

Exegetical Notes, John 6:25-59
“The Bread of Life”

Prepared by Charles H. Jensen, Pastor, Cornerstone Fellowship
101 Kylies Road, Coatesville, PA 19320
610-384-1375
charleshjensen@aol.com

John 6:25-59

Verse 25

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

- The crowd was confused. The disciples had left Jesus by boat at Bethsaida. Jesus had remained behind on the shore there. But he had joined the disciples by walking to the boat on the water. The crowd did not understand how he had gotten to Capernaum since they had come by land and Jesus had not. They wanted to know how he got there. See John 6 1:24.

Verses 26-27

Jesus answered, “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.”²⁷ Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on him God the Father has placed his seal of approval.”

- Jesus ignored the crowd’s question about how he had gotten from where he was to where he is. Instead, he spoke to them about their inability to see the really important things. They had been there when Jesus fed the 5000 (see John 6: 1-14). They had been happily fed. But they thought that was all there was to it. They had not perceived the lesson in the miracle about who Jesus was. Instead of seeing the miracle as a sign that Jesus was the Messiah who brought life and who bore the sign of God’s approval, they thought it was all about their hunger.

Verses 28-29

Then they asked him, “What must we do to do the works God requires?”²⁹ Jesus answered, “The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.”

- Jesus told them not to “work” for food which perishes but for “food that endures to eternal life.” So, they want to know what works they should do to get the food that endures to eternal life.

- Jesus responded to them by saying that the only “work” which is acceptable to God, the only way to get eternal life, is to believe in him; that is, to trust him to give us what we cannot attain for ourselves. We are not “justified by works. We are justified by faith in Jesus Christ alone.

Verses 30-31

So they asked him, “What sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? ³¹ Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written: ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’¹”

- But the crowd still does not understand Jesus. He fed 5000 men with five loaves and two fish. He had been healing the sick and even raising the dead. But the people in the crowd did not see these as signs which confirmed who he was. They wanted another sign that would prove to them that they could trust him.
- They asked Jesus to give them a sign like the one Moses gave, manna, which they described as “bread from heaven”.
- Even though Jesus has emphasized belief over works, they are still asking for works.

Verses 32-35

Jesus said to them, “Very truly I tell you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. ³³ For the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” ³⁴ “Sir,” they said, “always give us this bread.” ³⁵ 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.

- Jesus pointed out that Moses did not give the manna. God gave it. He pointed out that the true bread from heaven was the bread which came down from heaven and which gives life to men. That bread is Jesus.
- The crowd did not understand Jesus but wanted the bread from heaven which gives life. So they asked Jesus to give them this bread.
- Jesus then declared that HE was the bread of life. He said that whoever comes to him would never go hungry and that he who believed that he was the Messiah would never go thirsty.

Verses 36-40

But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe. ³⁷ All those the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. ³⁸ For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will

of him who sent me. ³⁹ *And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all those he has given me, but raise them up at the last day.* ⁴⁰ *For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day."*

- Jesus told these people that even though they had seen him and the signs which he did by the will of the Father to tell them who he was, they would not believe in him because they refused to accept the truth about him. He said that those who had been given to him by the Father would believe in him and have eternal life.

Verses 41-42

At this the Jews there began to grumble about him because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." ⁴² *They said, "Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, 'I came down from heaven'?"*

- At this point in the conversation the people listening to Jesus "grumble" among themselves. They took issue with Jesus saying that he came down from heaven because they knew his parents were Mary and Joseph. They expressed disbelief in him, thus proving his words about them. They refused to trust him.

Verses 43-51

"Stop grumbling among yourselves," Jesus answered. ⁴⁴ *"No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them, and I will raise them up at the last day.* ⁴⁵ *It is written in the Prophets: 'They will all be taught by God.'* ^[b] *Everyone who has heard the Father and learned from him comes to me.* ⁴⁶ *No one has seen the Father except the one who is from God; only he has seen the Father.* ⁴⁷ *Very truly I tell you, the one who believes has eternal life.* ⁴⁸ *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 confronted the crowd, ordering them to stop bickering over his words.
- He explained that they could not understand what he was saying to them because the Father was not "drawing them to him." The Holy Spirit leads us into truth, but they were refusing to follow the Spirit's leading.
- The prophets had said, "They will all be taught by God." (See Isaiah 54:13 & Jeremiah 31:33-34). God teaches all people about himself and about his Son. However, only those who are open to the Holy Spirit will comprehend

God's message. Those who are open will come to the Father through the Son. These persons will believe in Jesus and so have eternal life.

- This message is given to all. Everyone may “eat and not die.” But not everyone will choose to eat, to believe in Jesus.
- Jesus' comment, “This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world,” was a reference to his physical sacrifice. His flesh would die, and by his death, we live. By his death we are given life. However, the people to whom he spoke took it literally. They assumed that Jesus was saying that they must eat his flesh. Their misunderstanding was proof of their refusal to believe.

Verses 53-59

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. ⁵⁴ Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day. ⁵⁵ For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. ⁵⁶ Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in them. ⁵⁷ Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me. ⁵⁸ This is the bread that came down from heaven. Your ancestors ate manna and died, but whoever feeds on this bread will live forever.” ⁵⁹ He said this while teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum.

- Jesus continued to speak to the crowd in figurative language. By “eating his flesh and drinking his body,” he meant that they had to believe in him to have eternal life.
- He again claims to be the bread which came down from heaven that gives life to those who believe in him.
- But they remained confused because they interpreted his words literally. They were not open to the message which Jesus brought. They would not embrace the truth.

(These exegetical notes are the foundational study for the sermon entitled *The Bread of Life*. They have been prepared by the Reverend Doctor Charles H. Jensen, Senior Pastor at Cornerstone Fellowship, Coatesville Pennsylvania. All rights are reserved by *Cornerstone Fellowship* & The Reverend Doctor Charles H. Jensen. They are used here by permission.)