

**“I AM the Bread of Life”**

**John 6:25-36**

**25** When they found him on the other side of the lake, they asked him, “Rabbi, when did you get here?”

**26** Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw the signs I performed but because you ate the loaves and had your fill.

**27** Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on him God the Father has placed his seal of approval.”

**28** Then they asked him, “What must we do to do the works God requires?”

**29** Jesus answered, “The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.”

**30** So they asked him, “What sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do?”

**31** Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written: ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’ ”

**32** Jesus said to them, “Very truly I tell you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven.

**33** For the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”

**34** “Sir,” they said, “always give us this bread.”

**35** 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.

**36** But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe.

**Introduction**

Last weekend I officiated a wedding at the Sundance Resort (I know, it’s tough duty; but someone had to do it). Callie, the bride, grew up in a Presbyterian Church. So, she wanted a Presbyterian minister and I got the call.

At cocktail hour and receptions, I usually stand around as people with mixed drink or wine in hand tell me how perfectly lovely the ceremony was. A couple about my age was chatting with me when a standard comment was made. “Surely you don’t think that any one religion is better than another. Why, everyone knows that all roads lead to God in the end.”

Usually, I just nod my head and smile back, not wanting to get into it. But this time I said something like, “Yeah, lots of people feel that way. But I think they’re wrong.” After all, I thought I’d probably never see these people again.

The couple looked surprised. It isn’t quite proper to express a definite point of view that opposes others. They didn’t know what to say. Knowing they were from out of state, I pointed out that they would be driving back to downtown Salt Lake later that night. I said, “Just go down the road to 189 South and to Interstate 15 and go South and eventually you’ll get there... Not really. You’d be in quite a mess an hour past Provo.” And I-15 ends in San Diego.

At some point, you realize you have to turn around. That’s actually what the word “repent” means – change your mind, turn around, take the road in the right direction. Jesus made it very clear that he

himself is the only road that will get you there. “I am the way,” he said, “No one comes to the Father except by me” (see John 14:6).

### **I. The “Where?” (vs. 25-26)**

Have you noticed how Jesus cuts through all the fluff and goes right to the heart of the matter? After the now famous miraculous feeding of the five thousand, the crowd finds him again, calling “Rabbi, Teacher” (creating small talk), “When in the world did you get here?” Or, “Where have you been?” This simple, common, very real question sets up Jesus quite nicely for his Bread of Life sermon. Jesus is hopeful that at least some would learn the real answer to “When did you get here; Where have you been?” The answer: The Incarnation from heaven (see John chapter 1). “The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world.” And, “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.” And we are hopeful that some would bow down in worship.

Jesus answers them, “Very truly, I want to tell you something very important: You are looking for me, not because you saw the significant signs I performed but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. You got a good meal and were very pleased with it.” It’s the old “what have done for me lately” routine.

Jesus is really asking all such seekers, even the believing hearers and readers of John’s Gospel, “Why are you really here?” Jesus is about to redirect the people to the one great “Where?” of human searching and working.

### **II. The “What?” (vs. 27-29)**

“Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on him, it is on this person that God the Father has placed, has set his seal of approval.” Then they asked him, “What must we do to do the works God requires?” Jesus answered, “The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.”

Look at these verses carefully. Here we have foundational words of our Lord and Savior for the whole reality of Grace. Food for eternal life is Given by the Son of Man, the One God the Father has sealed once for all. New Testament scholar Dale Bruner puts it this way: “Jesus calls himself God’s heaven-certified, real-food deliverer.”

The people typically ask, “What should we be doing to do the works (plural) of God?” Jesus turns it around: “The work (singular) of God, by God, from God is this: to believe in the one he has sent, to trust in the One (Jesus) that That One (God the Father) sent. God does the one, singular thing necessary for life. “We are saved by grace through faith... not by our works so that no one can boast” (Ephesians 2:8-9). Various quoted by Dwight D. Eisenhower, Clint Eastwood, and Lewis Carroll’s White Rabbit: “Don’t just Do something... just stand there!”

The “Where” is from heaven. The “What” is believe. And now the “Who?”

### **III. The “Who?”**

So they asked him, “What sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written: He gave them bread from heaven to eat.” In other words: “Big deal Jesus. You fed a few thousand people – very impressive – but for only one day! Moses fed several hundred thousand people over forty years!”

Jesus said to them, “Very truly I tell you something very important, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven... that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”

“Sir,” they said, “always give us this bread.” The people still didn’t get it. Like the Woman at the Well said (remember?), “Sir, give me this water so that I won’t get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water.”

The grace of Jesus Christ is seen in both. To the Samaritan woman, he gives “a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” And now to his present hearers Jesus declared, “I, I myself, I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry.” Where? From Heaven. What? Believe. And Who? Jesus the Christ, the Savior-Messiah.

### **Conclusion**

Yes, there are many different roads to travel on in life, many diverse religions to consider. Jesus knows exactly who he is. And he offers himself as the very bread of life. His offer goes all the way back to Isaiah 55 and all the way forward to you and me.

“Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and you will delight in the richest of fare.” Sadly, Jesus had to say, “As I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe.”

Let us pray together.

#### **from Psalm 139**

You have searched me, Lord, and you know me.

You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar.

You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways.

Before a word is on my tongue you, Lord, know it completely.

For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb.

I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful,

I know that full well.

How precious to me are your thoughts, God! How vast is the sum of them!