

August 1, 2021

John 6:24-35

“That’s The Life!”

### **John 6:24-35 Common English Bible**

24 When the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they got into the boats and came to Capernaum looking for Jesus.

25 When they found him on the other side of the lake, they asked him, “Rabbi, when did you get here?”

Bread of life

26 Jesus replied, “I assure you that you are looking for me not because you saw miraculous signs but because you ate all the food you wanted.

27 Don’t work for the food that doesn’t last but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Human One will give you. God the Father has confirmed him as his agent to give life.”

28 They asked, “What must we do in order to accomplish what God requires?”

29 Jesus replied, “This is what God requires, that you believe in him whom God sent.”

30 They asked, “What miraculous sign will you do, that we can see and believe you? What will you do? 31 Our ancestors ate manna in the wilderness, just as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat.”

32 Jesus told them, “I assure you, it wasn’t Moses who gave the bread from heaven to you, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven.

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

34 They said, “Sir, give us this bread all the time!”

35 Jesus replied, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.

Q: Why are bread jokes always funny?

A: Because they never get mold!

Q: What does bread do after it is done baking?

A: Loaf around.

Q. Speaking of Panera, do you know where they take their injured sandwiches?

A. The Mayo Clinic.

During the pandemic one of the interesting...or weird depending on how one defines it, was the fad of many folks to get a sourdough starter and make sourdough bread. I first heard of sourdough bread a LONG time ago but never figured it for something that would ever be related to a pandemic. I'm still not 100% sure how the pandemic had anything to do with sourdough bread but I suppose it had to do with folks being home and having the time to make their own bread.

According to [webmd.com](http://webmd.com) when the question was asked how sourdough bread is good for us the answer given is: According to some studies, sourdough bread acts as a prebiotic, which means that the fiber in the bread helps feed the "good" bacteria in your intestines. These bacteria are important for maintaining a stable, healthy digestive system. Sourdough is also lower in gluten than other forms of bread.

In addition...Sourdough bread is a great alternative to conventional bread. Its lower phytate levels make it more nutritious and easier to digest. Sourdough bread also seems less likely to spike your blood sugar levels, which makes it an option for those monitoring their blood sugar.

When I asked Mrs. Google why sourdough was such a thing during the pandemic one of the answers stated that folks were scared of the dwindling bread supplies and decided to make their own bread...here's what it said, "In response, many people took matters in their own hands and began baking their own bread. ... But flour mills couldn't keep up with the demand, leaving grocery store shelves barren and sending bakers on a search for online flour sources." And since sourdough answered most of these concerns and seemed to be a healthier choice...it became a thing!

Bread is a big deal! I bet you already knew that. People in the USA consume about 53 lbs of bread every year. In 1997, Kansas wheat farmers

produced enough wheat to make 36.5 billion loaves of bread, or enough to provide each person on earth with 6 loaves of bread. I don't consider myself a big bread eater and yet when I took inventory of how much bread I ate during a typical week it was a least a loaf of bread each week...no wonder our 3 person family always seems to be running out of bread! And here are a few other little known facts about bread...The fastest "bun" in the West goes to a team of bakers from Wheat Montana Farms and Bakery who reclaimed the Guinness World Record in 1995. They harvested and milled wheat from the field and then mixed, scaled, shaped and baked a loaf in exactly eight minutes, 13 seconds. Scandinavian traditions hold that if a boy and girl eat from the same loaf, they are bound to fall in love. In Russia, bread (and salt) are symbols of welcome. Superstition says it is bad luck to turn a loaf of bread upside down or cut an unbaked loaf. AND...Legend has it that whoever eats the last piece of bread has to kiss the cook. And since I am often the one who eats the heels of the loaf I assume I have a lot of kissing to do with someone at Sara Lee! Right now there's someone named "Bud" who works at Sara Lee and is scared to meet me!

One of my fondest memories of my Grandma Sadie is getting to eat one of her home made rolls right out of the oven with melted butter all over it! My goodness those were amazingly good! So as you can see...even for a fellow who really doesn't consider himself much of a bread eater...bread is important! It also may show that I am a lot bigger of a bread eater than I imagine!

Bread's been around a while...in the beginning right after the fall when both Adam and Eve ate from the tree that gave them the knowledge of good and evil the Lord told them, "3:19, By the sweat of your face you will eat bread until you return to the fertile land, since you are soil (dust) and to the soil (dust) you will return."

Bread is mentioned at least 492 times in the Bible...depending on the translation. And it appears throughout the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. Bread is very important to our daily existence and it most certainly was to the folks of Jesus time and place. In fact if you notice

there are many times in the Bible when a person is sustained not by meat or vegetables...but rather by bread! If you look at the temptations Satan gave to Jesus one of them was to turn stones into...bread. And Jesus, perhaps giving us a reason to understand his later “bread of life” claim says, “Folks do not live on bread along...but rather by the word of God!” Remember in John who is identified as the Word of God? It is Jesus! So when Jesus claims here in John 6 to be the Bread of Life...maybe he was also telling folks he was the bread that was the WORD.

So...right after Jesus feeds the 5000 and shows that he is “more than enough” something interesting happens. It says, “The next day the crowd that remained on the other side of the lake realized that only one boat had been there. They knew Jesus hadn’t gone with his disciples, but that the disciples had gone alone. 23 Some boats came from Tiberias, near the place where they had eaten the bread over which the Lord had given thanks.” I find this fascinating. They have seen Jesus miraculously feed 5000 people with 5 loaves and 2 fish, and they see they have over 12 baskets of leftovers. So they decided to make him their king...but Jesus wants no part of that and he escapes...but the people are still looking for him. Jesus escapes in a boat and the people are fooled at first then the next day they realize he has left and that he is not with his disciples...but they don’t understand how he got over there since they knew he wasn’t in the boat the disciples took and the other boat was still on the other shore. You probably remember that Jesus WALKED on the water to get over there...to get away from the 5000 or so who were still looking for him. But remember they were partakers in a great miracle...they got their bellies fed and my suspicion is they were much more interested in finding Jesus the one who could feed their bellies than in finding Jesus the one who could do so much more.

Jesus seems to be right on this as he next says, “I assure you that you are looking for me not because you saw miraculous signs but because you ate all the food you wanted. 27 Don’t work for the food that doesn’t last but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Human One will give you. God the Father has confirmed him as his agent to give life.” 28 They asked, “What must we do in order to accomplish what God requires?”

29 Jesus replied, "This is what God requires, that you believe in him whom God sent."

So...the folks...the ones from the 5000 Jesus fed are looking for him...when they find him they are curious about how he got over to the other side of the Lake and even though they ask about how he got there the real reason they want Jesus is because he provided them food! When Jesus tells them that they should desire the food that endures for eternal life they ask him, "What must we do in order to accomplish what God requires?" And then Jesus clearly says, "You must believe in him whom God sent!"

Seems rather easy and to the point doesn't it? All anyone has to do is believe in him whom God sent. But what exactly does that get us? And what did the folks who were searching for Jesus understand about him?

So they ask him another question by saying, "What miraculous sign will you do, that we can see and believe you? What will you do? 31 Our ancestors ate manna in the wilderness, just as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat."

So they want a miracle kind of like the one Moses gave his people in the desert...they want manna...do you remember what manna was? Well when asked Moses claimed it was, "And Moses said to them, 'It is the bread that the LORD has given you to eat'" So manna...was a heaven sent bread. And the 5000 ish, who are now hungry again after their fine meal from the day before want something to eat! And when Jesus tries to tell them they just need to believe...they say, "Well, Moses at least gave our ancestors something to eat!"

And here is how Jesus responds to them, the hungry and getting a bit impatient people whom he had fed just the day before, "32 Jesus told them, "I assure you, it wasn't Moses who gave the bread from heaven to you, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. 33 The bread of God is the one who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

He is talking about heavenly bread that doesn't simply fill the stomach, but actually "gives life to the world." Not surprisingly, the people respond by saying, "Sir, give us this bread always" (v. 34).

We can understand their hunger, while wondering whether they really know what they are requesting. What exactly is this bread of God that gives life to the world? It's not a loaf and it's not a type of bread kneaded by a robot or delivered by a driverless car.

No, this bread of God is nothing less than Jesus himself. "I am the bread of life," says Jesus. "Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty" (v. 35).

Jesus is the "bread of life." For the first time, and for all time, we are able to receive "the true bread from heaven" which gives life to the world and satisfies our deepest hunger and thirst. So, then, what does it mean for Jesus to give life to the world?

The answer to this question is both universal and very personal, and both levels are equally important. After all, bread is a universal food, available almost everywhere around the world. It is also very personal in the sense that it appears in many different forms in a variety of cultures, from pitas to baguettes to tortillas to Wonder bread.

On a universal level, Jesus is the Word of God in human form. As God's Word, he existed "in the beginning with God." John tells us that all things came into being through him, and "what has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people" (1:2-4).

Jesus was there from the beginning of creation! Everything has come into being through him, including life. The apostle Paul says much the same thing in his letter to the Colossians, when he describes Jesus as the firstborn of all creation. "All things have been created through him and for him," says Paul. "In him all things hold together" (1:15-17).

This is the universal Jesus, the eternal bread that gives life to the world. But maybe this cosmic Christ is too big an idea for us to swallow in one piece. It is hard to take a bite out of a loaf this large. So it's better to drop to a much more personal level, focusing on Jesus as the bread of life for each of us. Perhaps that's why he was born in the little town of Bethlehem, which means "house of bread."

As our personal bread, Jesus gives us strength to face the challenges of life, both small irritations and huge obstacles. Everyone knows what it feels like to be "hangry" -- that is, bad-tempered or irritable as a result of being hungry. A little snack can lift your spirits and give you the strength you need to move ahead. Long-distance runners know that they cannot complete an entire marathon with the fuel they have in their stomachs from breakfast. They have to eat along the way, fueling their muscles with gel-packs and power bars and other energy sources.

As the bread of life, Jesus gives us what we need. He is the Word of God in human form, offering us correction and guidance and forgiveness. He is the bread of life in human form, giving us nourishment and strength and inspiration. Without this living bread, we would quickly wear out and give up in the face of the many challenges of life. Jesus is the One who is with us and available to us, able to satisfy our hunger and our thirst.

The sacrament of the Lord's supper is celebrated on the first Sunday of the month in our church, and more frequently in other churches. It's no surprise that this meal is offered regularly, because we all need the reminder of the nourishment that comes from the bread and the cup of communion. When Jesus broke bread at the Last Supper and said, "This is my body that is for you," he fully expected that his followers would break the bread regularly in remembrance of him (1 Corinthians 11:24). He knew that we would need the bread of life not just once, but over and over again.

Jesus is God's greatest gift, the one sent into the world "so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life." When we believe in him and eat the bread of life, we receive the forgiveness and

inspiration that we need to face the many challenges of life. Nourished by "the food that endures for eternal life," we are able to be Christ's people in the world, and point others toward the peace, justice and salvation of the kingdom of heaven. Nothing else endures for eternal life. Only by believing in Jesus can we receive the bread of God which gives life to the world, both universally and personally.

So...today, we join the crowd around Jesus in saying, "Sir, give us this bread always," the good news is Jesus does and the reminder we get in our communion lets us feel the assurance of his bread of life and with that bread we shall never experience Spiritual hunger again! Amen. <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.homileticsonline.com/members/installment/93041124>