

Lesson 2

Dec. 14, 2025

Jesus: The Bread of Life

Jesus, as the Bread of Life, provides spiritual nourishment for the believers.

THE LESSON OVERVIEW

When Jesus identified Himself as the “bread of Life” (John 6:35), He was introducing a profound spiritual insight. He alone offers spiritual nutrition that goes beyond physical needs. Following the miraculous feeding of the five thousand, the people, seeking more signs and free food, found Jesus. However, Jesus redirected their focus, emphasizing the importance of spiritual nourishment that can only be found in Him. He declared that belief in Him fulfills the deepest hunger of the human soul, offering everlasting life. This passage shows Jesus’ role as the source of spiritual fulfillment and invites us to trust in Him as the ultimate provider of life, both now and for eternity.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The context for today’s passage is the account of Jesus’ feeding the five thousand. In response to this miracle, the people saw Jesus as a messianic figure and wanted to make Him their king. However, they misunderstood Jesus’ mission, focusing on physical rather than spiritual needs. This highlights John’s use of irony in his Gospel. One type of irony he uses is situational irony, wherein the opposite of what is expected happens. Another type is dramatic irony, in which the reader or audience knows something that the characters in a story or the actors in a drama do not. Look for John’s use of irony in this story and throughout his Gospel.

THE LESSON OUTLINE

1. LABOR FOR BREAD THAT LASTS: John 6:22-27.

- A. Pay Attention to the Signs (22-26)
- B. Work for What Feeds the Soul (27)

2. RECOGNIZE THE SOURCE OF LIFE: John 6:28-35.

- A. Faith Is the Word of God (28-29)
- B. Jesus Christ Is the Source of Life (30-35)

3. SALVATION’S EVERLASTING WORK: John 6:36-40.

- A. Jesus Saves All Who Believe in Him (36-37)
- B. Jesus Will Resurrect Every Believer (38-40)

DISCUSSING THE LESSON

1. LABOR FOR BREAD THAT LASTS: John 6:22-27.

A. Pay Attention to the Signs, John 6:22-26

The day after Jesus fed the “great multitude” (6:5 NKJV), the crowds returned to the place where the miracle of the loaves and fishes had occurred. They were looking for Jesus and His disciples, but they were not there. Why were the crowds pursuing Jesus and His disciples? The answer became clear when they entered the boats and arrived at Capernaum. When they found Jesus, He revealed their true intentions. They saw Jesus as someone who could feed their physical hunger. But they were seemingly oblivious to the spiritual truth revealed in the miracle: Jesus was the key to satisfying their spiritual hunger and the source of eternal life. From the context (6:16-21), we know the journey across the Sea of Galilee could be hazardous. If these people were willing to take this risk to feed their bodies, they should have been even more concerned about the eternal state of their souls.

This account reveals that people often prioritize meeting immediate physical needs over addressing their deeper, eternal spiritual needs. The attitude of the people mirrors the journey of the children of Israel as they traveled to the Promised Land. Despite Moses’ reminder that people do not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God (Deuteronomy 8:3), the Israelites frequently grumbled about their lack of food and water in the wilderness. They failed to fully embrace the spiritual sustenance and guidance offered through God’s commands delivered by Moses. Similarly, during Jesus’s time, though well-versed in these Old Testament accounts, the people repeated the same mistake, prioritizing earthly concerns over spiritual truths.

B. Work for What Feed the Soul, John 6:27

The people went to great lengths to follow Jesus, risking a voyage across the Sea of Galilee. They certainly labored to find Him! However, they were driven by natural hunger, not spiritual hunger. Therefore, Jesus instructed them to work for the imperishable bread that only He could give – the bread that ensures eternal life. Jesus referred to Himself as “the Son of man” (v. 27). Of the twelve times Jesus used this title in John, three of them occur in passages that refer to Him being “lifted up,” meaning His Crucifixion (3:14; 8:28; 12:34). Jesus used the title here to link life-giving breads to His body on the cross, symbolized in the bread of Communion (6:51, 54-56). Thus, the church remembers His death in Communion while celebrating His presence as the Bread of Life.

Throughout John’s Gospel, Jesus reveals the legitimacy and divine origin of His ministry. In this passage, He emphasized that God “set His seal on Him” (v. 27 NKJV) – a powerful declaration rich with meaning. In the ancient world, seals were used as a means of authentication, authority, and verification. A seal, often bearing a unique engraved design, would be pressed into clay, wax, or other material to signify ownership, validate authority, and ensure the integrity of documents. By saying God placed His seal on Him, Jesus affirmed the Father’s endorsement of His mission, words, and actions. It signified the authenticity of His identity as the Son of God, the authority granted to Him by the Father, and the truth of His teachings. It confirmed that His ministry was not of human origin but was divinely commissioned and approved.

Jesus shifted the crowd’s attention from earthly food to eternal sustenance, proclaiming Himself the Bread of Life. He urged them to seek not perishable nourishment but the eternal life only He can provide. This passage highlights that while material needs are essential for survival,

they cannot satisfy the soul's deeper hunger. True fulfillment is found solely in Christ, who meets our deepest spiritual needs. We must prioritize eternal treasures over fleeting worldly pursuits, embracing the gift of salvation offered through Jesus, who is certified by the Father. At every meal, let us pause to give thanks to God for both the physical provision and the spiritual nourishment found in Jesus.

2. RECOGNIZE THE SOURCE OF LIFE: John 6:28-35

A. Faith Is the Work of God, John 6:28-29

When Jesus told the people to labor for the true bread, they wanted to know what they should do. They wanted to know what actions they should perform to earn the bread Jesus was offering. This reflects their religious perspective and, ironically, how ignorant they were of spiritual truths. True to the prevailing view of Judaism at the time, they wanted to know what works they must perform to merit the things necessary for eternal life. Jesus, however, was talking about God's plan of salvation, in which the bread of life is given by His grace and not earned by human merit. Instead of trying to earn eternal life, they should focus on believing in Jesus as the Bread of Life. Throughout this passage, John focuses on an important theme in the New Testament: the contrast between effort and earning on one hand and believing and receiving on the other. In other words, the contrast between faith and works.

Faith and works are deeply intertwined in the teachings of Paul, James, and John, each offering a unique perspective on the significance. Paul highlights the primacy of faith, teaching that salvation comes through faith apart from works. James emphasizes that works serve as evidence of genuine faith, revealing the transforming power of salvation in one's life. Together, they remind us that faith and works are not in opposition but rather two sides of the same coin. John brings clarity by proclaiming that faith in Jesus Christ is the sole requirement for salvation, as seen in Jesus' promise of eternal life in John 3:16. Yet, trusting in God is not always easy – it can feel like a struggle, as illustrated in chapter 6, where the people seemed to resist surrendering their self-reliance. We must realize that only God can enable us to believe in Jesus, which brings us eternal life.

B. Jesus Christ Is the Source of Life, John 6:30-35.

Ironically, the people asked Jesus for a sign to prove He could deliver on His promise of eternal life (v. 30). He had performed the miracle of the loaves and fish, demonstrating the power of God at work in His life. Yet, they insisted on another sign to convince them. Their focus was on the sign (fish and loaves) and not that it pointed to Jesus as the Messiah. Demanding a sign from God in every circumstance reveals a lack of faith. This is why Jesus said, "A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign" (Matthew 16:4 NKJV). Authentic faith is based on a relationship built on trust in God. People who have genuine faith in God do not require a sign because they trust in the Lord's goodness and faithfulness.

At the heart of this passage is Jesus' statement, "I am the bread of life" (John 6:35). The miracle of the loaves and fishes, as well as the miracle of the manna in the wilderness, point to the true identity of Jesus. As the bread of God who descended from Heaven (v. 32), Jesus Christ is the source of life. He is the only one who can satisfy spiritual hunger and nourish spiritual life. He invites all who hunger and thirst for a more abundant life to come to Him in faith. Once we do so, we will never hunger or thirst again.

While it may be tempting to criticize the individuals in this story for their lack of faith, it's important to reflect on our tendencies before casting judgment. After all, Jesus said we should not judge others (see Matthew 7:1-5). A more thoughtful approach would be to use this story as an opportunity for self-reflection, considering whether we, too, exhibit unbelief or spiritual shortsightedness, even when the truth of God's Word is clearly before us. As James 1:23 explains, God's Word serves as a perfect mirror, revealing the state of our souls. The Bible enables us to acknowledge our flaws and shortcomings, and more importantly, guides us in making the necessary changes to grow spiritually.

3. SALVATION'S EVERLASTING WORK: John 6:36-40.

A. Jesus Saves All Who Believe In Him, John 6:37-37

Jesus pointed out the crowd's lack of faith, noting that although they had witnessed the sign revealing Him as the Bread of Life, they still refused to accept the truth, even with Him standing before them. He further explained that all who come to Him are given by the Father (v. 37), emphasizing that no one can come to Him unless they are drawn by the Father (v. 44). This process involves a human response to God's invitation. While God draws individual to Christ, this drawing must be met with faith, which is "the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8). This relationship can be understood as a mutual attraction, where God's love compels Him to reach out to us, and we, moved by faith, respond to His call. Through this dynamic interaction, we are granted "the right to become children of God" (John 1:12) – an act rooted in both divine grace and human faith.

Jesus emphasized that no one who seeks Him with a hunger for the eternal bread He provides will be "cast out" (6:37). His promise is firm – He never turns away those with genuine faith. This assurance emphasizes the confidence we can have in God's work of salvation, as it is rooted in His infinite grace and unchanging commitment to us when we place our trust in Him. Billy Graham said, "Salvation is an act of God. It is initiated by God, wrought by God, and sustained by God."

B. Jesus Will Resurrect Every Believer, John 6:38-40

Jesus' existence as the Son of God is eternal. His coming from Heaven was part of the divine plan of redemption established in the Trinity's eternal counsel. Jesus explained He was sent from Heaven to do the Father's will (v. 38). First, the Father wills that no one He gives to the Son will be lost (v. 39). The phrase "lose nothing" denotes a "loosing, releasing." Jesus affirmed in love that no one who believes in Him can be shaken loose from His power. The Apostle Paul echoed this in Romans 8:38-39: "I am persuaded that neither death nor life ... shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (NKJV).

Second, it is God's will that the Son resurrect believers on the last day to "everlasting life" (v. 40). Jesus reiterated this promise of resurrection twice (vv. 44, 54), emphasizing its importance. Jesus could proclaim this promise of the resurrection with confidence because the authority to raise the dead was given to Him by the Father (10:17-18). Eternal life is not just about endless existence after the resurrection, but also about the quality of life now through faith in God. It is the abundant life Jesus speaks of in John 10:10. It is not simply something hoped for in eternity; it begins as a spiritual reality on earth.

In the first three hundred years of its existence, the church faced violent persecution for its faith in Jesus. Christians during this period believed that those who put their faith in Jesus would be raised from the dead, just as Jesus was. Because of this faith, they gave the ultimate witness to the truth of the Gospel by giving their lives as martyrs, which comes from the Greek word for witness. In many places in the world, the winds of culture are shifting, and Christianity is viewed with increasing hostility. As such, believers face a growing tide of hatred and violence for following Christ. Are we prepared to endure the persecution and be witnesses for Christ, even in the face of death?

CALL TO DISCIPLESHIP

To share the message that Jesus is the Bread of Life, we must first be nourished by that bread ourselves through our study of the Bible and spending time in prayer with the Lord.

MINISTRY IN ACTION

Ask the class how they have shared their hope in Christ with others. Ask them to find a partner and pray with each other that the Lord will help them be more effective in personal evangelism.

WORKSHEET

The First Miracle Performed by Jesus

Told Only by John's Gospel is the account of the first miracle performed by Jesus (2:1-11). All of the Four Gospels tell of many miracles performed by Jesus. His first miracle demonstrated His authority over nature (the creation).

The Miracle of Turning Water into Wine, the first ("this beginning") of Jesus' miracles (2:1-11), was performed during a wedding feast to which Jesus and His disciples had been invited (v. 2).

When Jesus Told the Servers To Fill Their Pitchers With Water, and to serve first the master of the wedding feast, the master declared it the best wine served during the feast (2:6-9).

Seeing That Jesus Christ Is, With God the Father, and God the Holy Spirit, the Creator of everything that has been created, it is a given that He would have authority and power over all that He has created (John 1:1-3; Colossians 1:16).

The First Miracle of Jesus Revealed the Principle At Work in all of His demonstrations of miraculous power over the natural world. Natural processes were mimicked and miraculously speeded up.

For Example, Over a Span of Months, grapevines produce grapes filled with juice. When the juice of the grapes becomes fermented it is wine. Fermentation occurs because the juice is acted upon by yeast, a common fungi widespread in the natural environment. Jesus' miracle replicated nature, speeded up thousands of times.

Jesus Multiplied Bread and Fish To Feed Thousands. Naturally, bread is multiplied by hundreds of grains of wheat growing on a stalk from one grain of wheat. The ripe wheat is made into bread. Fish multiply by one fish laying thousands of eggs that hatch, producing many fish. Over time, storms form, rage, subside, and cease to exist. Jesus stopped a storm instantly. All of Jesus' miracles over nature were consistent with the way He created things to work naturally. But His miracles were thousands of times faster than what we see in nature.

Living Bread

“For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world” (John 6:33 NKJV).

1. According to Jesus, why was a crowd following Him (John 6:26)?
2. How does Jesus compare two types of “bread” in verse 27?
3. Charles Spurgeon (1834-1892) said, “the Gospel which they so greatly needed they would not have; the miracles which Jesus did not always choose to give, they eagerly demanded.” How and why does this still happen today?
4. What could Moses not do, and why not (v. 32)?
5. What is “the will” of God the Father (vv. 39-40)?