 6:28. What he really means, and what we need to understand, is **WE** need to BELIEVE!
- And, while that sounds simple, too often our desperate seeking after satisfaction in so many other ways shows that we really don’t believe it. Like the people here in John 6, who had just seen an amazing miracle and yet still needed more of a sign, we look past the miracle and see only the food, or the porn, or the drugs, or whatever idol that sucks us into its embrace.
- We need Jesus instead. But it’s by faith and not by sight. We need to believe that he can do what he promises to do, which is to feed us with the bread of life.

Conclusion: Emily read to us from Isaiah 55 where the prophet sings

*“Come, all you who are thirsty,
 come to the waters;
 and you who have no money,
 come, buy and eat!
 Come, buy wine and milk
 without money and without cost.
 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 you will delight in the richest of fare. Isaiah 55:1-2*

It’s a promise. The bread of life is the richest of fare and it can be bought at no cost. How is that? How can you BUY something at no cost? Only Jesus can do that. In fact he already he did it – he bought us buy dying in our place on the Cross. He gives the promise of eternal life when he says, *For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all those he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. For my Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day.*” John 6:38-40. Look to the Son and believe. *Taste and see that the Lord is good.* Psalm 34:8. He’s the Bread of Life.

I know that most, if not all, of you already know this. You have tasted and seen and have been satisfied by the Bread of Life. Yes, you struggle with the things of this world that compete with him, but he's been victorious in your life. Well then, who do you know who needs to know him? You need to tell them. They need to know about Jesus. This bread doesn't spoil and it doesn't become moldy and worthless and it will always satisfy. They need to know that Jesus is the bread of life, and their only hope. Tell them. Amen.