

SERMON THOUGHTS ABRIDGED

**JOHN 6 (selected verses 26-35, 51b-57, 63b-64a, 67-69)
GETTING HIS BREAD, INTO YOUR HEAD**

Jesus answered them and said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. Do not labor [work] for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him." Then they said to Him, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?" Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent."

Therefore they said to Him, "What sign will You perform then, that we may see it and believe You? What work will You do? Our fathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'" Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." Then they said to Him, "Lord, give us this bread always." And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst. . . . the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world."

The Jews therefore quarreled among themselves, saying, "How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?" Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me. . . . The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.

But there are some of you who do not believe. . . . Then Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you also want to go away?" But Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

What's on your "to-do" list today? Check the cows? Visit dad and mom or children and grandchildren? Quick fix on the fence? Prepare a meal? Balance the checkbook? What's on your "must-do" list for today? What do you really need to do today? Go to church? Read from God's Word? "Well, I should do that, and I am here. But do I need to do that? Probably not. What I really need to do today is Eat." Which leads us directly into our text: What is most important, food for the body, or food for the soul?

We are in John Chapter 6. At the start of the chapter, Jesus and the disciples have crossed the northern end of the Sea of Galilee by boat in order to have some time to rest. A large crowd of people followed on shore by foot. They had witnessed His healing and sought more. In a deserted region, they met up with Jesus again. He healed them and taught them. He was also concerned about their need for food and fed 5000 men plus women and children from five loaves of bread and two small fish. The people were enthralled. This man must be the Great Prophet promised in the Old Testament! They wanted forcibly to make Him King! But He sent the crowds away and went up a mountain to pray. The crowds did not try to follow. I suppose their stomachs were full and they were not about to go to that much more effort. You know, seek Jesus when you have a physical need or problem, and once that's solved, then it's not so important. Sounds familiar?

Jesus sent the disciples back across the Sea of Galilee with the boat. He stayed to pray. During the night the wind came up, and the disciples were laboring at the oars. Jesus knew exactly what was going on, and went to help them, walking on the sea! They thought He was a ghost and cried out in fear! Jesus said, "It is I. Do not be afraid!" Ahh, they were safe. Jesus knows your every situation too and your every fear. When things look the worst, He is with you. In Him you are even safe from your lackluster record before God the Father. In Jesus your sins are atoned. You are safe from the Father's wrath. You are safe from genuine harm in life as well. Trust Him.

Jesus and the disciples were back at Capernaum. The crowds who had eaten to satisfaction in the wilderness eventually returned to Capernaum and asked, "How did you get here?" Jesus said, *You seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled.* Jesus knew they were more interested in the food which He supplied them than in what His miracle of making food meant! He was not just a man. He had been sent by God from heaven to do what they could not do for themselves. He came to provide for them right-standing with God. He came to provide them with righteousness before the Judge! But they were interested in physical food--something to eat. What do you need to do today? I need to eat.

Jesus told them to put physical food into the background and to *work for food which endures to everlasting life!* They got the point of “working” *for food which endures to everlasting life*, but they missed His words, *which the Son of Man will “give” you!* They missed the gift part and said, “What is the work we need to do to get food for eternal life? Do you see where the emphasis has gone? From Jesus to Me. “To go to heaven or not depends on what I do.” It’s logical. It sounds fair. God helps those who help themselves, right? But do you realize #1 that, that statement is not a Bible verse? And #2 if it were, it would not be talking about God pronouncing you Not Guilty. It would be talking about God’s disapproval of laziness, as in “*If a man would not work, neither should he eat*” (II Thessalonians 3:10). The idea that I have to do something always keeps coming back. It makes human sense. “If I break the commandments, I show my *dis-love* for God, and He punishes me--I will be confined to hell. But if I keep the commandments, which is the work of God, God will be happy with me and I will go to heaven. I’m going to try really hard to keep the commandments.” Yes, keep the commandments, but realize because it’s not good enough, Jesus says, *This is the work of God-- that you believe in Him whom He sent.* Jesus of Nazareth is your way and your “work” to heaven. Trust in Him as your payment-in-full for sin; you can’t pay it. Get that into your head.

The people finally got it, that physical bread wasn’t important, but that Jesus was. But, they didn’t really get it either. They asked Jesus what sign He would do to show them He was from God, so then they could believe in Him--as if he hadn’t just healed the sick and fed more than 5000 people! “Give us a sign like Moses gave our forefathers. He gave them manna in the wilderness for forty years.” It’s right back to give us something to eat! “Please make life easy for us.” Do you ever think that? “If God really loves me, if He sent His Son as my Savior, then all problems should be far away from me. If He makes my life easy, I’ll trust in Him.” Backwards, backwards. Each day for the Christian is not about an easy life on earth. It’s about nourishing your soul for heaven in Jesus.

Jesus had to correct the request of the Jews. Moses had not given them manna from heaven. God did. And the manna was not heavenly pure. Those who ate it still died! And, if it was not eaten on the day gathered, the next day it stunk. On the other hand, *God sends down true bread from heaven, giving life to the world.* Jesus Himself.

Jesus says, point blank, *I am the bread of life. He who comes to me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.* Then several verses later *I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness and are dead. This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever and the bread that I shall give is my flesh which I shall give for the life of the world. (6:48-51).* Jesus would give His flesh, His blood, His life for the world. He is true bread that nourishes you and your bond to the Father during this life and holds you firm, even through death, to the Resurrection and the eternal life to come!

It’s so hard to get this Truth of Salvation, this Truth of Real Life, this Truth of What Is Our Goal on This Earth into our heads and into our hearts! It’s so easy to look for what’s good for this life right now. The thing you really need to do today and every day is nourish your faith in Christ. *The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.* Scripture! There is no mechanical method: Read one chapter of the Bible every day, Read a half hour, Read a Bible devotion. There is no special formula. Yet indeed it all starts with the Bible’s message: You are dying because you are a sinner, your disobedience against God is a big problem, but in Jesus you have God’s pardon. A pardon from God! In Jesus you have God’s help, be it hunger or winds. In Jesus you have righteousness and resurrection from the grave. In Jesus you have eternal life in heaven! It’s all in Jesus the true Bread of Life.

Jesus is so intimately tied to and woven into the fabric of Christian life. He says, *Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood. You have no life in you. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life and I will raise him up at the last day (6:53-53).* Jesus is “The Be All and End All” for standing accepted before the Father during this life and the life to come. Not just a little tissue to dab your eyes with when crying, or to dab a cut with when bleeding. Your life revolves around Him. “*He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in me, and I in him. (6:56).* Think about that when the devil tempts you to cheat the government, when the devil tempts you to join the good ol’ boys and girls in worldly entertainment (you gotta have a little fun, the devil lies), or whatever else the sin may be. Jesus is in you and you in Him. He is your Bread of Life. Be devoted to Him.

Do you realize Jesus is not talking about the Lord’s Supper here with “eating His flesh and drinking His blood. It certainly sounds like it, BUT IT CAN’T BE. “Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood,” *you have no life in you*” Will those who die prior to receiving Communion, such as a youngster, not be in heaven? Whoever eats My flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life. Does going to the Lord’s Table, guarantee salvation, even for the pretender? Jesus is not talking about Communion. He is saying your Bread is faith in Jesus.

What do you really need to do today? or Monday back at the battle, or Tuesday when unraveling the wear and tear of another day, or on any day of life—you, the less than perfect soul that you are, with the less than perfect people around you. You need Jesus your Bread of Life. Get that into your head and heart! With Peter, *Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life!* Jesus is your Bread. Trust Him.

So be it! Amen!

Pastor Kanzenbach---