

“Jesus, The Bread of Life”

John 6:1-58

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Today's scripture is from the sixth chapter of John called the bread discourse. Due to its length it is usually divide up over four Sundays. Jesus heals, teaches, and feeds a crowd. Jesus withdraws to be alone then later walks on water. Jesus declares, "I am the bread of life!" and teaches. The entire chapter reveals the meaning of Jesus, the bread of life. As I read, if a phrase peaks your interest then repeat that phrase in your mind. What is God inviting you to do or be?

John 6:1-58 NLT "After this, Jesus crossed over to the far side of the Sea of Galilee, also known as the Sea of Tiberias. A huge crowd kept following him wherever he went, because they saw his miraculous signs as he healed the sick. Then Jesus climbed a hill and sat down with his disciples around him. (It was nearly time for the Jewish Passover celebration.) Jesus soon saw a huge crowd of people coming to look for him. Turning to Philip, he asked, "Where can we buy bread to feed all these people?" He was testing Philip, for he already knew what he was going to do. Philip replied, "Even if we worked for months, we wouldn't have enough money to feed them!" Then Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, spoke up. "There's a young boy here with five barley loaves and two fish. But what good is that with this huge crowd?" "Tell everyone to sit down," Jesus said. So they all sat down on the grassy slopes. (The men alone numbered about 5,000.) Then Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks to God, and distributed them to the people. Afterward he did the same with the fish. And they all ate as much as they wanted. After everyone was full, Jesus told his disciples, "Now gather the leftovers, so that nothing is wasted." So they picked up the pieces and filled twelve baskets with scraps left by the people who had eaten from the five barley loaves. When the people saw him do this miraculous sign, they exclaimed, "Surely, Jesus is the Prophet we have been expecting!" When Jesus saw that they were ready to force him to be their king, he slipped away into the hills by himself. That evening Jesus' disciples went down to the shore to wait for him. But as darkness fell and Jesus still hadn't come back, they got into the boat and headed across the lake toward Capernaum. Soon a gale swept down upon them, and the sea grew very rough. They had rowed three or four miles when suddenly they saw Jesus walking on the water toward the boat. They were terrified, but Jesus called out to them, "Don't be afraid. I am here!" Then they were eager to let him in the boat, and immediately they arrived at their destination! The next day the crowd that had stayed on the far shore saw that the disciples had taken the only boat, and they realized Jesus had not gone with them. Several boats from Tiberias landed near the place where the Lord had blessed the bread and the people had eaten. So when the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they got into the boats and went across to Capernaum to look for him. They found him on the other side of the lake and asked, "Rabbi, when did you get here?" Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, you want to be with me because I fed you, not because you understood the miraculous signs. But don't be so concerned about perishable things like food. Spend your energy seeking the eternal life that the Son of Man can give you. For God has given me the seal of God's approval." They replied, "We want to perform God's works, too. What should we do?" Jesus told them, "This is the only work God wants from you: Believe in the one God has sent." They answered, "Show us a miraculous sign if you want us to believe in you. What can you do? After all, our ancestors ate manna while they journeyed through the wilderness! The Scriptures say, 'Moses gave them bread from heaven to eat.'" Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, Moses didn't give you bread from heaven. God did. And now God offers you the true bread from heaven. The true bread of God is the one who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." "Sir," they said, "give us that bread every day." Jesus replied, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry again. Whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. But you haven't believed in me even though you have seen me. However, those God has given me will come to me, and I will never reject them. For I have come down from heaven to do the will of God who sent me, not to do my own will. And this is the will of God, that I should not lose even one of all those God has given me, but that I should raise them up at the last day. For it is God's will that all who see God's Son and believe in me should have eternal life. I will raise them up at the last day." Then the people began to murmur in disagreement because Jesus had said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." They said, "Isn't this Jesus, the son of Joseph? We know his father and mother. How can he say, 'I came down from heaven'?" But Jesus replied, "Stop

complaining about what I said. For no one can come to me unless God who sent me draws them to me, and at the last day I will raise them up. As it is written in the Scriptures, 'They will all be taught by God.' Everyone who listens to God and learns from God comes to me. (Not that anyone has ever seen God; only I, who was sent from God, have seen God.) "I tell you the truth, anyone who believes has eternal life. Yes, I am the bread of life! Your ancestors ate manna in the wilderness, but they all died. Anyone who eats the bread from heaven, however, will never die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will live forever; and this bread, which I will offer so the world may live, is my flesh." Then the people began arguing with each other about what Jesus meant. "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" they asked. So Jesus said again, "I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you cannot have eternal life within you. But anyone who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise that person at the last day. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Anyone who eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him. I live because of the living God who sent me; in the same way, anyone who feeds on me will live because of me. I am the true bread that came down from heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will not die as your ancestors did (even though they ate the manna) but will live forever."

What did you learn about Jesus, The Bread of life? Take a moment to reflect on what God is inviting you to do or be?

If something resonated with you then spend the rest of this time living into God's invitation. If nothing jumped out, then maybe one of the aspects that grabbed my attention is for you.

Jesus is compassionate. Jesus listened, healed, fed, then he taught. We should be compassionate. We should listen, help, serve and provide for another's basic needs then share our faith journey.

Jesus took time for Sabbath, to withdraw from compassionate loving service to be alone with God, to be nourished by God, which enabled him to nourish others. There is a rhythm of being nourished and nourishing. Abundant life emerges when one enjoys the rhythm.

Jesus' followers kept discovering that Jesus was offering much more than they even knew they needed. Jesus offered physical food. Jesus healed them. Jesus offered glorious eternal life. Jesus offered spiritual food. God is providing abundantly more blessings for us to discover and enjoy than we can imagine. There will always be more and different aspects of peace, wonder, joy, and love for us to celebrate.

Jesus invites us to believe in God, to take in God's blessings, to feast upon God's soul food, so Jesus can work in and through us. God forgives us so we can forgive. God loves us, so we can love. God fills us with Spirit, so we can create, dance, sing, paint, imagine, build, write, talk, inspire. We feast upon the bread of life so we can be the body of Christ to one another and the world.

Jesus will satisfy your every hunger for eternity. Jesus often had a meal with someone before he opened their minds to truths and their hearts to delights. God gives until every unsatisfied desire is nourished. Every meal we enjoy with God gives us a deeper and wider insight into our next adventure. Jesus offers us his blood, the source of life, the creative spark that sustains the cosmos. As we partake bread and juice spiritually, we become one with God, one with the cosmos, one with every aspect of creative, joyful, loving life, one with every person in heaven, one with your ancestors. The bread and juice nourishes our soul making our soul shine with God's glory and majesty. Partaking Holy Communion fills us with wonder, amazement, a burning desire to share, a passion to bless.

Be mindful of others as you eat. Look around the table. Spend a moment looking at each person, give thanks for them, and offer them an inward spiritual smile and blessing. Be mindful of all who have given to enable you to eat.

Every person has a place in God's family. God and the cosmos cherishes you for your uniqueness. God dwells in you as Jesus dwells in the Creator and the Holy Spirit. Love unites us all. Jesus lives in you. God lives in Jesus. Together all of us will live for eternity. Together we will enjoy glorious eternal love. Relax, don't be so concerned about perishable things, like physical food, because no matter what happens, or what you do, or don't do, Jesus will supply you with eternal spiritual food.

Sacraments are physical outward signs of inner spiritual blessings. Today we have the joyful honor of celebrating both baptism and the Lord's Supper. We will confess our sins and receive God's forgiveness. We will witness Derick being washed by the waters of baptism that will forever purify him, uniting him with God and all of us. We will feast at the Lord's Table, a foretaste of the ever expanding blessings of God that will nourish and unite us for eternity. Amen