



John 6
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²⁸ Then they asked him, “What must we do to do the works God requires?”

²⁹ Jesus answered, “The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.”

³⁰ So they asked him, “What sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? ³¹ Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written: ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’^[c]”

³² Jesus said to them, “Very truly I tell you, 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. ³³ For the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”

³⁴ “Sir,” they said, “always give us this bread.”

³⁵ Then Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. ³⁶ But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe. ³⁷ All those the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. ³⁸ For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. ³⁹ And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all those he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. ⁴⁰ For my Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day.”

⁴⁸ I am the bread of life. ⁴⁹ Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, yet they died. ⁵⁰ But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which anyone may eat and not die. ⁵¹ I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.”



SERMON NOTES

***I AM everything you need and
everything you need, I AM!***

There is an EMPTYNESS to be FILLED

Even the rich are hungry for love, for being cared for, for being wanted for having someone to call their own. Mother Teresa.

“Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes?” Mt 6:25

There is a Banquet to be Revealed

Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’” Matt 4:4

To eat bread without Jesus is to slowly starve.

There is a GIFT to be Shared

*“Bread for myself is a material question.
Bread for my neighbor is a spiritual one.”*

*I am generous not because I have a lot,
but because I know exactly how it feels to be hungry.*

SACRED JOURNEY

What is Prevenient (preceding) Grace?

Earlier we learned that part of God's nature is the desire to reveal himself to us. God is not merely interested in giving us rules to live by. He wants us to know him and enter into a covenant relationship with him through Jesus Christ. This self-revealing nature of God comes out in many ways, including creation, our consciences, in Scripture and ultimately in Jesus Christ.

It is important to understand that salvation never begins with anything we do, but always as a response to something God had done. To think that salvation begins without repenting of our sins and asking Jesus into our hearts is not the way the scriptures reveal the whole process of salvation. Rather, salvation always begins with God's prior action. He acts, and we accept or resist. It always happens in that pattern.

One way of talking about all the ways God prepares us to receive the gospel is to use the term, prevenient (or preceding) grace." Prevenient grace refers to all those acts of grace in our lives prior to our becoming a Christian. We know that such grace exists because Jesus said that "no one can come to me unless the father who sent me draws him" (John 6:44). There is a "drawing" or "preparing" which precedes our actual conversion.

The other reason we know that God's grace must precede our decision to follow Christ is that the Scriptures teach us that we are dead in our trespasses and sin apart from Christ (Eph. 2:1) The Scriptures do not teach that we are merely sick or that our overall spiritual progress is slow, but that we are spiritually dead. (This is another great distinctive feature of Christianity). This means that we are incapable of helping ourselves or saving ourselves without God's prior action.

Most Christians believe in the doctrine of total depravity. That means that humans are dead in their sins and cannot do anything to help or improve their spiritual state before God. However, it is also a Christian position to believe in free will. This means that we affirm that God wants us to act and make decisions for him. The problem is this: How can a

spiritually dead person act or decide to give their lives to Christ freely? The Bible is full of injunctions to act – people are called to repent, to believe, to come, to decide, and so forth. The answer is the doctrine of prevenient Grace. This is the bridge between human depravity and the free exercise of human will. Prevenient grace is a sovereign act of God whereby he lifts the human race out of depravity and grants us the capacity to respond further to God's grace. It is God's act of unmerited favor. It is God's light "which enlightens everyone" (John 1:9) which lifts us up and allows us to exercise our free will and respond to the grace of Christ.

1. Psalm 105:40

They asked, and he brought them quail; he fed them well with the **bread of** heaven.

2. Proverbs 4:17

They eat the **bread of** wickedness and drink the wine of violence.

3. Proverbs 31:27

She watches over the affairs of her household and does not eat the **bread of** idleness.

4. Isaiah 30:20

Although the Lord gives you the **bread of** adversity and the water of affliction, your teachers will be hidden no more; with your own eyes you will see them.

5. Hosea 9:4

They will not pour out wine offerings to the LORD, nor will their sacrifices please him. Such sacrifices will be to them like the **bread of** mourners; all who eat them will be unclean. This food will be for themselves; it will not come into the temple of the LORD.

A colleague remembers a hospital visit with a woman from his congregation prior to her surgery. This was a few years ago, when they checked you into a room the day before an operation. “She had never been in the hospital before and the procedure she was facing was life threatening. When the minister walked into her room she was a nervous wreck. She started crying and immediately begged him to pray with her, which he did. Following the prayer, he chatted with her, and as they talked he noticed that next to her bed there was a stack of books and magazines. He scanned the titles: True Love, Glamour, Hollywood Today, stories about various movie stars and celebrities. She had a large stack of them in her room, and she was a wreck. The pastor realized there was not one single calorie in that whole stack to help her through her experience. She had no place to dip down into a spiritual reservoir and come up with something – a word, a phrase, a thought, a memory, a person. She was empty.”

For many, the hunger is for meaning. We want to know that our lives have a purpose that is grander than ourselves. We want to know that what we do matters.

Others of us know there is a void within, but don’t understand what we are craving and we attempt to satisfy our appetite with artificial substitutes: material possessions, alcohol, affairs, sports, entertainment. One writer says, “We careen from one fix to another, trying to stay just ahead and out of sight of the specter of emptiness. When someone or something comes along that promises more, we rush to get in line, credit card in hand. When the latest hobby, fantasy, addiction, or self-deception lets us down, we eagerly scan the horizon for another

substitute, ready to embrace anything that will convince us that we are not, as Walker Percy writes, ‘lost in the cosmos’.”²

Isaiah 55

Invitation to the Thirsty

1 Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. 2 Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and you will delight in the richest of fare.

Come to Jesus. He is the Bread of Life.

For we cannot live by bread alone, but by every Word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.

Amen.

Bread of Life

Carl Jung

“Primary neurosis of people is emptiness”

A hallow place, hunger, yearning trying to fill

Void in the land of plenty.

We try to fill in all sorts of way,

Candy, toys,

Hunger, thirst, bread and living water

That which really fills

Metaphor of food

Role Food in our culture: verse the way it was 100 years ago

Fast food line

“if you are what you eat, then I must be cheap, fast and easy.”

We become what we pursue.

We feast on junk food that doesn’t satisfy.

The fat and sugar is unhealthy but we become captive by it addiction

Super-Size me – a guy live for a month o

24 lbs in one month and his cholesterol goes up dramatically and b

What we fill up with what we know doesn’t satisfy,

But it is cheap and easy and fast and empty

I AM the Bread of Life, that comes down from heaven that really satisfies.

Fear, uncertainty, grasp for that doesn’t satisfy

Empty of purpose longing for a noble cause, a special mission to spend our lives on.

Bread – earthy

Permeates and

Community of Faith – invites all people to come and feast and be changed.

After feasting on real bread, the fast foods don't

James McCellan

“And now the elders will bring in the elephants”

Anticipation that this is the Sunday the elephants will arrive.

Wait and watch and wonder about the elephants.

One SUNDAY the “elders will bring in the element” it makes sense

But where is the wonder in that, there is wonder in elephants, but elements?

But then he grew up and he heard the story of the elements and the wonder was revealed.

God had come. In the Bread. God had come in the Cup. God had come in the Community,

God had come and he knew he was growing up, again.

God's grace and God's love that fills us.