

The Bread of Life:
Finding Satisfaction in Jesus
John 6:35,51

Who loves bread? I love bread...second to rice. But I really love bread especially if that bread is pan de sal, the Philippine bread. In the Philippines, pan de sal comes in different sizes and shapes. And you'll really love it when it's served straight from the oven.

I remember when I was young, my mom would wake me up early in the morning to run to the bakery to buy a bunch of them. They were hot and sometimes I had a hard time holding the paper bag containing these bread because they were just hot. But, of course, as I walked back home, I was already munching one bread. Sometimes two. I always had a headstart. Because I knew that when I got home, they would be gone in 60 seconds. Imagine seven hungry kids waiting to devour those soft, succulent, tasty breads.

Now, the only thing I don't like about bread is when it's all gone. Bread brings satisfaction, but it is only temporary. No matter how much we have it in stock, bread will be gone--or if I don't eat it right away it will become stale, and then moldy, and I'll have to throw it away. I know that when the bread is gone I'll soon become hungry again, and until I get something to eat I won't be satisfied.

But there's another bread that will always satisfy and never run out. This is Jesus who claimed that he is the Bread of Life. Look at these verses.

v.35 says, *"Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."*

v. 51 says, *"I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."*

The most interesting thing about this bread Jesus talks about is that it will last forever. I want you to keep that in mind as we examine Jesus' claim to be the Bread of Life. By the way, this is one of the seven “I Am” statements of Jesus in the New Testament. There is also “I am the Light of the World” which Pastor Nonoy talked about last week. There’s also “I am the Door”, “I am the Vine” and so forth. All of them are from the book of John.

But that is not the subject of our series. We’re on the third part of our series on “Who is Jesus?” We’re looking at the various titles of Jesus in the Bible, both from the Old and New Testament. First, we learned that Jesus is the Word of God and as such, he reveals God to us and, in fact, he is God himself. Then, we learned also that Jesus is the Light of the World, that he is God’s glory. Today, we’re going to learn that Jesus is the Bread of Life and as such, you can find satisfaction in him.

Now, if we look at the context of Jesus words, we find that he said those words, “I am the Bread of Life”, after people were searching for him to give them free food again! You see, at the beginning verses of John 6, we find that Jesus did a miracle by feeding at least 5,000 people from just five loaves of bread and two small fish. Some commentators say the crowd could have numbered up to 10 or 20,000. Then, Jesus went away with his disciples to Capernaum and people followed them there the next day.

But Jesus knew what was in their hearts. They were following Jesus not because for who he is but for what he could give them. He says to them, **“Very truly I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw the signs I performed but because you ate the loaves and had your fill.”**

The people were more interested in their physical well-being rather than in their spiritual well-being. They were living just for the here and now. They wanted gratification of the flesh and they wanted it there and then. And yet, at their very core, they knew that there was something more but they couldn’t identify it.

Sounds like many people today, huh? People haven't changed after 2000 years. Many are hungry and thirsty but they just don't know how to satisfy that hunger and thirst. In fact, they search and yearn for the wrong things.

This can be illustrated by an interview conducted with Tom Brady, the famous quarterback of the New England Patriots, by 60 Minutes a few years back. In this interview he was at the height of his career. He had won three Superbowl titles, he had won two MVPs, he had a supermodel for a wife, he was a multimillionaire, so his story is basically - rich, beautiful people winning Superbowls. That's his story. Probably some of you have seen this interview especially if you're a Patriots fan and he sits down with the journalist and he says, "Why do I have three Superbowl rings and still think there's something greater out there for me? I think it's got to be more than this. I mean, this isn't it. This can't be what it's all cracked up to be." And the journalist asked, "What's the answer?" And Tom Brady responds, "I wish I knew." And that's a story we've heard many times from people at the top - "I wish I knew."

There's no denying the fact that everyone is hungry. We have hungry hearts - hungry maybe for comfort, hungry maybe for romance or for money, hungry maybe for power or for approval, but everyone is hungry.

So now, as we look at this "I Am" statement of Jesus, the first thing we must understand is that:

1. THE SOUL IS HUNGRY

When we are physically hungry our stomachs growl. But if we will open our ears to the sounds of the world around us I believe we will hear the growling of people's souls. The people of Jesus' day experienced this spiritual hunger. At the beginning of this chapter, Jesus had fed the crowd of 5,000 people with 5 loaves and 2 fish. And now they have come to Jesus wanting more food –their physical

hunger was only temporarily satisfied. And Jesus told them in v.27 "*Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you...*" Jesus knew that although these people had a real need for physical nourishment, their need for spiritual nourishment was even greater.

Isn't that evident in the world today? Can you hear the cries of people who are living their lives without Christ? Can you hear their souls crying out for something to eat? Can you see the moral degradation of our world and see that it directly corresponds to the need for spiritual fulfillment? Why does the drug addict keep taking drugs? Why does the alcoholic keep drinking? Why does the prostitute sell her body? Why does the homosexual march through the streets of our cities declaring to have "Gay Pride"? Why do people turn to religious cults in droves? Why do men and women go out and have adulterous relationships?

It might seem like too simplistic of an answer--but I believe it is because they have a spiritual void in their lives. They walk through life with an empty spot in their heart and they don't know how to fill it. So they turn to the things they think will satisfy--things like booze, sex, and cults. And when these don't satisfy their craving they turn to another vice, and another.

Do you want to know why depression is the most common mental problem in the world today?--it is because people have hungry souls and they don't know how to feed them.

It is said that there is a God-shaped hole or vacuum in our hearts that only God can fill. That is a saying taken from a quote by Blaise Pascal, "*What else does this craving, and this helplessness, proclaim but that there was once in man a true happiness, of which all that now remains is the empty print and trace? This he tries in vain to fill with everything around him, seeking in things that are not there the help he cannot find in those that are, though none can help, since this infinite abyss*

can be filled only with an infinite and immutable object; in other words by God himself.” - Blaise Pascal, *Pensées* VII(425)

S 12o we've identified our condition--the Soul is Hungry; the 2nd thing we need to notice is the sad news that:

2. THE WORLD CANNOT FEED IT

Secular agencies and governments have been somewhat successful in feeding hungry people. During times of natural disaster or crisis different agencies are quick to come to the rescue. And no matter how you feel about our present welfare system we do know that there are not many poor people in this country going without food. But when it comes to spiritual hunger secular agencies, companies, and individuals cannot meet the heart's real desire.

Just look around us. You can see how the world tries to fill the void in our hearts. There are amusement centers like Disneyland that offers happiness for a day or two or three. In fact, it's mission statement says "To be one of the world's leading producers and providers of entertainment and information." They exist to make you happy.

There are sports leagues like the NBA, the NFL, the NHL, and the like. They exist to entertain you and thrill you as well.

There are different brands of beer and wine for those who want to forget their problems. I don't think they entertain you.

There is social media like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and the like. They seek to entertain you and so that you can entertain others as well. More than that, it's a way for people to get acceptance and affirmation.

There are also casinos, singles bars, strip joints, and the like.

Now, I'm not saying all of these are bad. Because we need some entertainment too every now and then. We cannot be serious all the time. I have brought my children to Disneyland myself.

But the question is, will any of these bring a permanent fix to something that is broken in our lives?

Years ago, when I was broken, I tried religion. I was in my twenties but I was depressed to the point of wanting to take my own life. I thought the God of the Bible failed me and so I tried eastern religions. I dabbled with Hare Krishna and when you're in that organization, you're going to practice yoga and become vegetarian. I remember I went to Japan because of computer training and during my eight months of stay there, I didn't eat sashimi, sushi, tempura and all non-vegetarian food. I just feasted on noodles and more noodles. That was the most regretful time of my life.

Anyway, I practiced yoga and for a time it helped to calm my nerves, make me peaceful, and be more philosophical in my approach to life. But after a year, I still didn't have the peace that I was looking for. I was still troubled inside of me. Eventually, I quit doing yoga and left Hare Krishna altogether. Depression set in once again until God made his move.

My point is what the world offers is nothing compared to the bread that Jesus offers which is himself.

People are crying out to the world for help to fill the spiritual void in their lives. But the advice the world has to give only makes the void grow larger.

The Soul is Hungry; but the World cannot feed it; - the Good news is;

3. GOD HAS SENT US BREAD FROM HEAVEN

The people Jesus had fed wanted a sign from heaven. In v.31 they said to Jesus, *"Our forefathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written: 'He gave them bread*

from heaven to eat." But Jesus replied in v.33 *"the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."*

He went on to say in vv.48-51, *"I am the bread of life. 49 Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, yet they died. 50 But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which anyone may eat and not die. 51 I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."*

Jesus was saying, "You want a sign from heaven? I am the sign from heaven." "You want proof--I'm giving up my life for you." "You want manna that will temporarily satisfy--I am the bread that satisfies forever."

God saw the hunger of the world's soul. So He sent Jesus to satisfy that hunger. God has sent us bread from heaven.

So we've seen that the Soul is Hungry; that the World cannot feed it; and that God has sent us bread from heaven: The last and most important point is this:

4. WE MUST PARTAKE OF JESUS TO FILL OUR HUNGER

A very thin man met a very fat man in the hotel lobby. "From the looks of you," said the fat man, "there might have been a famine."

"Yes", was the reply, "and from the looks of you, you might have caused it."

There's a famine in many parts of the world today. You have all seen films of the starving children of the Third World. It is almost impossible to look at them very long. Their stomachs are protruding; there are flies stuck to their faces; they are crying out for something to eat.

Let's say we had a big grocery bag filled with nutritious food and we placed it in front of one of those children. But we put the bag inside a cage that is locked. The child could see the food; and would have a great desire for the food; but until the cage was unlocked the food would do him no good.

The spiritually hungry of the world are in a very similar situation. They have a great hunger in their life but no way to fill it. But Jesus enters the scene. They learn who He is and begin to understand what He's about. They can look at Him and see that He is what is needed to fill their spiritual stomachs.

But sometimes they find that Jesus--like our bag of groceries--is locked up in a cage and they can't reach Him. Is it because Jesus doesn't want them to have Him? No.

It is one of two reasons:

1. Sometimes we Christians have locked Him up by not telling the world that He is available for their every need.

And they can see us and they can see Jesus somewhere in the shadows, but until we tell them about Him we are just as cruel as someone who wouldn't share our food with a starving child.

2. The second reason has to do with the spiritually hungry person.

Some know without a doubt that Jesus will satisfy their need. But they themselves are unwilling to unlock the door. It isn't a door holding Jesus in--It is the door of their heart that is keeping Him out. The starving child wouldn't hesitate to partake of food if he was able--but for some reason many without Christ refuse to partake of Him even though He is standing at the door of their heart.

How do we partake of Jesus? Jesus tells us concerning Himself in v.51, *"If anyone eats of this bread He will live forever. This bread is my flesh which I will give for the life of the world."* He goes on to say in v.53, *"Jesus said to them, "Very truly I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you."*

Was He talking about cannibalism? No. Was He talking about the Lord's Supper. No, it has nothing to do with that. Jesus was saying, "To partake of Me is to make Me a part of you."

He is saying, "Don't hold back--take all of Me--allow Me to work in your life." How do you partake of Jesus. There are three simple steps. As simple as ABC. First, admit that you are hungry for forgiveness of your sins. Admit that you're a sinner who needs forgiveness. Second, Believe in your heart that Jesus Christ died for your sins and rose from the dead to give you eternal life. And Third, confess with your mouth that Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior of your life.

Jesus is the Bread of Life. And the good news is, this bread will never run out--It will last forever. He is enough for you today and forever.