

“The Bread of Life”
John 6:35–40
Mr. Jason Ellerbee
July 23, 2017 • Evening Sermon

What a privilege it is to be called by Christ, into His family, into His Kingdom, to be lavished with His love, and to have His favor upon us. Let that truth sink deeply into your heart and soul to really truly know that ‘it is well with our soul’ as we come to this study to prepare our hearts to come to His Table. The gates of hell will not prevail, praise the Lord! It is well with my soul. Hallelujah what a Savior we have! I am excited to share this study with you and I’m the young couple’s pastor here at Briarwood Presbyterian Church.

I’d like to start by asking a couple of questions. One is have you ever been absolutely famished, hungry where you could almost eat anything? Another is have you ever been rejected, denied, or humbled? Chances are you have been all of those things. I remember the first tears I shed over a girl that broke my heart. I thought she was everything but became nothing to me. She is something and I wish her well but the Lord had a better plan for me. The Lord had another girl for me.

I also remember the times I was hungry and very thirsty. I used to work for a ministry where I took 50 to 55 junior high kids on these high adventures into the mountains, down the rivers, through the forests and all those type things. Those junior high kids will make you feel rejected, hungry and thirsty because we were making all their meals and doing all these things for them. At the end of one of our adventures we would end up on a jet boat on a river. I knew if I could get all those 55 kids on that jet boat I knew I could just sit back and enjoy the ride. At the end of the ride we’d dock the boat, get off and go to this amazing log cabin that overlooked the river. There would be a feast prepared for us and this would be the first time in weeks where I wasn’t cooking or cleaning but just sitting down to enjoy the meal and the fellowship. My body was satisfied, though it was temporal, it was a joy to arrive to just sit and be served.

Christ has a Table where He is inviting us to come, sit and be satisfied. When I had sat down to that meal, eating all that good food, a few hours later I would be hungry again but Christ invites us to come to a meal in which we are eternally satisfied. We will be working our way through John 6:35–40 as we learn about those who have felt rejected, hunger and thirst as Jesus invites them to come to Him as the Satisfier for all of those things. Before we go to the text I would like to give some context and a background to this passage.

Earlier in John 6 Jesus has fed the 5,000 on the hillside next to the Sea of Galilee. This crowd had followed Jesus and this is where Jesus feeds them from a little boy’s five loaves and two fish. The people were following Him to satisfy their physical hunger and Christ satisfied that but Jesus had a bigger picture to show them and that’s what we will read about in John 6:35–40. I’d like to start by praying and then we’ll read through this passage.

Prayer:

Lord, thank You for the privilege of coming to Your Word and to Your Table. What a joy it is to know that we are invited by the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, the Creator of all creation, the One who spoke and it came into being, the One who raises the dead, for You are the One who has invited us to this Table, to sit at Your feet, hear from Your Word and then to dine at Your

Table. Lord, please give us insight as we read Your Word, nourish our soul and be glorified for we pray this in Christ's Name, Amen.

John 6:35–40 says [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."*

In these six short verses we see that Christ has prepared a feast for our soul and we learn that our role, at this banqueting table, is simply to look, believe and to come. Then we learn that His role is to receive, satisfy, sustain and then raise up. Now I want to walk through this text verse by verse to see what Jesus is speaking to us.

In John 6:35 Jesus is addressing those who had followed Him because their stomachs had been filled and He tells them *"I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst."* Jesus is the Bread of Life and this Bread is the reliever of hungry souls. In Him our soul finds rich supply and unlike common bread that simply feeds the body, Living Bread supplies eternal sustenance to the soul. Just as there was enough bread to feed the 5,000 with even some leftover, there is enough of Christ to satisfy every longing of your soul and then some.

In that day and age bread was common food for every meal. It was the daily necessary food at that time. It is not like western culture today where people have gluten allergies and this and that or that bread will put a few extra pounds of you so you don't want to eat too much of it. No, back in that day every meal every man would enjoy bread. It was for the king, the pauper, the rich, the poor, the young, the old, the male and the female. Bread satisfied everyone. Jesus does not discriminate. Jesus satisfies everyone. The one who is rich and we think lacks nothing, if he lacks Christ his soul is empty and he is poor. Jesus alone can satisfy him. If there is a poor man who we think needs an education or other physical needs met, Jesus is what he really needs because Christ alone will satisfy him throughout all of eternity.

If we go back in the Old Testament we get a picture of what this Bread of Life would look like. We see what God gives in Psalm 104:15 that says [15] *and wine to gladden the heart of man, oil to make his face shine and bread to strengthen man's heart.* Christ is the One that gladdens our heart. As we come to His Table to partake of the fruit of the vine, it is given to gladden the heart of man. Does your soul find joy in Jesus Christ? It really truly should. There a lot of things He has given us in this life that are amazing, fun and enjoyable but they pale in comparison to Jesus Christ. Jesus is the greatest source of joy for our heart and strength for our soul. When we run to Him we are deeply satisfied.

Ecclesiastes 10:19a says [19a] *Bread is made for laughter, and wine gladdens life...* Christ should bring great joy. In the midst of any circumstance Christ should bring you great joy. In the book of Philippians when Paul was in jail he wrote in Philippians 4:4, [4] *Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice.* In I Thessalonians 5:16–18 Paul says [16] *Rejoice always, [17] pray without ceasing, [18] give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.* Christ is the One who enables us to give thanks in all circumstances

for apart from Him we'll be crushed down and pressed down by our circumstances but in Christ Jesus our soul will rejoice with joy eternal.

Isaiah 55:1-3 says [1] *"Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. [2] Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. [3] Incline your ear, and come to me; hear, that your soul may live; and I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David."*

How easy it is to go wandering through the world and to look for things that satisfy or to give money toward things we think will satisfy like a car, a home, a vacation or whatever it is we're longing for. With these things we end up empty because the Lord had never designed those things to satisfy our desires. Sure, we can delight in those good gifts of the Lord but only Christ will satisfy the desire of our heart. We don't need to waste time pursuing the things of the world. We need to spend time enjoying Christ and pursuing Him.

He says "Come for I am the Bread of Life" and when you come to Him you shall not hunger. When you believe in Him you shall never thirst. Your soul is supplied with a peace and satisfaction that will not be taken from you when you come to Christ. Christ is your everlasting possession. Unlike natural bread that you eat and then hunger again later, partake in Christ and the depths of your soul are eternally satisfied. There is a place God has designed within us, our soul, where we'll never be satisfied in our soul with anything else other than Christ for only He satisfies and He is the One who says 'Come.' He is the One who welcomes you at His feet.

John 6:36 says [36] *But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe.* This is the painful unbelief of the human nature. How quick and easily we don't believe the precious promises of God and run to broken cisterns. He has promised us that these cisterns hold no water and they will not satisfy yet how quick and easily we run to them. We run to the idols of our heart instead of to the Satisfier of our soul. Jesus saw this unbelief of our human nature and He saw it with sorrow. We see Jesus weeping as He looks out over the people because they were harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd. He says 'I am the Good Shepherd' and He calls His sheep to Himself because He knows He is the One who will prepare a Table for us. He is the One who will lead us to green pastures and gentle waters. He is the One who will satisfy.

John 6:37 says [37] *All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.* When we come to Jesus we know at least three things. One we shall not hunger. Two we shall never thirst and three we will never be cast out. If we are given to Christ then we will come to Christ, against all odds we will come. Do you have a family member, neighbor, co-worker or friend that you have been praying for? If the Father has given them to Christ then they will come. This verse gives me great hope in ministry. I can't make them come but it's promised that if God has given them to Christ they will come to Him. I don't know if they will come but all I have been challenged and called to do is to proclaim the Word in love to them, to serve them, share with them and intercede on their behalf. I know that regardless of how bad I do at that or the difficulties in that, if God has given them to Christ, against all odds, they will come to Him and never be cast out.

Christ will not refuse to save those who come to Him, no matter their past sins or current weaknesses. It is a joy to know that we have a Savior who welcomes us to His feet. He welcomed the prostitute to sit at His feet and wash His feet with her tears and her hair. He welcomes the tax collector, the Pharisee who comes to Him at night, the Jew and the Gentile. He will not cast them out. He welcomes me and you and what a joy it is to come into the presence

of the One who has invited you, welcomes you and who promises to never cast you out but He will receive you graciously, pardon you freely, justify you completely and glorify you ultimately. It pleases Him to bring you into His family and give you everlasting life.

Romans 8:30 says [30] *And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.* This is a promise the Lord gives us and that He will carry it to completion, the work that He has started in us. The world may be against you, family and friends may forsake you but Christ will never cast you out. Some reading this are probably thinking ‘but you don’t know how my week has been or the amount of times I stumbled and fell or how many times I rejected the tender voice of the Spirit or how many times I ran back to those idols as a dog runs back to his vomit and you don’t understand how hard my heart feels at this moment.’ I don’t understand but Christ understands and He has promised that when you come to Him He will receive you and welcome you no matter your current weaknesses. Just come to Him by faith, believing in Him and looking to Him as your Savior and Lord and He will satisfy your soul.

John 6:38 says [38] *For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me.* What was that will? John 3:16–17 says [16] *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.* [17] *For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.* Jesus came to seek and save the lost and praise God that I was one of them. He set His affection upon me and called me. It doesn’t matter how lost you are because lost is lost. When you are lost He set His affection upon you and He called you by name.

John 6:39 says [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.* Those who come to Christ shall not be lost. Jesus is the One who goes after the lost sheep. Jesus is the One who will clean the house to pursue the lost coin. Jesus is the One who runs after the lost son. Jesus is the Seeker of your soul for there are none who seek Him, no not one, but He came to seek the lost. If you are reading this He is seeking you. He is calling you to come and dine in His presence and to be satisfied in the depths of your soul with the nourishment that only He provides.

From grace to glory Christ will hold you fast and will keep you safe in spite of the world, the flesh and the devil. Praise be to God for so often those three enemies are rising up in my life and they are seeking to draw me away from Him but the Lord has promised that those who are His cannot be snatched out of His hands. He who began the good work in you will carry it to completion (Philippians 1:6). No one or nothing can stop that from happening. Christ is the Receiver of all who come and the Preserver of all who believe. Praise be to Him!

John 6:40 says [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.* Christ receives sinners and preserves saints. By the will of God and the power of Christ God’s children will persevere. This is a promise that He has given us. You can build your life upon His promises because they will never fail. His promises are for all eternity. What a joy it is to know that we serve a risen Savior who invites us to come.

When we come to Him, look to Him and believe on Him, He will satisfy. He will not reject you but He will welcome you in as dirty and vile as you might be and He will cleanse you. He will present you to the Father in His spotless robes of righteousness. What a joy, what a privilege and hallelujah! What a Savior that we serve!

One of the ways we come to Christ is that we come to fellowship with Him at His Table which is prepared for us. Jesus says in John 6:57, *[57] As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever feeds on me, he also will live because of me.* Jesus invites you to feed upon Him, to daily nourish your soul upon Him for He is the Bread of Life. He is the Satisfier of your deepest hunger and thirst. Later on in this chapter it says in John 6:63, *[63] It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.* He alone gives life and He gives life abundantly, life to the full and that's how much He satisfies you. He satisfies us with His abundance and fullness and that is His prayer.

We see this in Ephesians 3 when Paul is praying for the saints to be filled with the fullness of God. Ephesians 3:18–19 says *[18] may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, [19] and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that **you may be filled with all the fullness of God.*** When you are filled with the fullness of God there is no room for anything else and that's His desire for you.

He wants you to be filled with His fullness to overflowing, to be satisfied with His bread, to have His living water and it's not a physical thing like the woman at the well initially thought. It's a spiritual, eternal thing that can never be taken away from you. Moth cannot eat it. Rust cannot destroy it. A thief cannot break in and steal it. It is yours and yours for eternity. Come and feast on the riches of Christ Jesus.

The invitation that Christ extended to those who followed Him over 2,000 years ago is the same invitation He extends to us who follow Him today. So as we come to His Table I encourage you to look to Him who receives you in spite of your sin, to believe in Him who can satisfy your emptiness and to come to Him who will sustain you all the way to glory. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, we thank You for the privilege we have to come to You for we are in many ways weary and heavy laden. You invite us to come and cast our cares upon You because You care for us. You invites us to come and eat that which satisfies and Lord we praise You that You satisfy for once we come to You we no longer have to go looking for satisfaction in other places. We also have the privilege to daily come to You and I pray that we would. I pray that as we partake of Your Table that we would rejoice in You and realize that in You alone receive us, satisfy us and carry us to Your Father's presence so may we delight in You at Your Table, in Christ's Name, Amen.