

The Bread Of Life – John 6:34-35

John 6:34-35. We’ve been studying John 6 as the basis for our Christmas series, because just *like* Christmas, it’s all about Jesus. All about the nearness of God, in Christ. So if you know Jesus, you know Christmas. From the presence of God to the peace of God.

But if you don’t, if you don’t know Jesus, you *don’t* know Christmas. At least no more than trees, lights, presents, and food. Just a few more pounds, a bunch more stuff, and a lot of emptiness. *No* Jesus, N-O, No Christmas. Nor any of the gifts that go along with it. Including life itself. The topic in *these* verses. Let’s pick it up in v32.

Intro

Jesus is standing before a crowd and says – [32] “*Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven* [referring to manna; temporary bread given to their forefathers in days of old], *but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven* [bread that lasts forever]. [33] *For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.*” (ESV) That’s true bread. True life.

But they didn’t get it. Indicated by their response. *They said to him* [v34], “*Sir, give us this bread always.*” They saw the value of it, wanting it *always*, but they didn’t catch the fact that the bread is a *person*. And they *certainly* missed the fact that he was standing right in front of them. They were still thinking physical bread. Like manna. Food for their stomach instead of food for their soul.

So Jesus, in one power-packed statement, connects the dots for them. V35 – *Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.”*

My mom cooked and baked a lot of good things in the course of her life, but one of my favorites was bread. Especially at Christmas. I could have made a meal out of the rolls she made. I ate them before the meal, during the meal, and sometimes after the meal for dessert. I cut them in half, buttered them on the inside, buttered them on the outside, and then added more butter in *between* each bite. Still do.

And when bread machines came along, I thought I’d died and gone to heaven. Every time we visited she had bread. A lot like this. And every morning for breakfast she pulled out the bread slicer Dad made, this very one, and we toasted it. Untoasted bread is fine as far as I’m concerned, but toasted bread with butter? No matter how you sliced it, it was awesome. Food for my soul.

That’s the analogy, and that’s the reality, of Jesus. He’s food for our soul. Bread for Life; capital L. Sustenance forever. So that if we take him in; if we receive him into our heart and soul like bread into our stomach, we’ll never lack for life and godliness. Never lack for grace and peace. Never lack for love and purpose. Hope and joy. We’ll never lack the power of his presence to fill and fuel our soul, and guarantee our future.

That’s the bottom line. And I want you to know it up front, because towards the end I’m going to give you an opportunity to have it. To *have* the bread of life. To receive him into *your* heart and soul. *Your* life. Analogy (bread), reality (people).

But before we get there, I want to make sure you understand his statement, phrase by phrase. Because it’s that full. Starting with . . .

“*I am the bread of life*”

It’s the first of *seven* “I am” statements that John records, and when you get right down to it . . .

• It’s a statement of fact

Jesus said, “*The bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life* (33);” the crowd said, “*Give us this bread* (34);” and Jesus replied, “*I am the bread.*” (35) A self-identifying statement of fact.

He *is* the bread of life. As in, the source and giver of all vitality. Not just physically, by making us and breathing into us the *breath* of life, but spiritually as well. He’s the source and giver of all *spiritual* life. That’s the emphasis here.

Just like physical bread gives physical life, Jesus gives spiritual life. Life to awaken our soul (Eph 2). Life to raise us from the deadness of our sin. Life to animate our heart. That’s why people who receive him walk with a spring in their step. They have a new lease on life. A new future. A new perspective: “It’s all because of Jesus I’m alive.” Because he’s the *bread* of life. The source and *giver* of life. It’s a statement of fact.

Second . . .

• It’s a claim of divinity

When Jesus said, “*I am the bread of life,*” he was using the same words that God the Father used, 1500 years earlier. To identify himself to Moses. Speaking from a burning bush in the Midian desert, God told Moses to go back to Egypt and rescue the Israelites. (**Exodus 3:13-14**)

[13] *Then Moses said to God, “If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ what shall I say to them?”* [14] *God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.”* [A phrase that carries a world of meaning; from “the ever-existent one” to “the self-sufficient one.”] *And he said, “Say this to the people of Israel: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”*

Same words. Which makes Jesus’ statement a claim of divinity. A claim that he’s God in the flesh.***** Something he gets even more explicit about later on. (John 8:58-59a)

Third . . .

• It’s a declaration of availability

“*Give us this bread,*” they said. And Jesus replied, “*I am the bread.*” As in, “I’m right here. Present and available.” It would be like a medical emergency where somebody says, “Is there a doctor in the room?” And the person right next to you says, “I am.” It’s not just a statement of fact, it’s a declaration of availability. Jesus was present and available.

And still is. Right here, right now. *Where two or three are gathered in my name* [he said], *there am I among them* (Mt 18:20). And later on, *Behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age* (Mt 28:20). And *everyone who calls on [him] will be saved* (Rom 10:13). Implying that he’s near and available. Just like that *bread*. Analogy (bread), reality (here).

The only question is, do you *have* him? Is he near to *you*? Have you *received* him?

The second phrase, or phrases, is . . .

“*Shall not hunger and never thirst*”

“I am the bread of life [Jesus said]; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst. Never lack the things our heart most needs.

Just like *bread* is a metaphor, so is hunger and thirst. To say that in Christ, we’ll never be in need, spiritually. Physically, sure. *You will have tribulation* (Jn 16:33). But spiritually, even in the midst of it, we’ll never be without. From the love we yearn for to the joy we desire. The peace we cherish to the assurance we treasure.

• It’s a promise to provide

*Whoever comes to me shall not hunger, is a promise to provide. A promise to look after us and care for us. So that we can say with David – *The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want* (Ps 23:1). Shall not hunger. Because bread of life that he is, he’s the source and sustenance for all we need. The one who *makes* [us] *lie down in green pastures* and *restores* [our] *soul* (Ps 23:1-3), by giving us himself.*

John 6:35 is a promise to provide. Which is why we can also say – *Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life. And I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever.* (Ps 23:6) Talk about provision.

It’s a promise to provide, and . . .

• It’s a guarantee to satisfy

Whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst. Never lack for life that satisfies. Life with significance and purpose. Life with a future and meaning. *Shall never thirst* is a guarantee to satisfy our heart to the depths of our soul.

When I was 10 years old, I helped my brothers mow telephone company yards. My Dad was the area manager, we had three push mowers, emphasis on push, and they threw me a few dollars here and there. Though I would have done it for free just to be with them.

But it wasn’t easy. We got up before dawn, traveled from town to town, and usually ended in darkness. And one occasion, it was so hot, we ran out of water in our thermoses before we were done. Tampico, IL. I remember it vividly.

As soon as we finished the yard, I left the mower right where it was and walked across the street to a little convenience store. And while I felt a little sheepish about how I looked, it didn’t keep me from walking in. I was thirsty. So thirsty I had stopped sweating.

So with a quarter to my name, I quickly found the pop, grabbed two **bottles of Coke**, as any 10-year-old would, and opened one on the spot; draining it in about 30 seconds. Then I took the other one to the register, only to find out they were 15 cents apiece instead of a dime. Robbery! But the lady behind the counter felt so sorry for me, she let me have them. Whereupon I drank the second bottle before I got out the door. *Satisfied* to the core.

Analogy (screen), reality (Bible). *Whoever comes to [Jesus] shall not hunger, and whoever believes in [him] shall never thirst.* Never *cease*, to be satisfied.

Is that you? Are you satisfied to the core? Provided for in the depths of your soul? You can be. Anyone can. Because the *next* words make it clear.

“*Whoever and whoever*”

*“Whoever comes to me [Jesus said] shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst. Like Jesus told the woman at the well in John 4:14 – *Whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again.* Whoever.*

• It’s an open invitation

An invitation to anyone and everyone. Including you. And me. People too bad and too sinful to deserve it. People who have made a mess of their lives. People who don’t think they *need* an invitation; too proud, too preoccupied, or too self-sufficient.

It’s open to everyone. You don’t have to have your act together; you don’t have to be a certain color or nationality; and you certainly don’t have to know everything; or have Jesus all figured out. It’s open to *whoever*.

• But it won’t last forever

There will come a day when the offer is pulled. A time when the invitation is void. And if you haven’t RSVP’d by then, you’re out of luck. And that day is either the day you die, or the day Jesus returns; whichever comes first. After that it’s too late. There’s no second chance, no purgatory, and no exceptions. Just judgment.

So whatever you do, don’t wait. Respond now. Join the *multitude* of “whoever’s.” The *multitude* of “anybody’s.” People from every tribe, tongue, and nation, worshipping the *bread* of life, who *gives* life. Don’t wait.

Which brings us to the final two phrases.

“*Comes to me and believes in me*”

Whoever comes to me [Jesus said] shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.” Two aspects of the same decision. Two sides of the same coin.

First . . .

• It’s a call to step out

A call to approach him. Like a pauper approaches a king. Or a child, their teacher. A fisherman, their Lord. *Whoever comes to me*, Jesus says. I don’t know for sure, but I can’t help but think that Jesus had *Peter* in mind when he said this. From the previous day. Just 24 hours earlier.

The disciples were in a boat, rowing against the wind in the middle of the night, and Jesus showed up walking on the water (**Mt 14:28–29**). At which point Peter said – *“Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.” [29] [And Jesus did.] He said, “Come.” So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus. It was a *call* to step out.*

And it perfectly illustrates his call to us. That we too need to step out. We too need to come to Jesus. Leaving the fragile lives we’ve constructed, tossed to and fro by the waves; to the forever life *he* offers, safe in his arms. The futile life *we* live, constantly rowing and never progressing, to the blessed life *he* gives, always at rest and certain to arrive.

Have you stepped out? Have you humbled yourself and come to Jesus? Taken that step of faith? Admitting that your way doesn't cut it? Your life doesn't really mean anything? Isn't really going anywhere?

If not, take the step. Jesus will meet you. He'll meet you and receive you with open arms. Embracing you forever. But you have to heed the call and take the step.

Second . . .

• **It's a requirement to trust**

Whoever comes to me is a call to step out, and *whoever believes in me* is a requirement to trust. More than just agreement with the facts, biblical belief, godly belief, is reliance on the One the facts describe. *Saying* this bread fills me is one thing. Eating it and *trusting* it to do so, is another.

It's like the time I rode along with my brother in his **Ultralight**. Emphasis on *ultra*-light. And notice the word "Experimental." With the words, "For instructional use only" right above it. My belief was tested before I ever got in. And certainly so when we took off. **(Video)**

Jesus is the bread of life, and if you're going to benefit, you have to *believe* in him. Trust him. In at *least* four ways.

First, you have to **trust him to forgive you**. Forgive you of your sin and sinfulness. Your offense at his holiness. Your rebellion against his way. Otherwise you're doomed. Forever condemned and never relieved.

Second, *whoever believes in me* is a requirement to **rely on him to save you**. Save you from the *consequences* of your sin. Separation from God in the throes of hell.

Third, you have to **rest in him to keep you**. To never let you go. Always hold you close. A child of God and part of his family, forever.

Fourth, you have to **depend on him to sustain you**. Depend on him to *give* you life and *sustain* your life. Upholding you with his strength, and blessing you with his presence.

Four ways to step out and trust.

And why wouldn't you? No matter how you slice it, he's the bread of life, and he's good. Analogy, reality.

Prayer – Father, thank you. Thank you for feeding our souls and saving our lives. Thank you for *giving* us life and making us whole. Guide and protect those who just prayed. Remind them of your presence, your nearness. And sanctify them for your glory.

You Are Loved