

Series: “Who is this Jesus?” A study in John’s Gospel

Message 4: Jesus is the Bread of Life

Text: John 6

Key verses: John 6: 32-35, 50-51

Christianity in its purest form is nothing more than seeing Jesus. Christian service in its purest form is nothing more than imitating him who we see. To see his majesty and to imitate him, that is the sum of Christianity.”

Max Lucado from his book “God Came Near”.

1. Jesus challenges our thinking and priorities (John 6:1-9)

Our confusion and panic in the midst of seemingly impossible circumstances, is often Jesus’ way of testing our faith orientation, for he has the solution to every problem.

Perspective 1: Philip

Perspective 2: Andrew

Perspective 3: The small boy

Perspective 4: Jesus

“The Christian life isn’t easy, yet it isn’t hard. The Christian life if it is genuine, real, legitimate, is always impossible to live in our own strength, for it is miraculous. “

God has done so much with so little for so long, he will now accomplish the impossible with nothing.”

Hudson Taylor Missionary to China

2. Jesus is the source of miraculous and supernatural living (John 6:10-15)

When we cease looking at our problems and begin looking to Jesus, believing in his adequacy, listening to his instructions, and

humbly obeying, we see the miraculous and learn the secrets of supernatural living.

3. Our fears are often the greatest hindrance to Jesus being Lord in our lives, that they hinder the miraculous and his peace (John 6:16-21)
At times, when in the midst of the storms of life, we are even afraid to invite Jesus into our situations and struggles and allow him to deliver to us the miraculous and his peace.

4. Jesus calls us to focus on him as Lord and Life-Giver rather than solely on his miracles and the meeting of our immediate wants and desires (John 6:22-40)

There always comes a time in the life of those that follow after Jesus for his miracles and the meeting of immediate wants and desires, when they are confronted with the absolute need to focus on Jesus alone – for he alone is the bread of life.

5. Eternal riches are in a Christ centered faith rather than a man centered religion (John 6:41-59)

Religious people struggle to accept that Jesus is the “Bread of Life”. Rather than pursuing a Christ centered faith they prefer a man centered religion, resulting in spiritual poverty rather than kingdom riches.

The Gospel writers as well as the apostle Paul used the body and blood imagery in talking about Communion (1 Corinthians 11:23-26). Jesus made it clear that we had to take his life into ours if we are to be sustained as believers. This requires both belief in Jesus’ death and resurrection and the practice of spiritual disciplines.

How can Jesus give us his flesh as bread to eat and his blood to drink?

To eat living bread means to accept Christ into our lives and become united with him. To drink his blood means to accept his blood-filled sacrifice on the cross for salvation. We are united with Christ in two ways: (1) by believing in his death (the

sacrifice of his flesh and the spilling of his blood) and resurrection and (2) by devoting ourselves to prayer, Bible study – relying on his teaching for guidance and trusting in the Holy Spirit for power to live his life in service to others.

6. Choose life by submitting to Jesus as Lord and Savior (John 6:60-71)

Jesus periodically challenges us to assess our loyalty and allegiance to him. Those who cannot and will not submit to his Lordship and receive him into their lives to receive his salvation, abundant and eternal life, are not encouraged to continue following, but accept that they are spiritually dead. Those who do submit to Christ and continue following realize that there is no one else to whom they can turn for spiritual life.

The Holy Spirit gives spiritual life; without the work of the Holy Spirit, we cannot even see our need for new life. All spiritual renewal begins and ends with God. He reveals truth to us, lives within us, and then enables us to respond to that truth.

In response to Jesus' message, some people left; others stayed and truly believed; and some, like Judas, stayed but tried to use Jesus for personal gain.

Many people today turn away from Christ. Others pretend to follow, going to church out of habit, for status, to feel spiritual, approval of family and friends, or business contacts.

There are only two real responses to Jesus—you either accept him or reject him.

Challenge

How are you responding to Jesus' challenge?

Which category will you choose to be in?

What is your demonstrated response to Jesus call to follow him?

Prayer (Psalms 51:10-12; Psalm 139:24)

Jesus, today I reaffirm my belief in you as the promised Messiah and the Son of God. I confess you as my Lord and Savior. I desire that you live your life in and through me so I can love and serve you. I open my life to you to

Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me. Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

Questions for reflection and discussion

1. Discuss the quote from Max Lucado: “ *Christianity in its purest form is nothing more than seeing Jesus. Christian service in its purest form is nothing more than imitating him who we see. To see his majesty and to imitate him, that is the sum of Christianity.*”
2. Share together any experiences you have had in which you have panicked, or problems you have faced where you have felt that there was no solution. What did you do? What was the outcome? What part did your relationship with Jesus play in both your deliberations and resultant behavior?
3. Have you ever experienced a miracle in your life? Describe the circumstances and how it came about. What part did you play? (Refer to John 6:10-15)
4. Respond to the following: “At times when in the midst of the storms of life, we are even afraid to invite Jesus to share in our struggles and lead us into peace.” (Refer to John 6:16-21)
5. Why is it important that we focus on Jesus rather than what he does, in order to experience real spiritual life? (Refer to John 6:22-40)
6. Why is it that some people are afraid to embrace Jesus – “The Bread of life” rather than tradition, custom, and lifeless religious practice (Refer to John 6:41-59)
7. If you were present with ? Jesus in the scene described in John 6:60-71, who would you most identify with: those who deserted Jesus, those who remained faithful, the disciples, or Judas? Give reasons for your answer.
8. Spend time in prayer for each other’s needs.