

SERMON BASED QUESTIONS

THE CHAPEL

I Am the Bread of Life

JOHN 6:22-35

April 15, 2018

MAIN POINT

Only Jesus truly fulfills our desire for meaning and purpose.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

What possessions, relationships, or experiences do you most want to add to your life? Why?

What has been the most satisfying time of your life? Why?

Like us, the people of John 6 were distracted by things that, at best, satisfy for a short time. In fact, they were generally quite poor, and every day was spent struggling for survival. It is no small wonder that they were drawn to Jesus after He miraculously fed them and provided leftovers. In their eyes, being with Jesus would eliminate their need to work for survival. Yet Jesus was not primarily concerned about their poverty. He was concerned about something much deeper.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 6:22-27.

What specifically stands out to you about how the crowd sought Jesus?

How do you think poor, hungry peasants would have felt about Jesus' instruction in verse 27? Why?

Were these people true followers of Jesus? In what ways do we see Jesus working to change their hearts?

What does it mean that God the Father "set His seal of approval" on Jesus (v. 27)?

In Jesus' day, a seal was made of clay, wax, or some other soft, moderately durable substance. A seal on something showed it was authentic, similar to the way a notary seal or stamp on a document does today. Jesus was saying that the reason the people should pursue Him for spiritual food was because He was authenticated for that purpose by the Father Himself.

HAVE ANOTHER VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 6:28-29.

What are the various possible answers to the people's question in verse 28? What works does God require? What passages of Scripture could you reference to support your answer?

What is the relationship between faith and works? How do faith and works set apart true followers of Jesus?

In verse 28, we see that people misunderstood Jesus' statement. When Jesus told them to work for eternal food, the people asked about what work God required of them. The answer is belief in Jesus as God's Son. In the Greek language, the word believe means "to rely on" or "to trust." The noun form of the word is translated "faith." Believing involves much more than merely accepting some facts about Jesus. The word "believe" sets a follower apart as a person who places his or her complete trust in Christ. "Believe" also carries the idea of relying on Him to keep His promises and to use His power to accomplish His purpose.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 6:30-35.

As if Jesus' healing the sick and feeding the thousands weren't miraculous enough, the crowd demanded more signs like the manna in Exodus 16. In Exodus 16, the people grumbled and complained against God about their hunger, forgetting God's power in the exodus from Egypt. In the same way that the Jews of Moses' day disregarded God's signs, the Galileans disregarded Jesus'.

How does reflecting on God's power and provision in our past help us with faith for the future? Have you experienced this in your own life? If so, how?

In verses 31-32, the people revealed their doubt that Jesus is any better than Moses, and Jesus sought to correct them. In what ways is Jesus better than Moses?

Moses stood between God and the Israelites and mediated an old covenant that could not save. Jesus is better than Moses: He stands in the gap between the people and the Lord once and for all, establishing the new covenant that alone saves (see Heb. 3). The biblical way to study the great people of God in the Old Testament is not merely to draw broad moralizations from their lives, but to see how they point us to Jesus and our need for Him.

Do you think most people would try to fill their spiritual hunger if all their physical needs were continually met? Why or why not?

The crowd in verse 34 clearly struggles to understand what Jesus is really talking about. Their treasure is their desire to no longer live in poverty, and Jesus is the means to that end. It's unlikely that people will seek to fill their spiritual hunger when their idols are being fed. "Junk food" may never satisfy, but it certainly keeps us occupied.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

The people in today's passage worshipped comfortable lives and tried to follow Jesus, thinking He would fulfill those desires. Are there idols in your life that you may be trying to obtain through Jesus? What steps can you take this week toward removing those idols from your life?

In what practical ways can we encourage one another to live lives that demonstrate we've made this faith our own?

What current ministry opportunities are available to you through our church that might give you the chance to share with others that Jesus alone truly satisfies?

PRAY

Close your group time in prayer. Thank God for being all that we need. Pray for the power to believe and experience that Jesus truly satisfies more than anything else in this world.

COMMENTARY

JOHN 6:22-35

The title of this Gospel says that it was written by John, and both internal evidence and evidence from early church fathers support this virtually uncontested truth. It is more difficult to pinpoint the date and location of authorship. Most scholars affirm that John was writing from Ephesus sometime between AD 70 and AD 100. Its theme is easily found in John 20:30-31, "Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of His disciples that are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may believe Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and by believing you may have life in His name."

While it is clear from this statement that John wrote with an evangelistic purpose, the teaching he included shows that he intended followers to have a grounded, informed faith. Through much of the Gospel, John hangs Jesus' teachings on selected signs or miracles and the people's reactions to both.

The feeding of the crowds aligns Jesus with God's providing of manna to Israel through Moses (6:30-31). In response to the people's demand that He perform a sign greater than Moses' signs at the exodus, Jesus claimed to be the "bread of life" that provides spiritual nourishment for all who believe in Him.

6:23-24. Tiberias was and is the chief city on the western side of the lake. Whereas Capernaum was located on the northwestern edge of the lake, Tiberias is several miles to the south.

6:27-29. People misunderstood Jesus' statement and asked about the works God required. Jesus said the only "work" required by God is faith in the Messiah.

6:30. Again, the people misunderstood. They demanded a sign as evidence of Jesus' claims. Jesus pointed to the significance of the "sign" he had just performed—the feeding of the crowd (2:18). This revealed people's stubbornness, which led many of Jesus' disciples to leave (6:60-66) and prompted John to indict the Jews for unbelief at the close of Jesus' public ministry (12:37-40).

6:31. This verse links exodus and Passover motifs with Jesus—He is the Prophet like Moses and He shows that God is again providing manna in the messianic age. The Old Testament reference seems to involve several passages, with Psalm 78:23-24 being most prominent.

6:35. "I am the bread of life" is the first of Jesus' seven "I am" sayings in John. Subsequently He said He is "the light of the world" (8:12; 9:5); "the door" of the sheep (10:7,9); the "good shepherd" (10:11,14); "the resurrection and the life" (11:25); "the way, the truth, and the life" (14:6); and "the true vine" (15:1). Apart from these sayings, there are statements where Jesus referred to Himself as "I am" (6:20; 8:24,28,58; 18:5), a clear allusion to God's identification as "I am" (Exodus 3:14).