

WHO IS JESUS?
Week Five: Food for the Hungry
John 6:27-40

Good morning Lake Wylie. If you have a copy of the Bible begin turning to the Gospel of John. Our passage today is found in John 4:43. If you're using one of the Bibles in the pew rack you will find the text on page.....

At Christmas one of my aunts gave my 3-year-old daughter Olivia a gift card to "Toys R Us." Now, when I was a kid, I thought money was the best gift you could possibly get, because then you could buy exactly what you want. I loved it when I got to go to the store and pick out whatever I wanted.

So on Friday I thought, won't this be fun to take my 3-year-old to 3-year-old heaven, AKA Toys R Us and let her pick out a toy for herself. We went up and down isles looking at Barbies, looking at Disney toys. And you know what I kept noticing? It seems like on every isle Olivia would find the perfect toy. She'd pick up a baby doll. Squeal and smile and say, "I want this one daddy," only to get to the next isle, throw the doll on the ground, pick up the tea set, squeal and smile, and say, "No, I want this toy!" Wash rinse and repeat. We went from dolls, to teat sets, to toy pots and pans, to a jump rope, to puzzles. And after about an hour of following her around I realized something: **3-year-olds actually don't know what they want.**

They think they know for about 5 minutes, then they move on to something else. They don't stay satisfied long. They find something they think will make them happy, squeal and smile, but it's lost its luster after a few minutes and they're on to something else.

And you know what else? You and I are exactly the same. When we are born into this world, and grow up, even the most intentional, selective, critical people among us don't really know

what they want. We only think we do. And we aren't satisfied long. We find something we think will satisfy us, we squeal and smile, but it doesn't take long for the things we were looking to satisfy us to lose their luster and we begin looking for something else.

In John 6 today, Jesus is going to challenge this internal quest you and I have for satisfaction. He's going to point us towards himself and show us how we can only find our hunger and thirst filled in him.

²⁷ Do not work 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." ²⁸ Then they said to him, "What must we do, to be doing the works of God?" ²⁹ Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent." ³⁰ So they said to him, "Then what sign do you do, that we may see and believe you? What work do you perform? ³¹ Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'" ³² Jesus then said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. ³³ For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." ³⁴ They said to him, "Sir, give us this bread always."

³⁵ Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst. ³⁶ But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. ³⁷ All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. ³⁸ For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. ³⁹ And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. ⁴⁰ 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."

¹ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version.* (2016). (Jn 6:27–40).

This passage can be summarized in three major claims that Jesus makes. Let me go ahead and give them all to you:

1. Jesus claims to be the **bread** which gives eternal life.
2. Jesus claims that you receive this bread through **belief**.
3. Jesus claims that he will **sustain, even through death**, all those who, by faith, eat of him as the bread of life.

We're going to keep the outline really simple this morning and we're going to ask three questions:

1. WHAT DOES IT MEAN THAT JESUS IS THE BREAD OF LIFE?
2. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BELIEVE?
3. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE SUSTAINED?

1. WHAT DOES IT MEAN THAT JESUS IS THE BREAD OF LIFE?

Let me set a little context for you. Back in Exodus 16 God's people, Israel, were slaves in Egypt and God delivered them out of their slavery through the leadership of a man named Moses. God moved them from Egypt to where Israel currently is today, the land of Canaan. But on that move God had to lead the children of Israel through the desert for 40 years.

And every single morning for those 40 years God gave bread to the children of Israel. It was a miraculous gift that came down out of the heavens, and the people lived. God provided for their needs. He sustained them in the desert.

Fast-forward to John 6. In the first 14 verses of this passage Jesus performs a miracle. Go read the details this afternoon, but here's the overview:

Jesus has been performing miracles in Galilee and a large crowd,

estimated to be around 15,000 people, has followed him to the side of a mountain. It's getting late and Jesus knows the people are hungry, so he tells his disciples, "You feed them."

Well, the disciples are way out of their depth here, but one disciple named Andrew finds a boy who has packed a little Hebrew lunchbox. He has 5 barley loaves and 2 fish. And Andrew, knowing that Jesus has the power to work miracles, basically says, "Jesus, we can't feed everyone with these, can we? Wink. Wink."

And then Jesus shows his power by multiplying the food to feed this crowd. Once the crowd has ate Jesus hops in a boat to go to the other side of the Sea and a large part of the crowd follows him.

Now here's where our text for the day picks up. So keep all this in mind:

Israel in Egypt, God delivers through Moses, bread from heaven, Jesus feeds the multitude. The crowd follows Jesus because he filled their stomachs. Then in verse 27 Jesus tells them:

27 Do not work 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.

Jesus is trying to get them to have spiritual eyes and see that the miracle of Moses, the giving of physical bread, was only a sign, a shadow, a picture of a greater spiritual reality. And here it is:

Physical food is important. You'll need to spend a lot of your time working for physical bread for the table. You'll get hungry. You'll fill the pantry; the pantry will empty. You'll fill the pantry; the pantry will empty. This cycle of needing physical food every day to meet a physical hunger is to be a constant reminder of a deeper hunger, a deeper need, a deeper reality.

You must work in order to buy physical bread. But give yourself to—Jesus says—give yourself – work for bread that endures. Work for bread that doesn't just meet your earthly time-bound needs of breakfast, lunch and dinner. Work for the bread that meets your eternal, timeless needs; your deep soul-hunger.

And Jesus tells them what it looks like to work for this kind of bread. He says, “Believe in me—the one who God has sent.” We'll talk about belief in a moment. But the people now look at Jesus. He's said believe in him and how do they reply?

“Then what sign do you do, that we may see and believe you? What work do you perform? ³¹ Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’”

Essentially what they are saying is, “Jesus, you've only fed us once. Moses fed our ancestors for 40 years. Right now, the bread that Moses gave sounds better than the bread that you are offering. So what sign will you do to prove that what you are offering is better than what Moses offered?”

³² Jesus then said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. ³³ For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”³⁴ They said to him, “Sir, give us this bread always.”

³⁵ Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.

Jesus is showing himself, in every way, to be better than the bread of Moses, to be fill a deeper need than the physical bread that you and I work our heads of for.

- You see, the bread that Moses gave could only fill the stomach. Jesus fill the soul.

- In the dessert wanderings of Israel, you needed new bread every morning! You'd eat your bread for the day and get hungry again. Jesus says, if you take him as your bread you'll never be hungry again, you'll never thirst for another drink.
- The bread of Moses perished. It rotted. It broke down. Jesus, as our true bread lasts eternally.

Just look there at verse 35 again. This may be one of the most profound verses in the New Testament:

³⁵ Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.

What does it mean for Jesus to be the bread of life? It means that Jesus is for your spiritual life, your spiritual hunger, what a loaf of bread is to your physical life and hunger.

Do you want to end your physical hunger? Make yourself a sandwich. Do you want to quench the endless, aching, spiritual vacuum in your life? Have you reached a point of spiritual starvation? Go to Jesus, and your hunger will be over. Forever. Believe in Jesus. Your thirst will be quenched.

The radical claim that Jesus makes is that if you try to eat satisfaction into your soul through any other means but him, you'll starve.

Listen to me—you are listening to a man preach who has followed Jesus for 25 years. Those 25 years are filled with 2 constants:

Constant #1: I fail constantly. My endurance in the Christian life has nothing to do with my ability.

Constant #2: After 25 years of trying to wring every last drop of soul satisfaction out of this Word, it still hasn't run dry. In fact, I feel as if I have only just found the tap.

2. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BELIEVE?

Three times in this passage Jesus says, “Believe in me.”

²⁹ “This is the work of God, **that you believe in him whom he has sent.**”

³⁵ Jesus said to them, “**I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.**”

⁴⁰ 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.**”²

What does it mean to believe? I constantly find people outside of the church misunderstand what Christians mean when we say, “believe.” And, unfortunately, I find too many people within the church that misunderstand what the Scripture means when it calls us to believe.

So let me give you 2 things believe doesn’t mean:

Christian belief isn’t a blind leap in spite of the evidence.

There’s this idea that what it means to be a Christian is that you believe in something in spite of the evidence. Faith is kind of this blind leap. There’s no evidence. There’s no rationality. You just kind of throw yourself out there. That’s garbage.

The entire Christian faith is built on evidence. It’s built on historical truth claims about who Jesus was, where he was born, who he was born to, where he performed miracles, how he died—and the biggest historical claim that Christianity makes is that Jesus Christ was physically raised from the dead three days after being crucified, placed in a tomb which was watched by a Roman guard.

Listen to me friends—if the resurrection didn’t happen. If we could 100% disprove the resurrection then our faith is vain, we are dead in our sins, and we should give up on all this, go watch the Super Boal and start looking for something else.

But our faith, our belief, isn’t blind, evidence-less, hope. Christian believe is built on historical claims that can be argued for.

The second thing belief doesn’t mean is this:

Christian belief isn’t just agreeing with Scriptural truths.

Having said that Christianity is based on facts it’s important that you understand, that when Jesus calls us to believe in him he isn’t just saying, “Trust the facts. Believe that the resurrection happened.” Christian belief isn’t just agreeing with Scriptural truths.

Believing in those truths is necessary for salvation. You can’t be saved without affirming the resurrection. It’s necessary that you trust that fact. But simply trusting some facts isn’t sufficient to save you.

There is a different between believing the truth claims made about Jesus and believing in Jesus. Ok, what is the difference? What does it mean to believe in him? Here it is:

Christian belief is taking Jesus as your life giving bread. Believing is the coming to Jesus and taking him by faith in the same way as you receive bread into your mouth.

You say, “I’m hungry, and if I don’t eat I’ll die.” And so you go and make yourself a meal.

To believe in Jesus means you say, “I’m spiritual hungry. And I need something to fill this hunger, or I will be spiritually dead forever!” And so you go and by faith you say to Jesus, “I am

² *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version.* (2016). (Jn 6:27–40).

trusting that all you are will fill my spiritual need. You're the source of spiritual life. You're the bread for my spiritual hunger."

That's how you and I ought to talk about Christian belief, or faith. And, listen to me church, it's imperative that you explain what I just said to your neighbors when they ask. It's imperative because we have lost a generation of Christians because we stopped defining what we mean about faith and belief. Do you hear me?

The call of God on all of us is to rightly explain the claims we make to a lost and dying world that has rejected Jesus because the church in America has stopped thinking critically about the faith.

We must make clear what we mean by belief in Jesus. It's not a blind leap. It's not just rational ascent to some truths. We mean that having examined the evidence for the truths about Jesus, we believe that he really is God who came as man to offer himself for us as our spiritual bread filling our hungry souls.

At the beginning of the message I said that Jesus makes three claims in the passage:

1. Jesus claims to be the **bread** which gives eternal life.
2. Jesus claims that you receive this bread through **belief**.
3. Jesus claims that he will **sustain, even through death**, all those who, by faith, eat of him as the bread of life.

3. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE SUSTAINED?

³⁷ *All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.* ³⁸ *For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me.* ³⁹ *And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day.* ⁴⁰ *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."³

One of the biggest struggles every Christian faces is the struggle for assurance of salvation. If you aren't a Christian here today, I want you to know that all of us in this room struggle with this.

- Sometimes we doubt our salvation because we don't live up to Jesus commands. And you've seen that in us.
- Sometimes even after years of following Jesus we're stumped by something in the Bible that we wrestle with.
- Sometimes we doubt because the circumstances of our lives press in on us and we don't sense the closeness to God that we have at other times.

Church—I want you to hear this: great Christians have doubts. It's ok to have doubts. But, I want you to move through those times of doubt with some rock solid theology. If you have come to Jesus and taken him by faith as your soul satisfying bread then I want you to see that your salvation in him is an unshakeable foundation.

First I want you to see that your salvation didn't begin with you so it can't possibly end with you:

³⁷ *All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.* ³⁸ *For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me.* ³⁹ *And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me*

Why did you come to Jesus? Think back to that moment. At one time you didn't love Jesus. At one time you were running from him. Then—you came to Jesus. His Word suddenly became sweet to you. Jesus became a treasure to you. What happened? How did you come to Jesus?

³ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version.* (2016). (Jn 6:27–40).

John 6:37 says that you came to Jesus because the Father gave you as a gift to him. It was your responsibility to believe in Jesus, but your salvation didn't begin with you. It began with God.

Next look at the **firmness of Jesus grip on you.**

- All the Father gives me **will** come to me.
- Whoever comes to me **I will never** cast out.
- This is the will of him who sent me, that **I should lose nothing.**
- And **I will** raise him up on the last day.

Listen to me church the assurance of your salvation will never come from you. Jesus lays the foundation of your assurance of salvation on his shoulders not yours. **When you come to him by faith he personally sees to it that he rescues you.**

And why does Jesus hold onto you so tightly? Because the Father wills that he should.

³⁹ *And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me*

You and I are sustained, not just because Jesus as the grave-conqueror is strong, but ultimately because Jesus is obedient to the will of his Father and God in his eternal, immutable will has decreed that all who come by faith to Jesus will be kept and sustained!

You and I change daily—God's will cannot change.

Look, lastly at the finality of Jesus' sustaining power:

³⁹ *And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day.*

Chelsea and I like to talk about what we think heaven will be like one day. You know, will she be able to take pictures in heaven?

This is something she loves doing here in this life. Will I be able to read books, and shoot guns in heaven?

Many people hate the idea of heaven because heaven has been portrayed as this ethereal existence on a cloud with halos and harps, and to be honest that's not really appealing to me. You know why that's not appealing?

Because when you think of sitting on a cloud strumming a harp you think, "That's not me. I don't know that person. That's not me."

Now, the verse I just read doesn't tell us everything that heaven is going to be like, **but it tells us what we will be like when we get there.**

Notice in verse 39 that Jesus doesn't use a gender related pronoun. He doesn't say, "this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose **no one** that he has given me."

Instead he says, "this is the will of him who sent me that I should lose **nothing** of all that he has given me."

Here's what I believe Jesus is saying:

You have been given to me by my Father. You're my gift. All of you has been given to me. And I love you to the degree that I am going to sustain all of you. Every single part. I'm not going to lose nothing—not a single part of you.

Your body. Even if it is lost at sea, I know where it lays and I will raise up your body and renew and redeem and glorify it on the last day.

Your mind, your personality. You aren't going to be a robot in heaven. I will lose none of your personality because I made it and I love it.

Your talents, gifts, and abilities. I will keep them all I will lose nothing of all those he has given me. I'll renew, redeem, and glorify them all.

What is Jesus saying? He's saying that the whole of the Christian life is being giving as a gift from the Father to Jesus. Coming to him. Believing in him. Feasting upon him. Being satisfied by him, and through his mighty power being raised up and sustained even through death into life everlasting.

Today if you drove home after church and when you got within sight of your house you saw smoke coming out of the windows. And as you jumped out of your car you knew you only had enough time to run into your home and grab one thing. What would you be willing to risk your life to keep?

Friends, when the smoke of God's just anger against your sin was burning Jesus ran into the fire and you know what he chose to save? You. He chose to save you. And he didn't simply go after at the risk of his life—he went after you at the cost of his life.

The reason that Jesus can hold you in his mighty arms is because those arms were nailed to a tree. **The reason that Jesus can sustain you through death is because he went there and back again.** The reason that Jesus in the last day you can stand **in the judgment** of God is because Jesus stood **under the judgement of God for you.**

If you come to him by faith—you'll never be cast away.

If you feast on the bread from heaven—you'll never be hungry again.

If you believe in him—he will lose nothing of all that the Father has given him.

I would like our assigned men to come forward as we observe the Lord's Supper.