

Jesus the Bread of Life

John 6:25-59 New American Standard Bible (NASB)

²⁵ When they found Him on the other side of the sea, they said to Him, “Rabbi, when did You get here?”

²⁶ Jesus answered them and said, “Truly, truly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. ²⁷ Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you, for on Him the Father, God, has set His seal.” ²⁸ Therefore they said to Him, “What shall we do, so that we may work the works of God?” ²⁹ Jesus answered and said to them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent.” ³⁰ So they said to Him, “What then do You do for a sign, so 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 out of heaven to eat.’” ³² Jesus then said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread out of heaven, but it is My Father who gives you the true bread out of heaven. ³³ For the bread of God is that which comes down out of heaven, and gives life to the world.” ³⁴ Then they said to Him, “Lord, always give us this bread.”

³⁵ Jesus said to them, “**I am the bread of life**; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will 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 the one who comes to Me I will certainly not 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 This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day. ⁴⁰ For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day.”

⁴¹ Therefore the Jews were grumbling about Him, because He said, “I am the bread that came down out of heaven.” ⁴² They were saying, “Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does He now say, ‘I have come down out of heaven?’” ⁴³ Jesus answered and said to them, “Do not grumble among yourselves. ⁴⁴ No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day. ⁴⁵ It is written in the prophets, ‘And they shall all be taught of God.’ Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father, comes to Me. ⁴⁶ Not that anyone has seen the Father, except the One who is from God; He has seen the Father.

47 Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life. 48 I am the bread of life. 49 Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. 50 This is the bread which comes down out of heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. 51 I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread also which I will give for the life of the world is My flesh.”

52 Then the Jews began to argue with one another, 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 yourselves. 54 He who eats 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 He who eats 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 he who eats Me, he also will live because of Me. 58 This is the bread which came down out of heaven; not as the fathers ate and died; he who eats this bread will live forever.”

59 These things He said in the synagogue as He taught in Capernaum.

Introduction

Today we celebrate the World Communion Sunday. All around the world, the believers take communion in the name of Jesus our Savior. Here at our church, we celebrate the Lord’s Supper every first Sunday of the month.

There are many different ways and traditions of ‘the breaking of the bread’ (Acts 2:42). From the various forms of Communion elements (wine or juice, regular bread, wafers, oyster crackers, and pita bread) to how often we celebrate the Lord’s Supper: at every gathering (the Early Church, the Roman Catholic Church, the Wesley brothers), monthly (American Methodist Churches in the 19th Century—the Circuit Riders), and even biannual celebrations (some Korean Churches).

Whatever tradition we have been following, if we blindly repeat what we have been doing in the past years, or if we only focus on non-essential aspects of the Lord’s Supper such as elements and frequency, we may miss out the true blessings of the Lord’s Supper. In other words, in order to appreciate and benefit from the Lord’s Supper, we must understand its underlying nature. That is what I am going to talk about today.

Content

God's Word points out three aspects of the Lord's Supper for us to remember each time we partake in it.

First, we remember **the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross**, where His body was broken for us. Christ first initiated the Lord's Supper with His disciples the night before He was crucified. He commanded them to observe the Lord's Supper *in remembrance of Him* (Luke 22:19). So, each time we celebrate the Lord's Supper, we remember what Christ has done for us.

This is what He has done for us. He suffered for sinners like you and me, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring us to God (1 Peter 3:18). Through His own death, He paid the wages of our sin, the Sinless for the sinners, so that our sins may be forgiven (Ephesians 1:7). His body was broken, and His blood was shed to redeem us through the sacrifice of His own body. He set us free from the bondage of sin and death. Every time we partake in the Lord's Supper, we remember what Christ has done for us. He died to redeem us from our sins.

Next, as we partake in the Lord's Supper, we take in **Christ the Bread of Life**. Christ did a wonderful thing for us on the cross 2000 years ago, but He continually blesses us with Himself, the Bread of Life. In today's passage, Christ twice says that He is the Bread of Life (v. 35, 48).

What's that mean 'the Bread of Life?' It means that as bread gives life to our physical body, so does Christ give life to the world (v. 33). He feeds our spirit and sustains our life. Both temporally and eternally. Imagine that everything is taken away from us. The last two things we really need for survival are bread and water. Likewise, for our spirit, Christ is the Living Water (John 4:10) and the Bread. We need Him every day and forever. Listen to Jesus: ³⁵ *Jesus said to them, "**I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst.** ⁵¹ **I am the living bread** that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread also which I will give for the life of the world is My flesh."*

Christ also calls Himself the Living Bread (v. 51). What's that mean, the Living Bread? He is the Bread of Life that comes into us and dwells in us. 24/7. He dwells in every believer through His Spirit. He feeds our spirit, strengthens us, encourages, and helps us through the times of temptation and challenge. Without Christ, without the Bread of Life, and without this Living Bread, we cannot live a single day--Avalon's song "Oxygen"—"You (Christ) are my oxygen, I breathe you in, I breathe you out". The question is: Do we live with such an

awareness of Christ in us? It's time that we took Christ as the Living Bread and the Bread of Life in our lives. Jesus says, ⁵⁵*For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink.*

Finally, in the Lord's Supper, we remember that **we are one in Christ**. Despite many differences, all believers are still one in Christ. (Eg.1) Dr. Paul Brand was once in Ankara, Turkey to teach a course on leprosy rehabilitation. He didn't speak Turkish and knew nobody and was put up in a little hotel room for the two weeks of the course, which was by translation. The country was strongly Muslim, and he couldn't find an English-speaking Christian church. So, he called the American Embassy, and they told him of an old Catholic church in the Italian Embassy, near his hotel, which hosted a simple Ecumenical Communion service in English and French on Sunday, after their regular Mass. There were not more than fifty of them there, and they were of diverse ethnic backgrounds. He didn't even know from what kind of church the pastor conducting the service came. All he knew was that they broke bread together, on their knees, and the name of Jesus Christ was honored. They hugged each other afterwards and felt at home. The atmosphere of love and fellowship stayed with him all day (*God's Forever Feast*, Paul Brand, pp. 232-233). (Eg.2) General Robert Lee did partake in the Lord's Supper together with a former slave in his church one Sunday morning after the Civil War.

Conclusion

I hope all of us will remember the following story for a long time. *“There is an Arabic Baptist Church in Israel that has a lovely way to celebrate the breaking of bread. When they come together, each member brings a handful of grains of wheat. It may be from one's own field, or from their personal supplies at home. As they enter the church, they each pour their grains into a common pot. When all have come, and while the worship goes on, the pot is taken to the kitchen and somebody quickly grinds the wheat in a stone mill, mixes in water and salt, and kneads the flour into a loaf. It is put into the already-heated oven and baked. By the time the service is finished, and the church moves into the celebration of the Lord's Supper and the breaking of bread, the loaf is ready. As each member breaks off his own portion, he or she is sharing grains of flour from every member of the church. When asked why they do this, one member replied, “As individual seed we are each alone and separate from each other. Only when we are broken into flour and baked together can we experience full fellowship” (ibid, p. 231).*

Let us pray.

