



# Summer Sermon Reflections

August 6, 2006

## Bread for the Soul

Jesus points past our physical wants to the spiritual hunger that lurks within us all. Even though we so easily confuse the two, Jesus doesn't send us away. He feeds us the "Bread of Life."

*John 6:24-25* So when the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they themselves got into the boats and went to Capernaum looking for Jesus. When they found him on the other side of the lake, they said to him, 'Rabbi, when did you come here?' Jesus answered them, 'Very truly, I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For it is on him that God the Father has set his seal.' Then they said to him, 'What must we do to perform the works of God?' Jesus answered them, 'This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.' So they said to him, 'What sign are you going to give us then, so that we may see it and believe you? What work are you performing? Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, "He gave them bread from heaven to eat." ' Then Jesus said to them, 'Very truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.' They said to him, 'Sir, give us this bread always.' Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.

### For Personal Study

Bread seems to have a bad image these days. Lo-carb diets encourage the elimination of bread from our meals. Yet, throughout human history, bread has been a mainstay of daily healthy nourishment.

The Bread of Life is the spiritual food we need. Without the bread of life we cannot live spiritually. Just as physically we need to eat in order to live, the bread of life gives us nourishment for the soul.

In the Old Testament, God provided the Israelites with manna, a form of bread from heaven. They were told only to take what was required for a one day supply and they had to trust that God would send more the next day. The manna served as salvation for the Israelites physical needs on a daily basis. God however knew of a greater need for the salvation of man's soul. He also had a plan to meet that need -- His Son, the Bread of Life. The Israelites needed to eat daily for survival, but once we have

tasted the Bread of Life, our souls have been saved for eternity. (Exodus 16:4-5)

Jesus Christ is the Bread of Life. It is he whom we need to eat in order that we might have eternal life. He is the manna for our souls that God promised. Though we don't need to wait each day to take part in the bread of life, we do need to make sure that our lives are lived like Jesus. He is the example of how we are to live. Part of what it means for us to eat the bread of life is to live our lives the way Jesus lived his. We should partake of Him each day by praying, reading His word, and listening for the guidance of the Holy Spirit, knowing that as we focus on Jesus, we are nourished spiritually. Use mealtime to remember that physical food is a symbol of how we are to relate to Jesus spiritually. We need him each day. Thank him for providing both physical food for our bodies and spiritual food for our souls. Give thanks for this 'daily bread.'

### Readings & Questions

#### Monday, August 7

Jesus says that the crowds were looking for him because "you ate the loaves and had your fill." What do you think he means? Why do you think that meeting people's *physical* needs was such an important part of Jesus' ministry? John 6:26

#### Tuesday, August 8

In this passage, Jesus says what "the work of God" is. Does his statement surprise you? If someone had asked you to define "the work of God," would you have defined it differently? John 6:29

#### Wednesday, August 9

Jesus describes himself as "the bread of life," and suggests that only those who *eat his body* have true life in them. What might this mean? Is it only a reference to the "Lord's supper" practiced in churches today, or is there another meaning to Jesus' words? John 6:35; John 6:48

#### Thursday, August 10

What are the similarities and differences between manna and the "Bread of Life"? Exodus 16; John 6:35

#### Friday, August 11

What happens when you are on a spiritual "Atkins (no bread) diet"? John 15:5