

I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE

JOHN 6:25-59



UNDERSTANDING HIS WORD

1. This chapter is primarily taken up with the significance of the feeding of the multitude in 6:1-15. A shorter description (compared to the Feeding miracle) of the miracle of Jesus walking on the water is given in 6:16-21. The main emphasis of the discourse that follows is Christological: Jesus is the Bread of Life, as He self asserts “It is I” (6:20, 35, 48, 51).
2. The setting of the events in Chapter 6 is located close to the Lake (6:15-16, 25; Capernaum 6:24; and the synagogue in Capernaum 6:59). John does not mention the “desert place” as scene of the Feeding (Mark 6:31-32, 36), which supports the idea that the feeding miracle is a repetition of the nourishment of Israel in the wilderness as a sign of the fulfillment of the hope of the new Exodus brought about by Jesus.
3. The mention that “the Jewish Passover feast was near” (6:4) hints at the sacrificial death of the Lamb of God, which is fundamental to 6:51-58. “The movement from the miracle to the discourse, from Moses to Jesus (6:32-35; cf 1:17), and above all, from bread to flesh, is almost unintelligible unless the reference...to the Passover...governs the whole narrative (Hoskyns).
4. It is obvious that several similarities with the Synoptics occur. Mark 6 also records the Feeding of the Five Thousand and Jesus walking on the sea. Mark’s second feeding narrative (8:1-8) is followed by a demand from the Pharisees for a sign from heaven (8:11), which is similar to John 6:30, and a dialogue on “leaven” and “bread” which alludes to the meaning of the feeding miracles (8:14-21). Peter’s Confession of Jesus as Messiah (8:27-30) parallels Peter’s Confession in John 6:66-71. These striking similarities have drawn two distinct conclusions from scholars. Some surmise the Fourth Evangelist is heavily dependent on the synoptic evangelists (Matthew, Mark and Luke). Others deduce John the Evangelist drew from traditional parallels to the synoptists rather than on the synoptic accounts.

5. Reference is made to memories enshrined in the tradition of Israel. God had miraculously led His people through the waters, fed them miraculously in the desert when they grumbled in discontent (6:31-33).

The events in Numbers 11 are recalled in Psalm 78:17-25. Moses had doubted the power of God to feed the multitude that he had led out of Egypt. God was in fact testing His people: "He humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know; that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but that man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord" (Deut. 8:3).

God's miraculous provisions test the reality of faith and expose the presence of unbelief.

6. Jesus looks ahead to the Last Supper where He will memorialize the giving of His life. He identifies the bread as His body and the wine as His blood, broken and shed for the world. Partaking of the bread and wine is the outward sign of faith and belief in the "bread of God...who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world" (6:33).
7. Most obvious to Jesus' listeners would be the Passover Feast, the occasion for this discourse (6:4). At this festival, lambs would be killed and blood sprinkled to celebrate life spared by the Angel of Death in Egypt. Families in Israel will gather in their households to eat flesh and drink wine to remember their deliverance from bondage. John the evangelist points to "Christ, our Passover Lamb, who has been sacrificed" (1 Cor. 5:7).
8. Samuel Ngewa suggests a helpful construction of this passage of Scripture: The passage can be divided into six scenes, with each introduced by a question or request from the crowd.
 - a. **Question from crowd: "Rabbi, when did you get here?" (6:25)**

Jesus' Response: He pointed out the real motive the people were searching for Him was to satisfy their stomachs even further. They could not understand the sign, but were concerned to use Jesus to satisfy their hunger as permanently as possible (6:26).

Then, Jesus exhorted them to get their priorities straight. They should not pursue "food that spoils," but instead work for "food that endures to eternal life" (6:27).
 - b. **Question: "What must we do to do the works God requires?" (6:28)**

Jesus' Reply: The only needed response to please God is to exercise faith in Jesus: "to believe in the one he has sent" (6:29).

Jesus is denying the Jewish concept that one has a list of requirements to fulfill to gain God's approval and acceptance. Only one thing is needed: faith in Jesus.

c. **Question: “What miraculous sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you?” (6:30)**

They wanted Jesus to authenticate Himself, to provide a basis for people to believe Him. It was not a faith step of the heart that the people wanted a basis for, but for a miracle to prove Jesus was believable, that what He said was true. Just like Moses who had provided bread in the desert.

It is interesting why the crowd asked Jesus for a miracle of provision when they had just witnessed the miraculous feeding of the five thousand (6:1-15).

Jesus’ Response: He first corrects the crowd’s understanding: *“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”* (6:32). The source of the bread in the desert and the bread of life now before them is God the Father.

The bread in the desert satisfied till the next meal. What Jesus is giving now is the “true bread.” As with “light” in 1:9, here “true” does not contrast with “false” but with “secondary.” The true bread is the source of all other bread that may nourish us. It is the primary bread, the one that nourishes eternally.

This true bread is identified as Jesus: *“For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world”* (6:33).

The bread is personified: *“The bread...is he...”* He comes from God can be inferred from the genitive “of God.” Jesus always referred to Himself as “sent by the Father.” Jesus not only came down, but gives life, which is an enduring offer to the world.

d. **Request: “Sir...from now on give us this bread” (6:34)**

Like the Samaritan woman in 4:15, the request indicated only a partial understanding by the audience of Jesus’ words. They wanted a perpetual supply (*“from now on”*) of the true bread, meaning a desire for a situation when they will never suffer any lack or be in want.

Response: *“I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty”* (6:35). The crowd being slow of understanding, Jesus says clearly He is the bread that has and gives life (genitive “bread of life”). He satisfies the deepest yearnings of the human soul.

“He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty” (6:35).

The promise *“will never go hungry”* is in gnomic aorist which indicates this as a timeless truth. They will remain satisfied and will never experience lack again. *“Will never be thirsty”* is a predictive future assuring 100% certainty, assuming the condition of believing is met.

“Never” is in double negative in Greek, emphasizing the absolute guarantee of God’s promise of permanent fulfillment.

The offer is contingent on “coming” to Jesus, or “believing” in Jesus. The synonymous expressions of one same response suggest the many ways we can come to faith in Christ.

e. **Question: “Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, ‘I came down from heaven?’” (6:42)**

Indeed, “a prophet has no honor in his own country.”

Right here in Galilee, Jesus’ own country, familiarity with him and his family hindered people from coming to faith in him.

Over familiarity has a tendency of preventing belief and receiving blessings. The physical or natural realm can blind us to spiritual realities.

Response: “*Stop grumbling among yourselves...No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day*” (6:43-44).

“Draw” has the idea of a magnetic, attractive power. Although Jesus was only a man, whose family is known to be humble in the community, with little to draw attraction, but He is powerfully attractive when people can see God in him. In 12:32, the same word is used: “*But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself.*”

And, in believing is everlasting life: “*He who believes has everlasting life*” (6:47).

“*But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which a man may eat and not die*” (6:50).

“*If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever*” (6:51).

f. **Question: “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?”(6:52)**

The people were still taking Jesus at a physical level when He has been talking about spiritual matters. They were offended Jesus was introducing cannibalism!

Response: “*Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you*” (6:53).

“*Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him*” (6:54-56).

“Eating” is different from the word used for eating food. It underscores the enjoyment that comes with eating fruit or vegetable (think dessert!). Presence of company is denoted in eating and drinking. Enjoying God’s Presence here and in eternity is the essence of eating His body and drinking His blood.

- Real food: No pretense needed. Only that which nourishes and strengthens.
- Remaining in Him: An intimate relationship is established and continues. “Remains” is in present tense, hence continuity.
- The chain of life guarantees the validity of the offer: The living Father sent the Son who has life in Him. The one who feeds on the living Son will also live (6:57).
- Their forefathers were only temporarily satisfied by the manna in the desert. But, the effect of the Bread of Life is permanent contentment. Eternal life will never end. What Jesus offers is God’s Presence and enjoyment of God that will be eternal. It begins here on earth, and goes on into eternity.



1. ***“From the fullness of His grace we have all received one blessing after another”***
(John 1:16).

“We all live off his generous bounty, gift after gift after gift” (MSG)

There is fullness in Christ. He is complete. There is no lack in Him.

In Him, there is:

- **Fullness of Life:** “I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full”
(Jn. 10:10)
- **Fullness of God:** “For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and you have been given fullness in Christ...” (Col. 2:9).
- **Fullness of Grace:** “We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, *full of grace and truth*” (Jn. 1:14).

He is generous with His bounty.

He gives freely: gift after gift after gift. Never withholding. Never sparingly. Always as fully as He is.

We have received. We are always clients of His mercy and candidates of His grace. Nothing we have is not from Him.

Our response should be one of gratitude as flowing as His grace.

We should be as dependent as creatures on their Creator.

We should be confident as a child in his/her loving parent.

We should be testifying to His grace and mercy.

2. What do we really want from God?
We want sustainable life as we know it. More of the same to maintain the same. We want security; more of the same in line of sight.
We think here and now.
God offers something more: more of ME.

Woman at well: "Give me this water that I need not come to draw from the well again."

People to Jesus: "From now on give us this bread" For the present time, this life. Sustainability.

But, Jesus wants us to *never* be hungry or thirsty again.

From existential to eternal.

From transient to permanent.

Ngewa's First Scene: Food that Spoils vs Food that Endures.

When we eat the Bread of Life, we will never be hungry again.

In 6:35, the Gnomic Aorist is used to indicate a timeless truth: "He who comes to me will never go hungry..." and the Predictive Future: "He who believes in me will never be thirsty" meaning the results are guaranteed.

"Never" is in double negative to emphasize absolute certainty.

3. We are always interested in mechanics – Show me the steps and procedures. We want to rely on our abilities and qualifications to meet the requirements.
Jesus says the only requirement is to believe in Jesus. To trust Him.
Not in methodology, but in relationship.
Otherwise we will always be asking for validation. "Show me the evidence."
He is the True Bread – Primary Sustenance, not auxiliary provision.

4. Partaking of Eternal Sustenance is to sustain intimate relationship with Christ.
Eating is the Pleasure of Presence, the Intimacy of Fellowship.
Where there is no pretense, only genuine building up.

*“You have made known to me the path of life;
You will fill me with joy in your Presence
With eternal pleasures at your right hand” (Psalm 16:11)*



FULLNESS IN CHRIST

Spurgeon Morning by Morning January 27, AM

"And of his fullness have all we received." John 1:16

These words tell us that there is a fullness in Christ. There is a fullness of essential Deity, for "in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead." There is a fullness of perfect manhood, for in Him, bodily, that Godhead was revealed.

There is a fullness of atoning efficacy in His blood, for "the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin." There is a fullness of justifying righteousness in His life, for "there is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus."

There is a fullness of divine prevalence in His plea, for "He is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him; seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them." There is a fullness of victory in His death, for through death He destroyed him that had the power of death, that is the devil.

There is a fullness of efficacy in His resurrection from the dead, for by it "we are begotten again unto a lively hope." There is a fullness of triumph in His ascension, for "when He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and received gifts for men." There is a fullness of blessings of every sort and shape; a fullness of grace to pardon, of grace to regenerate, of grace to sanctify, of grace to preserve, and of grace to perfect.

There is fullness at all times; a fullness of comfort in affliction; a fullness of guidance in prosperity. A fullness of every divine attribute, of wisdom, of power, of love; a fullness which it were impossible to survey, much less to explore. "It pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell." Oh, what a fullness must this be of which all receive!

Fullness, indeed, must there be when the stream is always flowing, and yet the well springs up as free, as rich, as full as ever. Come, believer, and get all thy need supplied; ask largely, and thou shalt receive largely, for this "fullness" is inexhaustible, and is treasured up where all the needy may reach it, even in Jesus, Emmanuel - God with us.