

John 6-22-36  
The Bread of life!

Preamble:

Promo membership class  
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**Sermon introduction:**

If you have been a parent for more than 13 minutes, you know that there is a big difference between what kids think they need and what parents know they need.

If most kids were left to themselves for a week, they would only eat three things—Lucky Charms, hot dogs, and pizza. And they would only drink one thing—Mountain Dew. There would be absolutely no fruits, no vegetables, and no vitamins.

If they were teenage boys, they would probably sleep in until noon and then they would play video games the rest of the day.

Why? Why would kids do these things? Because they are convinced that these activities will satisfy their souls.

But parents understand that a steady diet of junk food, soda, and video games does not satisfy the soul or lead to human flourishing.

Parents know better than kids what kids need to flourish.

Adults are no different than children. We often think that more wealth, success, beauty, and fame will satisfy our souls. But God knows so much better...

This brings us to our passage.

The crowds worked hard to find Jesus because they thought that what they really needed was physical bread. If they only had some bread, they would be satisfied, but they were wrong. Jesus tells them that what they really need is not physical bread, but spiritual bread. They need the bread of life.

***Here is the main point of our passage... we must work hard to satisfy our souls with the bread of life.***

***In light of this, I want to look at two concepts...***

1. Work
2. Satisfaction

**First, the work**

*Work is mentioned several times in verses 26-29. For instance...*

**The crowd worked to get stuff from Jesus!**

The day before our passage, Jesus fed 5,000 people (plus woman and children). As a result, they wanted to make him king. Since they misunderstood his mission, he fled from their presence. Later that night he walked

across the sea of Galilee and joined the disciples in their boat. The next day he is on the other side of the sea, but he can't escape the crowds. They worked hard to find him.

Why? They liked free bread.

In verse 25, the crowd asks Jesus, "Rabbi, when did you get here?"

**John 6:26 (ESV) — 26** Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves.

In other words, Jesus says,

"You did not work hard to find me because you understood that my miracles prove that I'm the long-awaited Messiah, who has come from heaven to save you from your sins. Rather, you worked hard to find me because you want more bread."

The crowds worked hard to get stuff from Jesus.

### **Illustration:**

Pastor Kenneth Copeland's net worth is just shy of one billion dollars. He has a private airfield, a private jet, fancy cars, and he lives in a massive mansion.

Nigerian pastor David Oyedepo has a net worth of \$150 million.

Pastor Creflo Dollar owns two Rolls-Royces, a private jet, a million-dollar home in Atlanta, and a multi-million-dollar home in Manhattan.

I watched TV preacher Joel Osteen say, "You are asking God for the new golf club, but God wants to give you the golf club (the entire club, club house, and all 18 holes)."

These false teachers proclaim that if we have enough faith, God will make us healthy, wealthy, and prosperous. They pursue God to get stuff from God...

The crowds just wanted bread.

The prosperity gospel just wants wealth.

### **Application:**

It is easy for us to criticize the prosperity gospel. But there are milder forms of it in all our hearts.

Some churchgoers just want God to fix their problems, that is all they want...

Just fix my marriage.

Just bless my career.

Just heal my body.

Just help me with my porn problem...

Just give me a sense of purpose....

Just give me a sense of psychological well-being...

This kind of sounds like, "Jesus, just give me some bread."

It is not wrong to bring our problems to Jesus, but it is wrong if this is all we do...

Parents don't want their kids to love them just because they pay for stuff. God is no different...

Jesus wants us to love him first and foremost for who he is—for his moral beauty. We grow in appreciation for his moral beauty by gazing long and hard at the cross.

*The crowd worked to get stuff from Jesus! In addition...*

### **The crowd worked for perishable things!**

**John 6:26–27 (ESV)** — 26 Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. 27 Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal.”

Jesus says, “don't work for the food that perishes but for the food that endures to eternal life...” In other words, don't wear yourself out to acquire material things. Material things perish, as a result, they will never ultimately satisfy.

### **Illustration:**

In the 1930s the most famous living author was William Somerset Maugham. He was an accomplished novelist, a great playwright, and a popular short story writer. He was the Danielle Steele or John Grisham of his day.

In 1965, Somerset Maugham was ninety-one years old and fabulously wealthy. Royalties continued to pour in from all over the world. Even at age 90, his fame was on the upsurge. He received an average of 300 letters a week from his fans. He was experiencing incredible success.

He lived in a spectacular Mediterranean Villa, worth millions. He had the best cars, the best clothes, 11 servants, and a full time cook, who was the envy of all the millionaires on the Riviera.

He worked hard for perishable things—and he obtained them all.

But... Towards the end of his life, he said,

"I've been a failure the whole way through my life. I've made mistake after mistake. I've made a hash of everything... I wish I'd never written a single word. It's brought me nothing but misery. . . . Everyone who's got to know me well has ended up by hating me. . . . My whole life has been a failure. . . ." (K. Hughes, John commentary)

### **Application:**

Through hard work Somerset Maugham attained all the things everyone wants. He had it all...

But it did not satisfy... He was empty, broken, and depressed.

We too work too hard for perishable things. We are often tricked into thinking...

If I could just make a little more money.  
If I could just lose a little more weight.

If I could just have a little more vacation time...

These are perishable things.

**Isaiah 55:1–2 (ESV)** — **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.

It is not wrong to work hard, or to have nice things, but nice things were never meant to ultimately satisfy.

*The crowd worked to get stuff from Jesus!*

*The crowd worked for perishable things! In addition...*

**The crowd worked to earn salvation!**

**John 6:28 (ESV)** — **28** Then they said to him, “What must we do, to be doing the works of God?”

When crowd asks Jesus, “What must we do to do the works of God?”, they are asking the age-old question—what does God want me to do to earn salvation or get to heaven?

Someone once said that religion is spelled with two letters—do. We find these words on the lips of the crowd when they say what must I “do” to earn peace with God?

Muslims must obey the five pillars.

Orthodox Jews must carefully obey all the OT laws.

Hindus must earn enough good karma to free themselves from the cycle of reincarnation.

Buddhists must understand the four noble truths and carefully follow the eight-fold path.

Roman Catholics must faithfully participate in the seven sacraments.

Religion is spelled do...

But Christianity is spelled with four letters—done. Jesus Christ has done everything necessary in his birth, life, death, and resurrection to reconcile us to God. Which means that there is nothing left for us to do—literally nothing. Therefore, all we must do is believe.

Which brings us to verse 29.

**John 6:29 (ESV)** — **29** Jesus answered them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.”

The crowds want to know what kind of work God wants them to do to be saved. Jesus’s response is amazing. He says that the only work that God requires us to do is believe, that is it... We simply believe! Belief is the work...

You don’t have to go to a holy place.

You don’t have to light candles.

You don't have to memorize some chants.  
You don't have to read your Bible, go to church, and give away your money...  
You don't have to clean up your life first...  
You don't have to *do* anything...

When we believe in him (Christ) all that Christ accomplished is instantly applied to us.

Faith/belief is the work!!!

**Ephesians 2:8–9 (ESV) — 8** For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, **9** not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Salvation is by grace alone through faith alone. This separates Christianity from every other world religion *and when I say every religion, I mean every world religion.*

Application:

Dave, we know this, tell us something new... But do you really know this????

Or are you stuck in the good day bad day trap. Explain....

*When we do "the work" of believing something amazing happens. This brings us to our next concept...*

*First, the work...*

## **Second, the satisfaction.**

We need to understand a few things about the satisfying bread... *like what? Consider...*

### **The identity of the satisfying bread!**

**John 6:30–35 (ESV) — 30** So they said to him, "Then what sign do you do, 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 from heaven to eat.'" **32** Jesus then said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. **33** For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

In the previous verses, Jesus made an audacious claim. He said, "the work God requires is that you believe in him."

So, naturally, the crowds ask Jesus to give them a sign to prove that he knows what he is talking about. They specifically want a sign like the one Moses performed around 1400 BC.

Do you remember that story? Millions of Israelites were about to starve in the desert, but then God used Moses to supernaturally provide them with bread from heaven, keeping them from starvation.

Now I'm sure, at this point, Jesus was tempted to say, "Are you serious? You want a sign like the one Moses performed? What in the world do you think I did yesterday??? Have you already forgotten? I supernaturally fed five thousand family units with five loaves and two fishes as they wondered around in the wilderness."

In other words, Jesus could have said, “don’t you see, I’m the new Moses. I’m the one to lead you out of slavery to sin, sustain your souls with the bread of life, and lead you into the eternal promised land.”

***Moses was always meant to point to Jesus.***

In the book of Exodus, Moses parted the waters, went up on a mountain, and then provided bread from heaven.

In John 6, Jesus walked on the waters, after coming down from the mountain, and then provided bread from heaven.

Is this a coincidence? Of course not. Moses not only points to Jesus, but Jesus is greater than Moses.

Not only does Jesus provide bread from heaven—he is the bread from heaven that satisfies our souls.

Jesus makes this astonishing claim in verses 34-35.

**34** They said to him, “Sir, give us this bread always.” **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.”

Application:

Jesus is saying, physical bread sustained and nourished Israel, but I will sustain and nourish your soul. The bread that fed Israel met their physical needs, but Jesus will meet all your spiritual needs.

BTW... This is the first of the famous “I am” sayings in John.

I am the bread of life (6:35,48).

I am the light of the world (8:12).

I am the gate (10:7,9).

I am the good shepherd (10:11,14).

I am the resurrection and the life (11:25).

I am the way and the truth and the life (14:6).

I am the true vine (15:1,5).

We looked at...

*The identity of the satisfying bread! Next...*

**The nature of the satisfying bread!**

**John 6:35 (ESV)** — **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.”

These are incredibly encouraging words.

Jesus promises that whoever comes to him shall *never* hunger and shall *never* thirst.

He is not talking about physical hunger and physical thirst, he is talking about soul hunger and soul thirst, which is far more important.

Nothing but Christ can satisfy our souls.

The best hunting trip must be followed by another hunting trip.  
The best vacation must be followed by another vacation.  
The best meal must be followed by another meal.  
Your best round of golf must be followed by another round of golf.  
Your best clothes will wear out.  
Your house and car will fall apart.  
Your career will eventually end.  
Your kids will grow up and leave the house.  
Your body will eventually break down...

One author writes,

“Somerset Maugham dressed in his finest tuxedo and night after night played cards with the most famous people in all the world. Dukes and duchesses sought his favor. He had the most exclusive of parties. But he found no lasting satisfaction.” (Hughes)

C. S. Lewis said, "I cannot find a cup of tea which is big enough or a book that is long enough."

God gives us things to enjoy, but they are meant to be windows not paintings.

Nothing but Christ can satisfy your souls.

### **Application:**

Maybe you are thinking, “Pastor, I’m a Christian, but I’m not experiencing the soul satisfying relationship with Christ that you are talking about.”

We enter our relationship with Christ by grace alone through faith alone, but we must cultivate this relationship via the ordinary means of grace, if we are going to experience its soul satisfying depths.

A soul satisfying life is spent in wholehearted, grace motivated, spirit empowered pursuit of the triune God.

*Who gets to experience this relationship with God? Let’s go back to verse 35...*

*The identity of the satisfying bread.*

*The nature of the satisfying bread.*

### **The recipients of the satisfying bread!**

**John 6:35–36 (ESV)** — **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.

Jesus says, “whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall not thirst...”

Notice the word “whoever.” You don’t have to be rich or poor, young or old, black or white, righteous, or unrighteous... This promise is for anyone.

Now notice the two verbs—come and believe...

These two verbs describe how everyone becomes a Christian.

***We must “come” to Christ.*** In other words, we must change directions. We must walk away from our sins and come to Jesus. The Bible calls this repentance.

In addition...

***We must “believe” in Christ.*** To believe in Christ is to trust completely in Him as the Messiah and Son of God, and to acknowledge that salvation comes solely through faith in Him (14:6; Acts 4:12).

To believe is more than accepting some facts about Jesus. It is more than intellectual assent. Belief is wholehearted trust.

Have you come to Christ and believed??? If not, why not??? No one else will satisfy.

***Maybe you are a Christian and you know that you have been looking to other things to satisfy your soul.*** What must you do?

You must keep coming and you must keep believing...

According to Martin Luther...

“**All of life is repentance.**” When we sin, we repent. In other words, we tell God we are sorry, we ask God for power to change, and we look to the cross once again for forgiveness and healing.

Not only does Jesus say, “**I am the bread of life.**”

He also says, “**I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays his life down for the sheep.**” (John 10:11,14)

If you are a Christian, he laid his life down for you. Which means that he forgives, and he forgives, and he forgives all those who come to him for mercy.

There is always hope for change and forgiveness, when dealing with the triune God.

### **Conclusion:**

Let me conclude by asking you one question...

What will you work hard on this week?

Jesus encourages us to work one satisfying our souls with the bread of life. Nothing else will satisfy.

Let's pray...