

December 14, 2025 (Lesson 2)

JESUS: THE BREAD OF LIFE

1. **Labor for Bread That Lasts** (John 6:22-27)
2. **Recognize the Source of Life** (John 6:28-35)
3. **Salvation's Everlasting Work** (John 6:36-40)

Central Truth: Jesus, as the Bread of Life, provides spiritual nourishment for the believers.

Focus: Discover the ongoing gifts of our Lord's grace and receive nourishment for our souls.

Evangelism Emphasis: We all must turn to Jesus to receive eternal life.

Golden Text: "The bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world" (John 6:33).

The teaching ministry of Jesus has always been a fascinating subject for people from all walks of life. In fact, it became popular in the nineteenth century to characterize Jesus as more of a teaching philosopher than a healing Messiah. Certain groups continue to believe Jesus was primarily a dynamic teacher and the miracles were simply "special effects" added by the later church to validate the truth of His teaching. Nothing could be further from the truth! Jesus' teachings are vitally connected to His whole personality, ministry, and mission.

Jesus' teachings cut to the middle of the grit of real life and faith. In addition, His teachings are daring! They challenged the conventional norms of that day. They boldly call for a strong response in our day.

In the Gospel of John, Jesus most often teaches about His own identity, work, and mission in the world. This differs from the Synoptic Gospels, which contain Jesus' teachings that are focused on the present reality of the kingdom of God. What we encounter in John 6 is part and parcel of the whole Gospel's focus. Jesus unabashedly declares Himself as the sustenance for humanity, leading His hearers to a crisis moment of belief or rejection.

1. LABOR FOR THE BREAD THAT LASTS

A. The "Other Side" (John 6:22-25)

²² The day following, when the people which stood on the other side of the sea saw that there was none other boat there, save that one whereinto his disciples were entered, and that Jesus went not with his disciples into the boat, but that his disciples were gone away alone; ²³ (Howbeit there came other boats from Tiberias nigh unto the place where they did eat bread, after that the Lord had given thanks:) ²⁴ When the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, neither his disciples, they also took shipping, and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus. ²⁵ And when they had found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither?

The teaching passages of Jesus in the latter half of John 6 stem from two tremendous miracles that occur in the former half of the chapter. First, Jesus miraculously feeds well over five thousand people, with twelve basketfuls of leftovers remaining. Fleeing the crowds who wished to immediately crown Him as Israel's king, He performs a more impromptu miracle before His disciples—walking on the water to reach them as they set off for Capernaum.

When those who were miraculously fed a free banquet cannot find Jesus on the premises, it only takes them one night to realize that Jesus and His disciples had gone across the lake (vv. 22-24). Capernaum was the obvious guess for where He was likely to be, since this was the hometown of Simon Peter and other disciples, and that's where they found Him.

The crowd asks Jesus, "Rabbi, when did you get here?" (v. 25 NIV). They know He was not on the boat when His disciples departed. They have no idea how He could have made it to Capernaum so quickly, and they are curious. Characteristically, Jesus says nothing about walking on the water. He does not inflate Himself in their presence. The miracle of walking on the water was only for His closest followers, not for the crowds. So He essentially ignores their initial question entirely.

What Are Miracles?

Miracles are the retelling in small letters of the very same story which is written across the whole world in letters too large for us to see.—C. S. Lewis

B. The Insignificance of Earthly Bread (vv. 26-27)

²⁶ Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. ²⁷ Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.

Jesus refused to refer to His own miraculous ability to walk on the water. Instead, He unmasked the crowd's true intentions (v. 26). They were not there to seek Jesus at all. The person of Jesus was merely incidental to their true motives. They were freeloaders there to see more spectacles. If an evil person had fed them, they would have even pursued him. This is why Jesus saw through their selfish plan to make Him king by force in verse 15. These people were spiritual infants about to receive a hard teaching.

Jesus met their immaturity with the necessary antidote, issuing the crowd a direct command (v. 27). Ironically, they were seeking to avoid labor. They wanted free bread, but Jesus encouraged work. They were lazy, and Jesus would have none of it. Only their work should not be focused on earthly bread, but on what would endure eternally. "Everlasting life" in John's Gospel is a qualitative term. It does not relate to time on the calendar, but to a new kind of life. This life is the free gift that comes only from "the Son of Man." This term was common in the prophetic literature to emphasize the prophet's human nature. Jesus combines this title with the seal of God, highlighting His unique nature as fully God and fully man.

\$ *What is the danger in seeking for the miraculous?*

2. RECOGNIZE THE SOURCE OF LIFE

A. Crisis of Belief (John 6:28-33)

²⁸ Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? ²⁹ Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent. ³⁰ They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work? ³¹ Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat. ³² Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto

you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. ³³ For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.

At first, Jesus' direct teaching does not elicit rejection or affirmation, but curiosity. They listen carefully to Jesus' emphasis on the right type of work, then they press Him with a specific question: "What must we do to do the works God requires?" (v. 28 NIV). The question is similar to that which the teacher of the Law asked Jesus prior to the parable of the Good Samaritan: "And who is my neighbour?" (Luke 10:29). Jesus was pleased to answer the question directly.

Jesus responds with the challenge, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent" (John 6:29 NIV), immediately bringing about a crisis of faith and decision. Throughout John's Gospel, *belief* is a key theme and vocabulary word. The Greek word is the verb form of *faith*, so that in Paul it is often translated, "have faith in" or "put faith in." The crowds are challenged to put their faith in a specific person.

The crowd's response in verse 30 reminds us of the Pharisees in Matthew 12:38; Mark 8:11-12; and Luke 11:29. In John 2:18, the temple administrators demand a miraculous sign to prove Jesus' right to cleanse the premises. Here the question is repeated, only with more urgency. This crowd does not ask for a miraculous sign so much as they demand one. They ask specifically what kind of sign Jesus will provide. They even give Him an example! They assume He will automatically comply. When Jesus fed them in the wilderness, they were reminded of the manna of Moses, so they suggest a similar miraculous sign. What now will He do to convince them that He is worthy of belief?

Jesus uses the crowd's own words against them. They have been focusing on Moses, not God! The manna of Moses is no longer in view in the light of the activity of the Father. They should not be concerned about physical bread, but heavenly bread. This Bread is among them and is not full of wheat, but of life! It is far more important than manna ever was. The age of manna is done!

Need Versus Want

The Gospel which they so greatly needed they would not have; the miracles which Jesus did not always choose to give, they eagerly demanded.—Charles Spurgeon

B. A Gracious Offering (John 6:34-35)

³⁴ Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. ³⁵ And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

The crowd cannot contain themselves as Jesus describes a life-giving type of bread far beyond the manna of Moses. They immediately make themselves candidates, respectfully asking Jesus for this bread. However, they have again missed the point. They are expecting a product that can fulfill their wild physical expectations. Jesus, however, can only offer Himself (v. 35).

“I am the bread of life” is the first of seven important “I am” statements by Jesus in John’s Gospel. Simply the usage of the term “I am” has overtones of God’s name in the Old Testament. God told Moses at the burning bush, “I AM THAT I AM” (Ex. 3:14).

After this lengthy conversation about bread, Jesus finally reveals its culmination. Earthly bread does not matter. He is the only bread that lasts eternally, because He is the ultimate revelation of God’s nature.

\$ *What did the people still not understand (v. 34), and why not?*

3. SALVATION’S EVERLASTING WORK

A. Jesus’ Mission (John 6:36-37)

³⁶ But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not. ³⁷ All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

It does not take long for Jesus to move from earthly talk to heavenly talk, from present tense to future tense. The crowds, of course, are only interested in the present tense on earth. They are focused on getting more free bread for themselves, which is the introduction to the entire conversation with Jesus. Jesus goads them on toward His proclamation of being the Bread of Life. Yet He says the crowds are far from belief (v. 36).

It is a deep mystery why some people see the miraculous acts of God and believe, while others see His works and walk away in unbelief and skepticism.

Verse 37 teaches all who come to Jesus must come within the eternal will of the Father. This should not be confused with the unbiblical teaching of *predestination*—that God has determined some people will be eternally lost and others will be eternally saved. The Father’s will is that *all* will be saved. Yet, they must come to this salvation through Jesus Christ. There is no other way. Only the way of the Father can bring us to saving faith in Christ.

The words *cast out* in verse 37 are from a Greek word meaning “throw out.” Those who come to Christ by way of the saving plan of the Father will never be rejected. Jesus is waiting, longing, interceding, that all might see the truth of the Father’s plan and acknowledge the truth that Jesus is the Son of God.

Salvation

Salvation is an act of God. It is initiated by God, wrought by God, and sustained by God. The faith that saves the soul is . . . faith in Christ as the Son of God.—Billy Graham

B. The Father’s Will (John 6:38-40)

³⁸ For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. ³⁹ And this is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. ⁴⁰ And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

Jesus never questioned the Father's will. For forty days and nights the devil tempted Him concerning the Father's will, but Jesus refused to be sidetracked from pursuing the eternal mission. Our Lord's knowledge of the divine will and His determination to do it provide a powerful lesson for us today.

Jesus knew His origin was in Heaven. He had been there eternally with the Father and Holy Spirit. This is so different from all other human births. Prior to human conception, we were not spirits living in Heaven. Although God has a perfect plan for us, we did not have existence until conceived by human parents. The practice of abortion is offensive to Father God; it is the unlawful intervention by man in the domain of the Father's will for each conceived human life. While our lives do not extend backward into Heaven (nor as falsely believed, forward in reincarnation), we are still of significance individually and our souls will live forever.

But Jesus came from Heaven. His existence has been eternal as the Son of God. This is why He could confidently affirm in verse 38 that He came "not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." His coming from Heaven was part of the divine plan of redemption established in the eternal counsel of divine love. He was sent by the Father.

This emphasis on *sent* by the Father dominates verses 38-40. We saw in verse 37 that Jesus will "in no wise cast out" those who come to Him in faith. In verse 39 we discover that He will "lose nothing" that comes to Him. The verb denotes a "loosing, releasing." Jesus affirmed in love that nothing or no one who believes in Him can be shaken loose from His power. The Apostle Paul echoed this in Romans 8:37-39: "Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (NKJV).

In verses 39 and 40, Jesus revealed that the resurrection of believers is part of the Father's will. This means our hope at the second coming of Jesus is real and shall be realized in the fulfillment of the Father's will.

\$ *Who "came down," and why (v. 38)?*

\$ *Who will be "raise[d] up," and how (v. 40)?*

ONE SOURCE OF SATISFACTION

What is the bread of your life? What do you consider the essence of life?

Many would say, "The bread of my life is to have every material possession my heart desires." Others would say, "The bread of my life is to enjoy every pleasure the mind can imagine." Still others might say learning, knowledge, humanism, and altruism are the bread of life.

But what is beneath and behind all the human striving to make of so many things the bread of life? The longing of immortality—the hunger for eternal life.

Jesus Christ is the only true Bread of Life. And only by making Him the bread of our life is our hunger for immortality satisfied.

Daily Devotions

- M. Bread From Heaven (Exodus 16:14-18)
- T. The Sacred Shewbread (Leviticus 24:5-9)
- W. David Sustained by Holy Bread (1 Samuel 21:1-6)
- T. God's Word Is Spiritual Food (Matthew 4:1-4)
- F. Jesus Institutes the Lord's Supper (Luke 22:14-20)
- S. Partakers of the Bread (1 Corinthians 10:15-17)