

Better than Sliced Bread

(John 6:22-36)

(preached 9/30/18; Pine Grove BC Sun AM)

Introduction

Much of my childhood is defined by the time that I spent with each of my grandparents..

Both were incredibly good to me, but each set of grandparents had their own unique traits as well..

One of my grandfathers worked as a mailman, the other repaired upholstery, lawn mowers, and ran a gas station.

One of my grandmothers loved to stay on the go, the other loved to stay home.

One of my grandmothers watched the Guiding Light, the other the Young and the Restless..

My grandparents were also very different in the food in their cabinets and the drinks in their refrigerators..

My dad's mother rarely made sweet tea, while my mom's mother made very sweet tea.

And then there is the issue of mayonnaise that I have mentioned in the this pulpit..

One served Duke's and the other only used Miracle Whip.

Well, if that wasn't bad enough, the one who used Miracle Whip also bought whole whole grain bread..

As a kid, I simply called it brown bread...

So when a sandwich was on the menu at that grandma's house, it was ham, brown bread, and Miracle Whip.

On the other hand, my grandma with Duke's always bought white bread.

It was usually Bunny bread, but even if it wasn't it was white and the only brown on it was the crust and not the center..

Now look, bread was a staple of the diets of Jesus' day.

In fact, bread has been a staple of diets since the beginning of creation.

The mention of bread is all throughout the Bible and all throughout history..

It is probably the oldest of all prepared foods resulting from a mixture of dough and water that is baked..

God told Adam after the fall that he would eat bread only by the sweat of his brow..

The people of Israel were fed bread from heaven as they wandered in the wilderness..

The book of Proverbs tells us that the hard worker will always have plenty of bread..

The book of Ezekiel warns the nations that God will cut off their supply of bread if they fail to honor him.

Yet in the NT and in the church, bread takes on a whole new meaning in some respects..

Yes, we will eat bread as part of our diets, but we also have a new perspective on bread, and the reason for that is because of the verses that we are going to look at in John 6 this morning..

John 6:22..

22 The next day the crowd that stood on the other side of the sea saw that there was no other small boat there, except one, and that Jesus had not entered with His disciples into the boat, but that His disciples had gone away alone. 23 There came other small boats from Tiberias near to the place where they ate the bread after the Lord had given thanks. 24 So when the crowd saw that Jesus was not there, nor His disciples, they

themselves got into the small boats, and came to Capernaum seeking Jesus. 25 When they found Him on the other side of the sea, they said to Him, “Rabbi, when did You get here? 26 Jesus answered them and said, “Truly, truly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. 27 Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you, for on Him the Father, God, has set His seal.”

28 Therefore they said to Him, “What shall we do, so that we may work the works of God?” 29 Jesus answered and said to them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent.” 30 So they said to Him, “What then do You do for a sign, so that we may see, and believe You? What work do You perform? 31 Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, ‘He gave them bread out of heaven to eat.’” 32 Jesus then said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread out of heaven, but it is My Father who gives you the true bread out of heaven. 33 For the bread of God is [i]that which comes down out of heaven, and gives life to the world.” 34 Then they said to Him, “Lord, always give us this bread.”

35 Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst. 36 But I said to you that you have seen Me, and yet do not believe.

Let me pray for us..

As we come to John 6, remember that we are in a chapter of John's gospel that gives us one of the the best looks at true and false Christianity anywhere in the Bible..

Look the Bible is clear.

Jesus Himself is clear.

There will those who claim to know Christ in a saving way but in fact, they aren't saved.

They are either deceitful on purpose or they have deceived themselves.

And false believers have always been around.

They were in the OT.

They are in the NT.

They were around when Jesus was doing ministry on the earth.

The greatest example of a false believer is Judas, whop spent over 3 years with Jesus but never believed in Him.

And how do we know that Judas wasn't a believer?

The fruit of his life.

He betrayed Christ for money and eventually killed himself..

Jesus called him a devil and through he walked with Christ, Jesus knew his heart and his counterfeit belief..

Well Judas wasn't the only one in the days of Christ.

In fact, there were plenty of folks who looked like followers of Christ, yet they weren't...

And the same is true today.

Not everyone in a church is a believer.

Not everyone who wears a Christian T-shirt or listens to Christian music is a Christian.

Last week, we watched Jesus walk on the water in front of a small boat carrying 12 disciples yet not everyone in that boat was saved..

So it should come as no surprise that even that in every small group of those who claim to know Christ you will find an unbeliever...

Well, we are being taught how to spot the false believer in John 6, and today we turn our attention back to false believers..

Last week, we saw that true believers worship Christ.

The disciples in that boat on that night worshipped Christ.

They adored Him.

They loved Him.

They confessed Him as the Son of God..

But today, we move back to the crowds that are following Jesus and we are reminded on how shallow and superficial false Christians truly are..

So let's begin in verses 22-26 with this truth..

I. False Believers Seek Christ for Selfish Reasons **(22-27)**

In order to keep you up with the geography of John 6, we look again at our map on the screen..

When chapter 6 began, Jesus and his disciples were on the northwestern side of the sea of Galilee..

Yet, Jesus wanted to go to the northeastern side of the lake to escape the crowds for a little break.

Jesus loved these disciples who has committed their lives to Him, and he liked to get away with them every once in a while to teach them..

He hoped to do that in the mountains on the northeastern side of the sea, but the crowds followed him by land as he as the disciples went by boat.

And if you remember, they weren't following Christ for the salvation and forgiveness of sins that he was offering, they were following him for free health care.

Jesus had been doing many healings all over Israel and word was out about him, so the crowds sought him out so that they could feel better..

And we noted that attitude is the attitude of unbelief..

It is not interested in Christ for spiritual healing, it is only interested in Christ for physical healing...

And this is still true today.

Many people show up at church after a bad diagnosis.

They ask for prayer.

They may want the church to help them with medical expenses..

In other words, people love to sing the praises of the Good Physician but they really don't want Him to tell them how to live..

Many people love to go to the doctor until he tells them to go on a diet and then they just another doctor..

The same is true with Christ.

Many come to Christ with health concerns but when he says repent of sin, they simply go somewhere else..

Well, the crowds at the beginning of John 6 followed Jesus in hopes that he would heal their diseases..

And interestingly, Jesus did go into the crowd to heal them but he did it in order to demonstrate his deity and lead them to believe in Him..

But when the teaching and helpings were over that day, the crowd didn't leave..

And since Jesus has a never ending compassion for people, he calls them to sit down and he then feeds them..

What began as free health care has now turned into free lunch, and guess what?

The crowds of false believers is thrown into a frenzy after the healing and covered dish service...

They try to kidnap Jesus and make him their king for life...

When Jesus sees their shallowness, he sends the disciples away to the other side of the lake..

He goes away to the mountain to pray but eventually comes to them last week in the middle of the night in the middle of the sea of Galilee walking on the water..

The disciples are scared and then calmed and then worship him and the boat carrying them and Jesus is miraculously carried back to the western shore in an instant..

And we saw that last week...

So as we arrive at verse 22, the crowd of people on the eastern shore is still there..

They have eaten so much and been fed so well that they have a great night's rest, but when they finally wake up, Jesus is gone..

So in verse 24, they get into some boats and head to find Jesus on the western shore of the sea of Galilee..

Which leads to the question of verse 25..

“Rabbi, when did You get here?”

Now, this question is little revealing..

First of all, he has just fed this entire crowd of 20000 people with food that he made out of thin air..

Yet, when they show up, they aren't addressing him as God but simply as Rabbi..

Their unbelief is still seen in their title given to him, but it is also seen in their coming to Him..

Now who would think that jumping in a small boat and heading across a body of water looking for Jesus is a bad thing?

But in this case, it simply reveals their hunger for more of their physical needs to be met..

They are looking for breakfast and for Jesus to heal more of their aches and pains..

This is not a question of concern for the presence of Christ, but rather but rather this is a question of demand?

“Hey, where did you go?”

And then Jesus cuts right to the heart of the issue with his response in verse 26..

“Truly, truly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. 27 Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you, for on Him the Father, God, has set His seal.”

Again, this is characteristic of false disciple.

He or she comes to Christ and stays with Christ and even seeks out Christ but never for the right reasons..

Ultimately, these crowds risked their lives to cross the sea of Galilee for more welfare from Christ.

Yet Jesus rebukes them for that attitude..

How dare they work so hard to get to Him so that he can feed them again..

And look, let me tell you something..

There are churches that break their budgets trying to feed people and clothe people and pay medical bills and though none of that is bad...

The greatest thing the church should be offering is the gospel of Jesus Christ..

Sadly, many churches only encourage more false disciples by main themselves into food pantries and financial institutions for the lost..

Look, the crowds who followed Jesus had plenty of physical needs, and though Jesus met some of them for a time, he told them no when they weren't willing to embrace Him as Lord.

The church today needs to be just as clear as Jesus was in verse 26 and 27.

We must tell the world that food and clothes and good health wont' save them.

Salvation is only found by repentance and faith in Christ..

So, the crowds of false disciples once again demonstrate their selfishness and shallowness, but it gets worse..

Let's now look at verses 28-40 where we see a second characteristic of false disciples..

II. False Disciples Cannot Understand Spiritual Truths (28-36)

Now that Jesus has rebuked them for their shallowness in coming to him for more food, the crowd seems to offer a glimmer of hope in verse 28..

28 Therefore they said to Him, “What shall we do, so that we may work the works of God?”

This seems a step in the right direction.

Jesus has told them not to work for physical food but for the food of eternal life, so they ask him in verse 28..

Ok, what do we need to do then?

If you don't want us here seeking more food from you, what do you want us doing?

Verse 29..

29 Jesus answered and said to them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent.”

There is the gospel.

Don't come to Jesus looking for a meal.

Come to Jesus believing in Him as the Son of God.

There is the clearest instructions of what the crowds need to do..

Stop seeing Jesus as big vending machine fixing your health problems and filling your stomachs..

And simply believe in Him as One sent by the Father in the world..

So there it is for the shallow and selfish crowds...

The fork in the road has come.

How will they respond?

Verse 30..

30 So they said to Him, “What then do You do for a sign, so that we may see, and believe You? What work do You perform?”

I hope you see how ridiculous and funny this answer is..

Jesus has just fed this crowd of 1000s of people a day earlier out of thin air, and now this same crowd is asking for a sign to prove to them that what he just told them is true..

This is height of spiritual blindness..

Jesus does a miracle.

The largest miracle for the largest crowd ever.

They come the next day wanting more food.

He tells them that is a wrong attitude.

He tells them that God is not honored by them seeking more food from him, but that God is honored by their belief in Him..

And they simply respond...

“Well, who are you to tell us what to do?”

In fact, if your words are true about what God desires, then do a sign so we will believe them..

How crazy is that!

Jesus has been doing signs for months in the presence of the crowds, yet spiritually blind people never get it.

Then even go on to challenge him in verse 31...

31 Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, ‘He gave them bread out of heaven to eat.’”

In other words, feeding them on a hillside was nothing.

Moses had fed their ancestors for months while they walked in the wilderness..

Yet, Jesus reminds them that Moses did no such thing.

Verse 32.

32 Jesus then said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread out of heaven, but it is My Father who gives you the true bread out of heaven.

The truth is that Moses was not responsible for the manna that fell out of heaven each day...

God was.

And then in verse 33, Jesus makes a spiritual comparison...

33 For the bread of God is [i]that which comes down out of heaven, and gives life to the world.”

This is not a reference to the feeding of Israel in the wilderness, this is a reference to God sending his Son out of heaven into the world..

And how do we know that?

Well, the greek word for life used there is not the word that speaks of physical life, but rather the word that speaks of spiritual life...

Here again is a gospel offer to the crowds...

Jesus is the bread of heaven that has come down into the world to offer eternal life to all who will believe in Him...

Once, the gospel is clear here..

But listen one more time to how the false disciples of the crowd respond...

Verse 34..

34 Then they said to Him, “Lord, always give us this bread.”

You may think that is an outstanding response but it is not.

In fact, that response is simply the greatest example of spiritual blindness..

Jesus didn't need to give them that bread.

That bread of life was standing right in front of them..

My wife is right.

Men go blind when they open a refrigerator or cabinet.

I will go to cabinet, open the door, and yell out almost on instinct, “I can’t find it.”

Maybe it is our laziness in having to move our arms to shuffle things around..

Maybe it is our ignorance in not knowing where to look...

For these people in this crowd, they were simply blind to the Son of God standing right before their eyes...

They never connected the spiritual truth of Jesus being the bread of life...

Reminds me of the woman at the well..

At first when Jesus offer living water, she simply thinks that the well is too deep to find it...

When the crowds heard bread, their own hunger and selfishness and shallowness prevented them from see the spiritual truth that Jesus was teaching..

There are people who walk into churches and hear spiritual truth each week but they never get it..

They never see their own need of salvation and in fact they are so dead to spiritual truths, that is bores them to sleep while God's truth is being proclaimed in the same room..

How scary is it to be in a room where spiritual truth is being taught but give in the physical desire to sleep..

I see it every Sunday and it fills my soul with fear for those people..

Sadly, if you ring the dinner bell, they all line up and head to the kitchen.

These crowds never got it..

Yet, look at the compassion of Christ for the spiritually dead...

Verse 35-36...

35 Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst.

For the third time, Jesus has preached the gospel to this crowd..

This time, he makes sure that he speaks as clearly as possible..

He is that bread of verse 33..

And if the crowds will come to Him believing in Him, they will never hunger again..

Yet, the sad reality is that most of the people if not all never understood that truth...

Verse 36..

36 But I said to you that you have seen Me, and yet do not believe.

And how equally sad is that so many people in the church see Christ every week in the Scriptures and fail to believe in Him..

Conclusion

This morning we come to the Lord's Table..

It is a commanded event in the church to help us remember the sacrifice of Christ on behalf of guilty sinners like us..

Christ is not in the wafer or the cup of juice.

They are simply symbols of his body and blood, which were beaten and spilled for all those who believe in Him.

The bread of life was bruised and battered and hung on a cross...

The living water was pierced in the side and water and blood poured out of him.

This is the high price of sin.

Jesus comes to you this morning as the bread of life and the living water.

He can guarantee that you will never spiritually hunger or thirst again.

Yes, you may have physical hunger pains and be thirsty in this world, but you will never be spiritually hungry or thirsty again..

For those of us who believe in Christ, we simply take of the bread and the cup to remember the price that was paid on our behalf.

While we were sinners, Christ died for us.

This Lord's Table is open to all believers this morning, not just members of this church.

Yet, the warning in the Bible is clear..

Do not take part in this supper if you are living in sin.

This is not the same as occasional sin but this is a lifestyle of sin that you have no interest in repenting of..

Also do not take part in this table if you are an unbeliever..

If you have no repented of sin and have no desire to believe in Christ, you won't find joy at this table but only the judgment of God..

With that said, our men will come forward to serve us...

Let me pray for us..