



## Jesus, “the Bread of Life,” Gives Life to the World!

John 6:25-44



### 1. Jesus as “the Bread King:” earning or spurning “the Bread of Life”

In our Gospel reading in John 6:35, Jesus said:

“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.”

Jesus who is God made flesh here calls Himself “the Bread of Life,” the One who gives eternal life! Jesus was not speaking of our usual hunger, but of a spiritual hunger, a hunger for eternal life, which only He can satisfy. Jesus is “the Bread of Life” for all who trust in Him in the sense of taking away our spiritual hunger and thirst and giving us eternal life.

#### a. Do not look at Jesus as “the Bread King:” “Do not work for food that spoils!” (v. 27)

In contrast to Jesus who is “the Bread of Life,” there is a different kind of food that does not take away our hunger for very long and quickly spoils. Shortly before He calls himself “the Bread of Life,” Jesus gave His hearers this warning:

“I tell you the truth, you are looking for me, not because you saw miraculous signs but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. Do not work for food that spoils, but for

food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you!” (v. 27)

Jesus said all this, especially the words “do not work for food that spoils,” because a large crowd numbering in the thousands, which he had just miraculously fed with five small barley loaves and two fish, was following him around, hoping for more food from him. This crowd was focused on Jesus as the solution for permanently taking away their earthly hunger by continually giving them miracle bread to eat. After all, He had just fed 5,000 men plus women and children—it must have been at least 15,000 people—with just a handful of food by miraculously multiplying those small bits of food. Imagine that! Imagine how Jesus could also solve all your problems with paying the bills, keeping a roof over your head and putting food on the table for your family! Instead of believing in Jesus as “the Bread of Life, who gives life to the world,” they wanted Jesus to be their “Bread King” who would give them food to eat forever!

#### b. The modern heresy of “the Prosperity Gospel”

Today, there is a widespread teaching which pretends to be biblical but is not which also looks at Jesus as “the Bread King.” This modern heresy which parallels the false notions of the crowd following Jesus in our text is called “the Prosperity Gospel.” In the light of our text from John 6, it is neither “gospel” nor does it give prosperity.

“The Prosperity Gospel” is the teaching that God will

reward signs of faith with health and wealth. It is also called "word faith," "name-it-and-claim-it," and the "health and wealth gospel." This false gospel, this heresy, is rapidly spreading among churches large and small, denominational and independent, especially through the ministries of televangelists such as Creflo Dollar, Joyce Meyer, Paul Couch, Kenneth Copeland, Marilyn Hickey, Benny Hinn and Joel Osteen. These so-called preachers encourage their followers to "sow a seed" of faith by spending money—often in the form of a donation to their ministries—in order to reap earthly prosperity.<sup>1</sup> Basically, they teach people works righteous by encouraging them to try to get on the good side of Jesus by sending money to the televangelist.

**c. "What must we do to do the works God requires?" (v. 28)**

People in the crowd in our text from John 6 also wanted to get on the good side of Jesus by doing good works. He was obviously a man of God, since He could perform these miracles. And the crowd was used to working for food. So, it just made sense to ask Jesus what was necessary for them to do to do the works of God, so they could get more of this miraculous food from Him. So, in v. 28 they asked him, "What must we do to do the works God requires?" (v. 28) The crowd was thinking of works which they must perform to earn

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<sup>1</sup>[http://www.religionlink.com/tip\\_060227.php](http://www.religionlink.com/tip_060227.php) last accessed July 27, 2009

their daily bread and eternal life. The crowd was thinking with a work righteous mindset. They were thinking that if they were going to get this miraculous bread from Jesus, then they must do things to earn the favor of Jesus and to get on His good side. The crowd believed that Jesus could do miracles, but that they had to do something to earn that miraculous food from Jesus, just like "the Prosperity Gospel" teaches.

**d. The work of God is this: to give faith in Jesus whom He has sent (v. 29)**

Jesus gives an answer which is opposite from the mind-set of work righteousness, from earning God's miraculous gifts, rather a mind set which humbly receives gifts from God. Jesus answered: "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent." (John 6:29) Jesus is not speaking of the many works (plural) they must do, but of the one work (singular) which God continually does in them and to them, namely giving them the gift of faith, the gift of believing in Jesus. The meaning of what Jesus says is: "the work which God does for you is that you might believe in Me, His Son, whom God the Father has sent to you."

In other words, it's not our work that Jesus is talking about but God's work in us: that He gives us faith in Jesus and sustains that faith in us through Word and sacrament. While we must do the believing, our believing is the work of God! We trust, but God puts that trust in our hearts through His Word and the sacraments.

Faith in Jesus is a gift from God. That faith in us is a gift from God is expressed by Jesus in verse 37, “All that the Father gives me will come to me” and in verse 44, “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him!”

**e. Earning or spurning His gifts**

It is easy for us, today, to treat Jesus in the same way as this crowd as a “Bread King” by rejecting this gift of faith. It is easy for us to fall into the trap of earning or spurning His gifts. It is easy for us to deal with God in two equally wrong but interconnected ways: 1) by trying to earn His gifts and His friendship by what we say or do or think or live or 2) by spurning God as soon as He does not give us the things we expect and demand from Him.

As far as trying to earn God’s gifts: we are faithful in worship, prayer and trying to live as God wants us to live, as long as we think God is doing something for us. “The Prosperity Gospel” is attractive as long as God gives us what we want. “The Prosperity Gospel” makes us think that God is prospering us, because of our gifts of money and time and prayer to Him. So, we think that we are actually earning the prosperity God gives us freely as a gift.

But as soon as Jesus does not meet our expectations or disappoints us in some way, we quickly turn away from God. We spurn God, because He does not quickly and fully give us the prosperity we demand and expect. For example, we pray for money, but remain poor, so we give up on God. Or we

are diagnosed with having cancer, trust God that he answers prayers for healing and begin to fervently pray for that healing. But when healing does not come, when the cancer remains, we stop praying and turn away from Christ and His church. We spurn God, because He does not give us the health and wealth that we expect and demand from Him.

**2. “I am the Bread of Life who gives life to the world!” (v. 35)**

In contrast, Jesus said in v. 35: “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.” (v. 35) Rather than earning or spurning His gifts, rather than pursuing earthly bread, the treasures of this world, rather than buying into “the Prosperity Gospel,” Jesus is inviting his hearers and us to come to him in faith, because he is “the Bread of Life” who will meet all our spiritual hunger and thirst forever!

**a. Jesus is the One who gives eternal life and the resurrection from the dead!**

When Jesus refers to himself as “The Bread of Life,” He means that He is the one who gives eternal life by His perfect life, sacrificial death and amazing resurrection for all mankind. Jesus makes this clear, when he says in verse 40 our text from John 6: “For My Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in Him shall have eternal life, and I will raise Him up at the last day.” Jesus says “everyone!” Jesus came down from heaven to give life to all people through faith in Him. Again, the saving faith that Jesus is talking about in this verse

is a gift from the Father as Jesus says in verse 37, “all that the Father gives me will come to me!” Through this gift of faith in Him Jesus promises eternal life and our own resurrection from the dead.

Eternal life begins on this earth when we are given faith in Jesus and continues in heaven for all eternity. Eternal life is the forgiveness of all our sins, and peace and fellowship with God on this earth and also in heaven. We have eternal life on this earth when the eternal God lives in us. He lives in us through faith in His Son, “the Bread of life,” who gives life to the world!

The second promise through Jesus is that He gives us the resurrection from the dead. He will raise us up on the last day from our graves to live with Him forever in heaven. In verse 39 Jesus says: “and this is the will of Him who sent Me, that I shall lose none of all that He has given Me, but raise them up at the last day!”

Jesus promises eternal life and resurrection from the dead not just to some of mankind, some nations, only certain kinds of people, but He promises them to all the world, in verse 33, “the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world!”

**b. So, Jesus calls on us all to believe in Him as “the Bread of Life!”**

So, Jesus calls on us all to believe in Him as “the Bread of Life!” We all are like the crowd listening to Jesus and following

after Him, wanting miracle bread from Him. We all are in the error or can easily fall into the error of earning or spurning His gifts, of following “the Prosperity Gospel.” Earning his gifts appeals to our vanity and conforms to the ways of this world. And spurning His gifts comes so easily, when we think that He has disappointed us.

But Jesus still stands before us, as “the Bread of Life,” who gives eternal life to the world. He stands before us each day with the marks of the whip and the cross and the crown of thorns on His body to assure us of the forgiveness of all our sins, eternal life and the resurrection from the dead.

**Conclusion**

In verse 35 Jesus gives us this promise:

“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. ...40 For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day!”

By the grace of the heavenly Father, may you always look at Jesus not as your “Bread King” but as “the Bread of Life,” who gives life to the world and to you! Amen.