

## 20. Jesus Taught that He Is the Bread of Life

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that many people seek Jesus for the wrong reasons. Many people came seeking Jesus the day after He fed the five thousand but most of them came because of their desire for food and other earthly things. In our topic today, we are going to see that Jesus explained to the people what they should really seek.

The people had come in their boats, to Capernaum looking for Jesus. We read in John 6:25-27, “And when they found Him on the other side of the sea, they said to Him, ‘Rabbi, when did You come here?’ Jesus answered them and said, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him.’” Here, we see that when the people found Jesus they wanted to know when He had come to Capernaum. They knew that He had gone up into the mountain to pray the previous evening. However, they had no idea how He had traveled from that mountain to Capernaum during the time in between.

Jesus knew the hearts of these people. He knew their real reason for looking for Him. They had seen Jesus do miracles of healing. However, that was not the reason why they had come looking for Him that day. Instead, Jesus said that they looked for Him that day because they had eaten the bread and were filled. Here, we see an example of the selfish nature of people. It was one thing for the people to see Jesus do miracles that benefited other people. However, everyone had been benefited by this miracle. John 6:11 says, “And Jesus took the loaves, and when He had given thanks He distributed *them* to the disciples, and the disciples to those sitting down; and likewise of the fish, as much as they wanted.” We see that every person got as much food as they wanted. They would like to have had that happen every day so that they would no longer need to work. That was the reason why they had wanted to make Him the king the previous day.

Jesus told them not to work for the food that was only earthly and temporary. Instead, Jesus told the people to seek the food which will provide eternal life. Jesus would explain a few verses later in John 6:35, “And Jesus said to them, ‘I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.’” Jesus is the only One that is able to give food that produces eternal life because He is the One who is the source of life. That is why He told the people that the Son of Man was the One who could give them that life. Jesus said that the Son of Man was the One that the Father had sealed. The word translated “sealed” means *to place a seal on a document to prove that the testimony of the writer of that document is who he professes to be*. As a result, Jesus said that the Father had placed His seal on Jesus to show that Jesus is the One who is both the Son of Man and the Son of God.

Jesus went on to tell the people that the true work of God was to believe the One that the Father had sent. John 6:28-31 says, “Then they said to Him, ‘What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?’ Jesus answered and said to them, ‘This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.’ Therefore they said to Him, ‘What sign will You perform then, that we may

see it and believe You? What work will You do? Our fathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written, ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’” Here, we see that the people had no understanding of what the Old Testament teaches or of what Jesus meant. They thought that Jesus must be talking about the works that they were supposed to do to earn spiritual life. Most of the people of that day thought that they were accepted by God because of the works that they were doing.

Instead, Jesus told the people that the work of God was to believe on the One that the Father had sent. Isaiah 64:6 says, “But we are all like an unclean *thing*, and all our righteousnesses *are* like filthy rags; We all fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.” Isaiah had said that the works of people were like the rags that were used to cover bleeding sores. They were unclean and absolutely useless. Romans 3:19-20 says, “Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.” The purpose of the law was not to show man how to work for salvation. Instead, the purpose of the law was to silence every person and show that every person is guilty before God. Works can never save.

That is why Jesus told the people that the work of God was to believe the One that the Father sent. Malachi 3:3 says, “‘He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver; He will purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer to the LORD an offering in righteousness.’” This passage from Malachi was talking about the One that John the Baptist would introduce. Jesus is the One who can purge away sin. He is the One who can replace our sin with His righteousness. That is why 2 Corinthians 5:21 says, “For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” As a result, all who believe in the One that the Father sent can stand before God in the righteousness of Christ instead of their own sin.

The Jews immediately asked Jesus what sign He would do to prove that they should believe Him. Then, they asked Him to do a greater work than Moses did in the wilderness to prove that He was from God. They reminded Jesus that their fathers ate manna in the wilderness for forty years. In fact, they even quoted from Psalm 78:24 which says, “Had rained down manna on them to eat, and given them of the bread of heaven.” God had fed the people under Moses for forty years and so the people talking to Jesus said that He should feed them at least as long as Moses did in the desert to prove that He was from God. The people said that if Jesus would do a greater sign than Moses that then they would believe in Him. Here, we see the unbelief of many of the people of Galilee.

Jesus answered their demand in John 6:32-37, where we read, “Then Jesus said to them, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.’ Then they said to Him, ‘Lord, give us this bread always.’ And Jesus said to them, ‘I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst. But I said to you that you have seen Me and yet do not believe. All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.’” Jesus made it clear that Moses was not the source of bread from heaven that gives eternal life.

John 6:48-50 says, “I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die.” Those who ate the bread in the Old Testament, all died, including Moses.

Jesus said that the Father is the One who gives the true bread from heaven. Jesus said that the bread of God is the One who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world. The Jews were still thinking of physical food to eat like the five thousand ate the previous day. They wanted more of that physical food that would give them physical life. As a result, the people said, “Lord, give us this bread always.” Because of their spiritual blindness, the people had no idea that Jesus was offering them the eternal life which He would provide by His death and resurrection. That is why they could not understand when Jesus said that the work of God was to believe in the One that the Father had sent.

Then, Jesus spoke even more clearly and said, “I am the bread of life.” Since Jesus had just said that they had to believe in the One that the Father had sent, this was a clear claim to the people that day that Jesus is the One who had been sent from God. They had to choose to believe in Him or choose to reject Him as the One that the Father had sent. Then, Jesus explained some important promises to all who would believe in Him. Jesus said that those who would come to Him would never hunger. Jesus said that those who believe in Him will never thirst. Earlier, Jesus had told the Samaritan woman in John 4:13-14, “Jesus answered and said to her, ‘Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.’” Jesus told the woman that the water that He would give her would result in everlasting life.

At a later time, Jesus said in John 7:38-39, “He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.” But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet *given*, because Jesus was not yet glorified.” At the moment of salvation, all those who believe receive everlasting life and receive the Holy Spirit as the down payment and guarantee of that everlasting life. Jesus realized that most of the people that had seen Him had not believed in Him. Jesus understood that the Father must draw them to Him and said in John 6:44, “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.” Jesus also gave a wonderful promise to all those who would believe and come to Him. Jesus promised that He would receive everyone that came to Him and that He would never cast them out. This is a tremendous promise that we want to help our physical and spiritual children clearly understand. First, it will prevent them from having doubts of their salvation in their own lives. Second, they will be able to explain to others why those who come to Jesus in true belief will never have to fear the fact that Jesus will not accept them. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children understand the tremendous peace that this promise gives.