

JESUS IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Adapted from *Jesus in the Spotlight* by Kay Arthur with Cyndy Shearer

KEY PASSAGE: John 6:41-71 (Focus on vs 60-71)

FOCUS: Jesus is the Bread of Life--Part 2

MEMORY VERSE: John 8:12 Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.

Background Information

Don't Miss the True Bread

Article by Jon Bloom, Staff writer, desiringGod.org

One of the strangest things Jesus ever said is recorded in chapter six of John's Gospel, where Jesus stated that his followers must eat his flesh and drink his blood.

These words are disturbing. Almost everyone, including his most loyal disciples, misunderstood them at the time. Many disciples stopped following him after he said them (verse 66). They have been the subjects of much debate for centuries in the church. And because of them, Christians have even been accused of cannibalism by participating in the Lord's Supper.

But what did Jesus really mean? If we pay close attention, it's not that difficult to understand. But we must examine the context carefully and recognize Jesus's clues.

The Context: Feeding the Five Thousand

The day before Jesus said these things, he had fed a crowd of 5,000 people with a few loaves and fish. In this miracle, the crowd recognized that the Prophet like Moses had been raised up (John 6:14; Deuteronomy 18:15). Not since the days of manna had a prophet provided miracle bread like that. They were ready to make Jesus king right there.

The crowd was right that Jesus was the Prophet. But Jesus knew that they didn't yet understand his mission. So he evaded the premature coronation and went to Capernaum (via a nighttime stroll across the Sea of Galilee). But the enthusiastic crowd tracked him down there.

Excitement Over the Wrong Bread

Jesus decided it was time to expose why their enthusiasm was wrongheaded. So he said to them,

Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking me not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. Do not labor for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal. (John 6:26–27)

This crowd had seen Jesus do all sorts of miracles and likely knew at least some of his claims of authority (John 6:2; see John chapter 5). But what made them want to make Jesus king was the miracle bread. Their excitement was that Jesus could take away their hunger, not that he had come to take away their sins (1 John 3:5). For them the miracle bread had become the gospel.

What Jesus was telling them here was that the *bread* was not the gospel, his *message* of salvation from sin was the gospel (John 3:17). He had come to not save them from starvation but from damnation.

The True Bread

At this point the tension began to rise. They asked what work was required to get eternal life bread, and Jesus answered, “This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent” (verse 29).

Here the crowd began to hedge. They did not believe in everything Jesus was claiming. They demanded more signs — in fact, more “bread from heaven” would be a good start (verses 30–31).

So to expose just how little they believed in him, Jesus declared, “I am the living bread that came down out of heaven . . . and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh” (verse 51).

This sounded bizarre. The crowd recoiled. And then Jesus delivered the knockout:

Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. For my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink. (John 6:53–55)

The “Jesus for King” campaign evaporated. The crowd melted away shaking their heads. The miracle-working prophet was a lunatic who wanted them to eat his flesh!

The Clues to What Jesus Meant

So what did Jesus really mean by these disturbing statements? The clues are sprinkled throughout John 6:22–71:

- How does one work for the food that endures to eternal life? *Believe in Jesus* (verses 27, 29).
- “I am the bread of life; whoever *comes to me* [believing] shall not hunger, and whoever *believes in me* shall never thirst” (verse 35).

- “For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and *believes in him* should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day” (verse 40).
- “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life” (verse 47).

Do you see it?

- “Whoever *feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood* has eternal life” (verse 54).
- “Whoever *believes* has eternal life” (verse 47).

Eating Is Believing

For Jesus, eating was *believing*; drinking was *believing*. These words were “spirit and life” (verse 63). Jesus promised eternal life not to those who eat and drink from his broken body, but to those who believe in why his body was broken — to pay in full the penalty for their sin and to freely give them his perfect righteousness in exchange for their unrighteousness. That is the gospel of the New Testament. It is the priceless promise of John 3:16.

So the next time you gather with the brothers and sisters in your local church to share in the simplest yet most profound of all meals, the Lord’s Supper, remember: eating is believing; drinking is believing. The meal celebrates and proclaims belief. Jesus instituted it so that all of his disciples throughout all of history would remember and proclaim what they believe about his death until he comes (1 Corinthians 11:24–26).

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LESSON

(Note to teacher: Read/teach the lesson to the students; be sure to allow them enough time to look up verses and engage with the Scripture independently. Each student should have the printed Scripture and colored pencils. Write the key words/symbols on the whiteboard before class..)

I. The Introduction

When we filmed John 6 last week, it was a quieter scene with Jesus talking to the crowds. Even after witnessing the miracle of Jesus creating food out of nothing, the people still demanded that Jesus needed to prove that He was God by doing more miracles. They wanted Him to make bread fall from heaven, just like manna fell from the sky. But the people misunderstood. They didn't need the physical food or manna, they needed something--or Someone else. Who did the people need? *Allow students to answer.* That's right, they needed Jesus. To explain how they needed Him, Jesus compared Himself to bread. Do you remember what His statement was? *Allow students to answer* I AM the bread of life.

The crowds just became more angry with Jesus when He said this. Verses 41-42 says they grumbled, "How can He claim to be God? We know His family, His mom and dad. He's just like us." Verse 52 says the crowds then started arguing among themselves. This is where we'll pick up in today's passage.

Prayer

Whenever we study God's Word, we need to start with prayer. It is only through the Holy Spirit that we'll understand and believe this. Let's pray together. *Pray with students. Pray for their prayer requests too.*

II. Bible Passage

Jesus liked to use parables and word pictures to explain things that are hard to understand. For example, do you remember how He explained salvation to Nicodemus? *Allow students to answer, being born again* Do you remember how confused Nicodemus was? He wanted to know how an old man could climb back into his mother's belly. But Jesus didn't actually mean that. He was using a word picture of a physical birth to show him how a spiritual birth was necessary to salvation.

In our passage today, Jesus uses another word picture.. It's going to sound a little weird and gross, but it helps us to understand that we can do nothing to save ourselves.

Just like last week, we'll read a smaller portion and answer our 5W's and an H questions before proceeding. We also have a KEY WORD to look for: LIVE, LIFE. Since these two words are so closely related, we'll mark them both with the same symbol. What symbol do you want to use to mark our KEY WORD? *Allow students to come up with their own way of marking the word(s).*

Let's pick up in verse 51.

51 I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh."

52 The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?"

53 So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. **54** Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. **55** For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. **56** Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. **57** As the living

Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever feeds on me, he also will live because of me. **58** This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like the bread[□] the fathers ate, and died. Whoever feeds on this bread will live forever.” **59** Jesus said these things in the synagogue, as he taught at Capernaum.

- WHO is the “living bread”? (v. 51) **Jesus**
- WHAT is the “bread”? (v. 51) **His flesh**
- WHAT promise does Jesus give for all who “eats my flesh and drinks my blood”? (v 54) **Will have eternal life and be raised up at the last day**

Ewww, I told you this word picture was rather gruesome. Is Jesus telling the people that we really need to eat Him? No! This is why we need to look at the context of this whole conversation. Remember, we’ve broken up this passage into two separate weeks, but Jesus’ conversation happened all at once. To understand what He means, we need to look at the whole conversation. Let’s look back at verse 35. Will one of you look that up and read it? **Help students to look up John 6:35 in their Bibles.** “Then Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.”

In this verse, Jesus doesn’t say “eat” or “drink”; He uses another verb. What is it? **Comes to me, believes**

To Jesus, *eating is believing*. Whoever believes in Jesus will have eternal life. Think about why and how you eat. Would you live long if you never ate or drank anything? No! We need something outside of ourselves to help us live. We need plants like wheat and rice and apples or we need an animal, like a chicken, to die so that we can keep living. Can you make your own food without anything? No, all of our food comes from outside of us. In the same way, we can’t make our own eternal “food” either. Jesus needed to give it to us by being destroyed. He is the only source of our eternal life. So again, when Jesus says that we should “eat” his body, He means to believe in Him for our life and salvation. By the way, this is why we celebrate Communion every Sunday—it helps us remember that our eternal life is entirely dependent on Jesus.

However, there will be many who hate what Jesus has to say. Let’s continue reading our passage:

60 When many of his disciples heard it, they said, “This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?” **61** But Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples were grumbling about this, said to them, “Do you take offense at this? **62** Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? **63** It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. **64** But there are some of you who do not believe.” (For Jesus knew from the beginning who those were who did not believe, and who it was who would betray him.) **65** And he said, “This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father.”

66 After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him. **67** So Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you want to go away as well?" **68** Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, **69** and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God." **70** Jesus answered them, "Did I not choose you, the twelve? And yet one of you is a devil." **71** He spoke of Judas the son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the twelve, was going to betray him.

- WHO was grumbling about Jesus? (v. 61) *His disciples*
- WHY were they grumbling? (v. 64) *Some of them did not believe*
- HOW can anyone come to Jesus?(v. 65) *If it is granted to him by the Father*
- WHAT was the response of many of Jesus' disciples? (v. 66) *They turned back and did not believe*
- WHO did believe? (v.68) *Simon Peter and 10 other disciples*
- WHO would not believe and betray Jesus? (v. 70-71) *Judas Iscariot*

APPLICATION:

Not everyone will have eternal life. It is not enough to hear the words of God or follow Him around for a while. Jesus' disciples walked away because they didn't believe. Judas would betray Him because He did not believe. They missed heaven and would only have eternal death in Hell.

Simon Peter recognized that there was no where else for him to go, nothing else to try. Only Jesus has the words of eternal life. We must believe in Him.

VI. MEMORY VERSE

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YhRB6MxIEtQ>

VII. Activity from <http://childrensbiblelessons.blogspot.com/2015/02/lesson-jesus-is-bread-of-life.html>

The Bread of Life

Materials needed: 6" x 12" light brown paper, scissors, crayons.

1. Hand out light brown paper.
2. Fold in thirds.
3. Round top corners only. This should resemble a loaf of bread.
4. On the outside of the folded up paper, write "What JESUS said to the people..." (See picture above).
5. Unfold up one 'flap.'

6. On the bottom flap, write "3 times, He said..."

7. Unfold paper all the way.

8. On top flap, write "I am the bread of life." and "John 6:35."

9. On the middle flap, write "I am that bread of life." and "John 6:48."

10. On the bottom flap, write "I am the living bread." and "John 6:51."

11. Fold paper back up, so the students can take the project home.

Student Page: _____

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