

WHAT IS THE ONE THING YOU NEED TO BE DOING MORE OF TO GROW IN CHRIST?  
KEEP YOUR ANSWER IN MIND because we'll come back to the question.

## THE BREAD OF LIFE

John 6:

### INTRODUCTION:

We've all had this experience. Every one of us has found ourselves in front of the TV a couple of hours after a satisfying and filling supper and seen a commercial – and not just any commercial. You know what I mean: One of those commercials. There it is: a delicious looking triple bacon cheese-burger or maybe a pizza smothered in mozzarella cheese and pepperoni. It could be any sort of food advertisement. Maybe it's an ad for a Dairy Queen Blizzard or the latest deal from Arby's or Olive Garden. All of a sudden you're hungry – and you didn't even know it!

No matter how many times we eat enough to fill us up – even to make us feel stuffed! – we always get hungry again. We don't have the option – we have to eat again. One meal will never do us forever.

This part of the story follows the event where Jesus fed the crowd of 5000 men plus women and children. They were amazed and they wanted more – more food, more miracles – they wanted to take him and crown him King.

READ JOHN 6:25-50

Verse 35 is the first of the "I Am" statements from Christ :

I am the bread of life; ...the light of the world – 8:12.....the door – 10:7.....The Good Shepherd 10:11.....The Resurrection and the life 11:25.....The way, the truth, the life 14:6.....The True Vine 15:1-5

Each image is rich in meaning. Who in human history has ever spoken about him or herself in this way? Each statement communicates a profound truth about the person and work of Jesus Christ. Each statement was provocative then as they are now. Certainly they are worthy of our careful and prayerful consideration.

- I. The Importance Of The Bread
- II. How We Get The Bread
- III. How To Know If You've Come To Jesus

### I. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE BREAD

This passage takes me back because it was the first sermon I preached in France. Sadly or happily I no longer have that sermon on file. But I'm sure I mentioned something about French bread – how can you talk about Jesus as the Bread of life and not mention French bread when you're living in France. THEY TAKE THEIR BREAD VERY SERIOUSLY – there is nothing like a fresh baguette or croissant – I miss it.

For all that has changed over the last 2000 or even 4000 years one thing remains the same – Bread is a dietary staple for many cultures.

Seriously, bread is an essential staple in every culture because typically it is fairly inexpensive so even the poorest can afford it. It's probably true that the poor rely on it more than others for staying alive.

By saying, "I am the Bread of Life" Jesus is showing that he is necessary AND relevant for every class of society, and perhaps more relevant to the poor than the rich – another sermon. Without bread people die. Bread is necessary for life and it is enjoyed by rich and poor, except for those folks who are cutting out the carbs. Jesus is claiming to be the one we can't live without.

Are you coming to Jesus for some other reason, but aren't feeding on him as the Bread of Life?

Just as the people wanted to come and make him king because he fed them so too today people want to make Jesus the icon or mascot for their own agenda and movement.

What about you? Do you know him or are you on a **spiritual Atkins diet** – you're cutting out the true Bread of life while trying to feed on something else?

## II. HOW WE GET THE BREAD

By coming to Jesus 6:35

This text raises all sorts of questions, about how we can "come to Jesus"; many probably won't be answered this morning; sorry.

- it is the CASABLANCA question -

The mystery of the salvation of a lost soul – "how did I or how did you ever come to believe on Jesus as savior and Lord?"

It is interesting that in the context of this great "I AM" passage Jesus gives an important insight into the inner workings of salvation. In fact 3 of the 7 "I AM" statements have similar teachings:

6:35-37, 44; John 10:14, 25-29; John 15:1, 16

**What this and other passages teach us is the inability of man and the sovereign grace of God's choice in salvation.** The Father has given to the Son a people – some sheep- and the Father enables them to come and believe, and the Son will raise them up on the last day. V.37,39

Jesus doesn't tell the people what to do- then they would do it and it would increase their arrogance. He tells them to believe in or come to HIM- that means dependence and trust.

**The work Jesus tells us to do is believe, but even that is impossible for us. To come to Christ we must be drawn by the Father. Throughout scripture man's inability is shown and God's grace is magnified.**

Does our spiritual inability taint the free offer of the gospel? NO.

All are invited and all who come will be received and will not hunger or thirst. But Jesus knows the heart of man (john 2) and he knows that there are those standing in front of him who do not believe.

We want to think that we can do what is necessary on our own, but Jesus underlines that even something as simple as coming to him is an ability that must come from God. 6:44 – No man can come (is able to come) except the Father draw him (this is an active force – it is not like wooing)

EX: Peter drawing his sword – he doesn't woo the sword- God DOESN'T WOO HIS SHEEP; He draws them. Does this raise questions in our minds? Sure, but that's ok because God has it figured out and all he asks us to do is to be hungry and to come.

**Our inability is not a natural inability; it is an issue of the heart, a heart disposed against Christ.** There is a resistance of the natural heart to God. The word used for "drawing" is typically used in a

context where there is resistance. And scripture says that the natural heart is hostile to God and cannot obey – Rom 8

What better proof of the human impossibility of coming to Christ than the world's reaction to Christ when he came. There was Jesus in person before the people and they did not come to Him except for more miracles. Within a few years' time from this event, the people he came to were crying out, "we have no king but Caesar."

We don't need to be wooed; we need to have our hearts changed. Jesus is bread, but left to our own condition we only have a taste for mud pies; He is living water but we drink from dirty cisterns; he is light, but we love the darkness; He is the good shepherd but we're running away like stray sheep; He is the Way, the truth and the Life, but we pursue our own path, lies and death.

If we're really honest about our own hearts we know deep down how true it is that God saved us. We didn't just up and decide to embrace Christ one day. Something changed on the inside. We moved from hostility, rebellion or indifference to Christ to curiosity to strong interest to having a desire for him. THAT IS THE WORK OF God from the inside. He actively draws his sheep enabling them to embrace Christ.

"What if someone wants to come to Christ, but he or she isn't chosen or given to Christ by the Father?"

The desire to come to Christ is evidence of being chosen.

"What if I'm here today and I've never come to Christ, what should I do? Should I ask God to give me a new heart and to draw me?"

Better yet, look intently at the one who is the object of faith and trust – look at Jesus who lived a perfect life and who gave himself for his enemies. Look and realize that all you do is vanity and it falls short. Look at what HE HAS DONE – He obeyed the Father; he became hungry and thirsty and cut off so that we might be forgiven and be satisfied; he was raised for us and intercedes for us and promises that he'll raise up all who come to him.

If you look at him and look to him and you find that your heart is melted and you desire Him, then you'll know that God is drawing and is giving you the ability to come to Jesus.

Look to him and get a sense of the reality of the Bread of Life. There is nothing more appetizing than fresh bread.

Christian, you know Christ, but are you coming to Him daily to commune with him, to gaze on him, to repent at the foot of the cross and to celebrate his grace and forgiveness. Nothing can fling a craving on me like fresh bread

### III. HOW TO KNOW IF YOU'VE COME TO JESUS

– Soul Satisfaction – You're not hungry or thirsty anymore

The satisfied soul is a gracious, forgiving, obedient, and generous soul. One who understands how he or she ever came to believe should live a life of grateful humility. IT'S ALL OF GRACE

#### WHAT DOES THIS SATISFIED SOUL LOOK LIKE?

– you have ceased striving to have power, position, possession, performance, and reputation to prove yourself

- You get off the treadmill and you get others off the treadmill – they don't have to do things the way you do to validate your decisions, values and experience.

- You are more other centered and less self-centered; you're not using others to fill the void in your soul so you're able to love and serve them.
- You're less critical, less defensive, not so easily offended, and you complain less
- You experience a sense of soul CONTENTMENT like unto a well-fed man on Thanksgiving day with a good football game and the remote control
- You are not looking to be satisfied or satisfy others by my performance; you are satisfied and transformed by the perfect work of Christ.
- You're no longer hungry and driven to create a resume to impress others.
- You remember that the gospel teaches you that you're a loved moral failure (God didn't love you because you were good.)

"What must we do TO WORK THE WORKS OF God?" BELIEVE in Him...

The heart that's not feeding on and resting in Jesus is resting on performance and reputation.

Knowing that God set his love on you personally – a helpless, hopeless, God-hating, alienated lover of self – and drew you to Himself so that he might give you forgiveness, acceptance, love, a new family, a reconciled relationship, an eternal home and his smile and favor – knowing this should make you want to shout

You know you make me wanna (Shout!)  
 Kick my heels up and (Shout!)  
 Throw my hands up and (Shout!)  
 Throw my head back and (Shout!)

We're Presbyterians so we don't do that – except at football games or after a good golf shot or Soccer goal or when we get a raise or a new car or get asked out by the right guy or the right girl accepts your invitation.....

What's even more incredible is that God rejoices over you with singing

Knowing that our salvation has nothing to do with us, with our performance, with our moral behavior, our intelligence, our own wisdom, our good decision making, or our own open heart should lead us to a life of HUMILITY – Eph 4

Understand Jesus' teaching on our salvation brings a crippling blow to our pride – that's a good thing. Until we embrace it we'll always have an underlying default concept in our heart that says, "I'm saved because of something I did; you aren't saved because you haven't done what I did."

We may try to stifle that idea because it does sound prideful and it is, but it will always be there. Like the underlying theme of a movie soundtrack our heart will keep going back to it – JAWS

Do you see how it impacts our lives, our relationships, the way we view the unreached, etc. It can lead to a subtle or not so subtle disdain of the unbeliever; it can lead to us proclaiming the "gospel of me" rather than the gospel of Jesus. It runs counter to the central message of the Bible –  
 God SAVES SINNERS.

He doesn't just help us or give us a boost or make salvation possible to those who are smart enough, spiritual enough, humble enough, moral enough, or religious enough to believe.

God SAVES SINNERS – he chooses a people to give to the Son, the Son through his perfect obedience and perfect sacrifice accomplishes salvation and the Holy Spirit enables / renews the hearts of those whom the Father has given and whom the Son has purchased.

VoV – The Trinity

<https://banneroftruth.org/us/devotional/the-trinity/>

O Father, thou hast loved me and sent Jesus to redeem me;

O Jesus, thou hast loved me and assumed my nature, shed thine own blood to wash away my sins,  
wrought righteousness to cover my unworthiness;

O Holy Spirit, thou hast loved me and entered my heart, implanted there eternal life, revealed to me  
the glories of Jesus.

We're beggars at the feast and the bread will never run out and there is nothing that smells  
or tastes better than Fresh Bread.

WHAT IS THE ONE THING YOU NEED TO BE DOING MORE OF TO GROW IN Christ?

6:29 Believe, come to Him

<https://banneroftruth.org/us/devotional/the-lords-day/>  
<https://banneroftruth.org/us/devotional-series/the-valley-of-vision-devotional/>

Heavenly Father, blessed Son, eternal Spirit,  
I adore thee as one Being, one Essence,  
one God in three distinct Persons,  
for bringing sinners to thy knowledge and to  
thy kingdom.

O Father, thou hast loved me and sent Jesus to redeem me;

O Jesus, thou hast loved me and assumed my nature, shed thine own blood to wash away my sins,  
wrought righteousness to cover my unworthiness;

O Holy Spirit, thou hast loved me and entered my heart, implanted there eternal life, revealed to me  
the glories of Jesus.

Three Persons and one God, I bless and praise thee,  
for love so unmerited, so unspeakable,  
so wondrous, so mighty to save the lost  
and raise them to glory.

O Father, I thank thee that in fullness of grace  
thou hast given me to Jesus, to be his sheep,  
jewel, portion;

O Jesus, I thank thee that in fullness of grace  
thou hast accepted, espoused, bound me;

O Holy Spirit, I thank thee that in fullness of  
grace thou hast  
exhibited Jesus as my salvation,  
implanted faith within me,  
subdued my stubborn heart,  
made me one with him forever.

O Father, thou art enthroned to hear my prayers,

O Jesus, thy hand is outstretched to take my  
petitions,

O Holy Spirit, thou art willing to help my  
infirmities, to show me my need,  
to supply words, to pray within me,  
to strengthen me that I faint not in  
supplication.

O Triune God, who commandeth the universe,  
thou hast commanded me to ask for those  
things that concern thy kingdom and my soul.

Let me live and pray as one baptized into the  
threefold Name.

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