

JESUS IS THE BREAD OF LIFE

Devotional for August 12, 2018 based upon John 6: 35, 41-51

Every culture on earth has some form of bread, be it bagels, biscuits, baguettes, tortillas, pita, matza, or even lefsa. People get together to “break bread.” In the Arabic language the word for bread is the word for life. Bread is basic to life. It sustains, nourishes, draws people together, and both tastes and smells good. So much so that it can help you sell your house if you bake some bread soon before someone comes over to look at your house.

That is what Jesus was saying when He said, “I am the bread of life.” Jesus is essential to life. Everything that bread represents – sustenance, relationship, goodness, and delight – Jesus claims that He is.

Notice that Jesus did not say, “I can give you the true bread from heaven.” Rather He said, “I am the true bread from heaven.” “You can live without manna, Moses, and religion, but you cannot live without Me.”

And that’s what makes Jesus’ claim so outrageous for many people. That’s why it became such a problem for the crowd. Jesus was telling them that He is more important than anything else in life. That was more than the crowd could take. That is why many stopped following Him.

There is no middle ground with Jesus. You either stone Him or you serve Him. You either receive Him and revere Him or you reject Him. You either follow Him or you turn away.

The people in the crowd that day were impressed by the miracles of Jesus. They also admired the teachings of Jesus. But they did not want to have to admit that they needed Jesus. They would rather have manna. They would rather have a list of rules. They would rather be religious than to have to be in a relationship with Jesus.

And many people today stumble over the same thing. They would like to experience the miracles of Jesus. They admire and would like themselves and other people – especially their children – to live according to the teachings of Jesus. But they would rather take their chances and try to do it by themselves than to have to admit that they need Jesus.

Every time we come forward to receive communion, we confess that we need Jesus. We admit our need for a relationship with Jesus. We are saying that we cannot live without Jesus – in this life and in the life to come.

Maybe we do not fully understand the nature of our need and how it works. But we know we need something that we cannot provide for ourselves. We cannot obtain it in any other way except to come forward and receive it.

Jesus is the bread of life. We cannot earn it, buy it, work for it, or come to the point of deserving it. All we can do is to receive it as we believe in the one whom God has sent.

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