

John 6:41-51

Last week we had the opportunity in the sermon to look at **manna** - that special food which God sent from heaven, to sustain His people during their 40 year journey through the wilderness to the Promised Land. It was a **perfect** food for them, but as good as it was at sustaining their bodies day after day, eventually their forefathers still **died**. Eating **manna** couldn't keep **death** away from them forever. But in our text for today Jesus said, "*I am the bread of life*" - and He claimed that when a man eats the bread **He** brings - he **doesn't** die. Can something like that actually be **real**? Is there really something which we can **consume** which will keep us from **dying**? That's what we're going to find out this morning as we hear in our text that **Jesus Is The Bread Of Life**.

We know that at some point in time we're all going to **die**. Physical death is a reality for **all people** because as the Bible tells us, "*the wages of sin is death,*" and we are all **sinners**. But Jesus isn't talking about **physical** death here. He's talking about **spiritual** death - the death that entered into the world when the first man, **Adam**, chose to disobey God's command regarding the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. When Adam **sinned**, He **lost** the **image** of God, and became **ungodly** - guilty, and condemned to live **apart** from God. He died **spiritually**. And we know that everyone who is **descended** from Adam - which includes **everyone** in the **world** - is born in **his** image - filled with **sin**, and **guilt** - condemned to be **enemies** of God. We are born into this world **dead** in our sins, and under God's **wrath**. And if that spiritual death is not **overcome**, it ultimately leads to **eternal** death - the wretched state of being separated **forever** from God in the outer **darkness** and eternal **agony** of **hell**.

That's why our text for **today** is so **important**. Jesus points to **Himself** and says, "*This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that anyone may eat it and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats this bread, he will live forever.*" How can Jesus make a **promise** like that? He can **do** it, because **Jesus Is The Bread of Life**. Let's take a few moments to check out His "**ingredients**."

The **first** ingredient which makes **Jesus The Bread Of Life** is that He "*comes down from heaven.*" Jesus is **heavenly** - He is **God's Son** from all eternity - He is **true God** with all the **power**, and **wisdom**, and **authority** of God. The **second** ingredient is that Jesus "*came down from heaven.*" Jesus was **conceived** and **born** into this world - He became **fully human** - He is a **true man** who was required to live **under the Law**, just like every **other** human being. And the **third**

ingredient is what Jesus, the God-man, came to **do**. He said, *“The bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.”* Jesus would **live** a **sinless life** in this world, and then He would **give** His sinless life as a **perfect sacrifice** on the cross - a sacrifice which would bring **life** to the **world**.

Jesus would **do for us** what we **couldn't do** for ourselves. As **sinners**, we brought ourselves **punishment** - the punishment of facing God's **hatred** of sin, and earning for ourselves eternal **agony** in hell. But Jesus **took our place**, and the Prophet **Isaiah** tells us that when He was **nailed** to the cross, *“It was because of our rebellion that he was pierced. He was crushed for the guilt our sins deserved. The punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.”* Jesus laid down **His life** in order to provide salvation for **all people**. His death was **payment-in-full** for the sins of the world. His sacrifice **cancelled** our guilt and condemnation, and **gave us eternal life** with God. Jesus gave us a **“life sentence”** - a life with all our sins **forgiven** - a life with a path paved with His **perfection** all the way to our heavenly home. This was the **recipe for Jesus - The Bread Of Life**.

Yes, **Jesus Is The Bread Of Life**, and Jesus Himself **invites us** to **partake** of that precious bread. He said, *“This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that anyone may eat it and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats this bread, he will live forever.”* Jesus invites **everyone** to **eat** the Bread of Life - to **consume Him** - to receive our **life** from Him - to **believe** in **Him** and His **promise**, *“If anyone eats this bread, he will live forever.”* Believing in **Jesus** is the **only way** for us to receive eternal life in heaven.

Americans are frequently referred to as **consumers**. And it's **true**. We **consume** lots of **food** and **drinks** - lots of **oil** and **gas** - lots of **information** and **data** - lots of **fun** and **entertainment**. But what about **Jesus**? Do we consume **Him** as well? Is **The Bread Of Life** something that we **consume** in huge quantities, or do we just pick at the **edges**? Back in Bible times many people didn't want **anything** to do with Jesus. They were preoccupied with **earthly** bread - with **money** - with **immediate** pleasures. They weren't **interested** in **The Bread Of Life** which **Jesus** offered. And it's not much different **today**. People still pursue the pleasures of **mansions**, and **luxury** cars and trucks. They still spend a great deal of their **time** consuming **fun** and **entertainment**. Amazon has made us even **bigger** consumers. Now there are literally **millions** of products which we can **search** for, and which we can bring into our lives right from the comfort of our own **homes**. But how many people are searching for the **Bread Of Life**? How many are searching for the **living** bread which feeds our **souls**? Jesus Himself asks the

question, *“What will it benefit a person if he gains the **whole world**, but forfeits his **soul**? Or what can a person **give in exchange** for his soul?”*

Now, while **bread** is meant to be **eaten**, everybody knows that we **don't** eat the **bag** that it comes **wrapped** in. That's just there to **deliver** the bread. I think it's important to remember that there is **wrapping** around **Jesus** too. No, I'm not talking about the **swaddling cloths** which wrapped Him at the time of His **birth**. But rather, Jesus comes to us wrapped in beautiful church **buildings** and stained glass **windows** - in Christian **artwork** and **jewelry** - as well as in age-old **traditions** and modern-day **procedures**. But it's **Jesus Himself** who truly deserves our **focus**. **Jesus Is The Bread Of Life**, He's the one who must be **consumed** by our **thoughts**, **words**, and **actions**. He's the one in whom we must put our **trust**, because Jesus said, *“If anyone eats **this bread**, he will **live forever**.”* Jesus invites us to put out trust in **Him**; and to put our hope of **salvation** in His **flesh**, which was given on the **cross** for the life of the world.

As odd as this may sound, it's true that when we **eat** something it becomes **ours** - ours in the most **personal** way possible, as it **nourishes** us, and **sustains** our lives. In a very similar way it's **also** true, that when we believe in **Jesus** we have **Him** in a very personal way. We have His perfect **life**, and everything that He has **done** for us, including providing us with the gift of **eternal life**. But Jesus makes it even **more personal** for us. In the Lord's Supper - **in**, **with**, and **under** the bread and wine - He **feeds** us with His **body** and **blood** - the very **same** body which hung on the **cross**, and the very **same** blood which He **shed** for us there. **Jesus Himself** becomes **part** of us - **nourishing** us, and **sustaining** our lives. That precious **gift** makes us **doubly sure** of our salvation, Jesus **tells** us that we are saved in His **Word**, and then He **reconfirms** that message by giving us His **body** and **blood**.

Jesus Is The Bread Of Life - bread which we **need** for life in **this** world, as well as for life in the world to **come**. Fill up your shopping cart with **Jesus**. Take Him **home** with you. **Believe** in Him, and in everything He **tells** us in His **Word**. And **rejoice** in His promise that we will live with Him in heaven **forever**. Amen.