

John 6: 25-69

Introduction

I. What foods do you crave?

Food serves two basic purposes: 1) it sustains and 2) it satisfies

II. Food is a great analogy for life

We crave/hunger for various things (relationship, adventure, wealth, etc)

Various ways we try to fill those cravings

III. Jesus says “I am the bread of life”

He came to be the bread that satisfies us and sustains us

The Passage

I. Structure

A. Scene 1: the miraculous feeding of the 5,000

B. Scene 2: Jesus walks across the Sea of Galilee

C. Scene 3: the conversation with the crowd on the other side

II. The background

A. Exodus 16: God provided manna for the Israelites in the desert
= bread from heaven (Ps 78:24-25)

B. Deut 18:15: Moses prophesies, “The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers.”

C. John 6: 14-15: when the crowds see Jesus miraculously multiply bread and feed them, they are ready to make him king.

D. The conversation on the other side of the lake marks the turning point in Jesus’ public ministry: after this many of the disciples will leave him.

III. The conversation

v. 26: Jesus’ miracles are called “signs” in John’s gospel

= they are meant to point beyond themselves to the person doing the miracle

So Jesus is saying: “you’re looking for me because you’ve had your bellies filled,
And now you’re back for more, but you’ve failed to realize the
significance of the sign.

v. 27: “work” for bread that lasts for eternal life

v. 28: what “work” should we do?

v. 29: the “work” is simply to believe in the one God sent

v. 30: what “sign” will you show us?

Jesus has just made a bold claim, so they’re asking for a sign to back it up

Moses gave manna every day for 40 years. Jesus has only given bread for one day

Moses gave us bread from heaven—you gave us bread from earth

v. 32-33: Jesus corrects their thinking

1. Moses didn't give the manna; God did
 2. God didn't give it past tense, He is giving it right now
- v. 34: They want it, but they still don't understand
- v. 35: I am the bread
- I am the ultimate reality that will sustain you and satisfy you
- sustenance: "bread of life"
- satisfaction: no more hunger and thirst
- I can satisfy your cravings forever
- Jesus is saying, "I don't want to just give you bread that will satisfy/sustain you
- I want to be the bread that satisfies you/sustains you"
- v. 41-42: they grumble just like the Israelites in Exodus
- v. 48-51b
- Manna was just bread: spoiled after a day, sustained them for a day
- Jesus is "living bread": never spoils, sustains forever, satisfies forever
- v. 51-55
- Jesus is speaking in a metaphor
- My body will be broken, my blood will be shed for your sins
- You need to believe in me, who I am, and what I've done for you
- Maybe he uses this language of eating and drinking to define the faith he desires
- = crave me, feed on me, treasure me, etc
- John Piper: "Christian faith is not to simply believe that Jesus is the Son of God who died for your sins, rose again, reigns in heaven, is coming again. That's only factual. It's also a being satisfied with that, treasuring that. Faith is not just an intellectual assent to doctrines. Faith is an affectional embrace of the Savior for my deepest longings."
- v. 56-57: he compares our relationship with him to his relationship with the Father
- see John 4:31-34: "My food, said Jesus, is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work"
- v. 60 and 66: many of his disciples leave him desert
- What a change from v. 14-15!

Conclusion

- I. Notice the contrast between what Jesus is offering and what the crowds want
 - A. The crowds just want Jesus to give them the bread they want; Jesus wants to be the bread they need
 - B. We're always tempted to approach Jesus in the same way
 1. We identify the bread we want (kids, marriage, job, health, hobbies, etc) and we ask Jesus to provide the bread (protection, success, etc)
 2. Jesus becomes the "vending machine God"
 - C. Jesus is saying to us in this passage, "I haven't come to give you the bread you want. I've come to be the bread you need. I want you to find your satisfaction and sustenance in me."

II. The battle of faith is not just a battle of morality (right and wrong); it's a battle for our cravings/hungers/where we go for satisfaction

- A. We often think that Christianity is about being a good, moral person in the midst of all of our cravings
- B. In reality it's about coming to crave Jesus more and more and coming to find our satisfaction and sustenance in him.
- C. Overcoming sin happens when we realize that sin isn't just wrong; it's dumb

III. Question for this week

- A. What things stir up my affection for Jesus Christ? What things point me to my desire/hunger for Jesus as the bread I need

- B. What things dull my of my affection? What things mask my hunger for him?

IV. The child born in Bethlehem

Bethlehem = "house of bread"

Manger = a feeding trough (he is the meal)

Discussion Questions

1. Opening questions: What struck you most about the sermon/the passage? What surprised you? What confused you? What did you disagree with?
2. In what ways do you tend to think of Jesus as your "vending machine God?"
3. Discuss John Piper's statement: "Christian faith is not to simply believe that Jesus is the Son of God who died for your sins, rose again, reigns in heaven, is coming again. That's only factual. It's also a being satisfied with that, treasuring that. Faith is not just an intellectual assent to doctrines. Faith is an affectional embrace of the Savior for my deepest longings." How does that statement connect with your own faith?
4. Discuss C.S. Lewis' statement: "Our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink, sex, and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to keep playing in the mud in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the beach. We are far too easily pleased."
5. What things in your life stir up your affection for Jesus Christ? What things point you to your hunger for him?
6. What things dull or mask your affection for Jesus?