

Evening Service 31.1.2016 Sermon notes

Sermon: John 6: 25-40 I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE.

Continuing our IN, UP and OUT theme in John's gospel

Bread is common to every person throughout the world. Bread. For the hungry person, bread is what satisfies.

Jesus is the bread of life. He is what satisfies the hungry soul.

John 6: 5-15 the feeding of the 5,000 is the background to the story

Jesus was presenting a picture of himself. Even as he was feeding the people he was teaching them about who he was. Lessons in care, provision, satisfaction in their deepest need. Jesus is all-sufficient. We're told that each person took as much as they wanted, that everyone had their fill – they were full – there was still an abundance left over. This is who Jesus is.

John 6:25-40 – is actually a continuation of the story of the miracle on the hillside. The people had caught up with Jesus and they are thinking of food. They recognise someone in Jesus who can feed their physical hunger – but Jesus turns the conversation around to spiritual hunger.

Jesus tells them, "Do not work for food that spoils but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you" (verse 27)

"Then they asked him, "What must we do to do the works God requires?" (verse 28). There must be a formula to please God...

Jesus answered, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent" (verse 29). Notice the difference: they say "works"; Jesus says "work." **There is one work God requires: believe in Jesus.**

Still people question... "What miraculous sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? Our forefathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written: 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat'" (verse 30-31).

...we live in a people who will only believe if they have the evidence in front of them. "If so-and-so could just see a miracle they would give themselves to Christ." "We live by faith, not by sight" (2 Cor 5:7).

Jesus reminds the people gathered to not just seek the miracles but the One who gives the miracles. I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE he says.

I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty" (32-35).

Jesus is giving them a picture of himself.

Cf with the experience of the Israelites in the desert.

- The Lord provided manna, bread from heaven, it fed them – when there was nothing else. It was their everything. They didn't need anything else. **Now Jesus says that he is the true bread from heaven. He's the same.**
- God provided physical food from a spiritual place. Same today? People spiritual wilderness. God intervenes and sends Jesus. He is exactly what we need to live. But so many people don't realise that they were hungry all along.

- In the wilderness the bread had to be gathered - each person had to gather enough for his or her family – if you didn't you died.
Jesus is available to everyone too. Anyone who wants him must take and eat.
- Bread had to be gathered daily – The Israelites could not hoard or store the manna. They couldn't put it in their cupboards for the next day – it would rot. Manna had to be gathered every day. **The Bread of Life must be gathered everyday too.** You must seek out Christ new each day. He is not an idea to be thought about. He is not a subject to be discussed. He is a person who wants a relationship with you every day. We can only find spiritual fulfilment in the person of Jesus. He is what satisfies the longing in our hearts. He is to our spirits what bread is to our stomachs.

Continuation of the story is a foretaste of Easter.... “ 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. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life and I will raise them up as on the last day!...” (verse 53)

The only way to have real life is to eat this bread.

Jesus names himself as the bread we are to feed on. This story is a foretaste of Easter. That is why Jesus is the Bread of Life, so that all can have enough in a hungry world. So that all can be transformed and redeemed and made new. His suffering becomes our healing.

Communion... prodigal outrageous generosity of the one who surrenders himself to us and gives himself to us as the bread of heaven that we might know ourselves beloved and that we might live forever, freed and forgiven and nourished for fullness of life.

And so here we find ourselves present at a miracle even more astonishing than the feeding of the five thousand, or the provision in the wilderness who in his one broken body becomes the bread of heaven which is broken and offered to us, more than enough to satisfy the deepest hungers and hopes of not just five thousand, but of all the billions people on this planet.

Our longing for healing, and our hunger for justice, and our thirst for peace all come together, in Jesus the Bread of Life, on whom we are invited to feed and believe. Do you?