

*Sermon: The Living Bread*  
*Text: John 6:35, 41 – 51*  
*Date: August 9, 2009 AM*  
*Place: Jesup First UMC*

Bread! Living Bread! Now, this may surprise you as big as I am, but I don't like a lot of bread. But if I close my eyes and breathe really deep, I think I can still smell biscuits cooking in Grandma Jennie's kitchen. She'd come in from milking cows, get washed up, and reach for the flour can. And she'd sift the flour and whip up a pan of biscuits in no time at all. And you had to have bread at every meal, so if it wasn't biscuits, it had to be cornbread. And when grandma made cornbread, you didn't need meat and potatoes. In fact, the favorite meal of the grandkids was cornbread and milk. Now, my other grandma, Grandma McDonald, had a different kind of cornbread. She made Johnnie Cakes. And folks, when you've had Mrs. Jennie's biscuits and cornbread and you've had Mrs. Mildred's Johnnie Cakes, store bought bread is kinda anti-climatic.

Bread! Do you realize that every culture in the world eats some form of bread? Some eat biscuits; some eat cornbread; some eat tortillas; some eat noodles, but we all eat bread. It's a staple part of our diet, something we just can't seem to do without.

One day, Jesus got out of the boat and a crowd gathered around Him. They wanted to be near Him, to hear Him teach, to be touched and healed by Him. And after several hours, the disciples came to Jesus and said: "*Jesus, it's getting late and we're out here in the middle of nowhere; so send these people away so they can find something to eat.*" And you remember what

happened, right? He sat them down on the hillside and fed the 5000 with five barley loaves and two fish. Then, the disciples got in the boat and left and Jesus went into the mountains to pray. And then, He went out to His disciples, walking on the water.

Now, when the people realized Jesus was gone, they went looking for Him and caught up with Him in Capernaum. And they said: "*Jesus, how did you get here?*" And we would expect Jesus to be glad to see them; after all, this is why He came, right? He came to "*seek and to save*" the lost. He came to serve others. But look what happened: Jesus looked at these people who were looking for Him and said: "*I know why you came looking for me. You didn't come seeking me, but you came looking for more bread. You didn't come because of who I am; you came because I fed you bread. Well, guess what? I am the Bread of Life.*"

Now, what's this passage about? What is God trying to say to us this morning from His Word?

***First, this passage speaks about Jesus' true identity!*** Jesus said: "*I AM the Bread of Life.*" Every weekend, a group from Asbury College drove into downtown Lexington to do Street Ministry at Triangle Park. And one night, I talked with a young man who said: "*When I think about Jesus, I feel really sorry for the dude ... He was just an ordinary guy; He never claimed to be anything special, but the church turned Him into some kind of superhero or something.*"

Well, it would be hard for a serious student of the Bible, especially John's Gospel, to make such a statement. When Jesus said: "*I AM the Bread of Life,*"

our attention is immediately drawn to the word “*Bread*,” but those who were listening to Jesus that day would have been immediately drawn to “*I AM*,” the name of Israel’s God. Remember, God told Moses: “*Tell them “I Am” has sent you.*”

Now, at this moment, Jesus is either telling the truth or blaspheming the name of God. He is either a liar or the Bread that came down from heaven. What do you think? Who is Jesus? A liar? Someone to be pitied because of what the church has done to Him? Or could it be that He is ... God Himself?

Jesus is God.

***Second, this passage speaks to the satisfaction that Jesus brings!*** He said: “*Here is the Bread that comes down form heaven, which a man may eat and not die. I am the Living Bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this Bread, He will live forever.*”

Maybe you’ve heard Shel Silverstein’s story, *The Giving Tree*. A little boy had a favorite tree and he liked to climb on its branches and eat its apples. And the boy was happy and so was the tree. But as he grew older, his love for the tree faded. Then, one day a young man came to the tree and the tree invited him to come and play, but the boy said: “*I don’t need to play; I need money.*” So the tree gave him some apples and he sold them at the market for money. And he was very happy, but again, the tree was very lonely.

Well, years went by and the boy came again. And the tree offered her apples and branches, but the boy wasn’t interested. What he really wanted was a

home to start his family in. So the tree offered her branches and the boy build a house. And he was very happy, but again, the tree was lonely.

And years went by, and the boy came again. And the tree was glad to see him and invited him to play, but the boy didn't want to play. What he really needed was a boat. So, the tree offered her trunk for a boat. And the boy was happy, but again, the tree was very lonely.

Then one day, as old man walked over to the old tree stump. The tree was happy to see him, but she had no more apples, no more branches, not even a trunk to hug. But the boy's teeth were too weak for apples and his arms and legs were too weak for climbing. What he really needed was a quiet place to sit and rest. So, he sat upon her stump and the boy was happy and finally, the tree was very happy too.

We all have needs, don't we? We've learned to categorize our needs. We speak of the basic needs: food, water, clothing, shelter, and company. And life is filled with an incredible amount of anxiety over these needs. But Jesus said: *"Don't worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or your body, what you will wear ... but seek first the Kingdom of God and all these things will be added to you."* Paul said: *"My God shall supply all your needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus."* The Psalmist said: *"I was young and now I am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging for bread."*

Jesus satisfies. The hymn writer said: *"You satisfy the hungry heart with Bread of finest wheat. Come; give to*

us, *O Saving Lord, the Bread of Life to eat.*” Jesus satisfies.

***Third, this passage speaks of the necessity of constant communion.*** Jesus said: “*If anyone eats of this bread, He will live forever.*” The tense of this verb “to eat” literally means “to gnaw on”; it means to put something into your mouth and chew it for a while, kinda like chewing gum. It’s not something we do once with everlasting benefits; it’s something we do continually with everlasting benefits.

And so, this text reminds us of the importance of feasting on the Word of God, not just on Sundays in Sunday School and Worship but, in our homes, during our quiet time. It reminds us that we are to be people of prayer, not just at meal times but, praying “*without ceasing,*” walking with God in daily prayer. It reminds us to make worship the very core of our lives, not just during the school year and not just at church but, giving reverence and honor and service to God in all aspects of our lives.

There was a man who was a faithful churchman and then, all of a sudden, he just quit coming. So, one day the pastor went to see him and they chatted for a while. And then, the pastor asked: “*Why haven’t I seen you lately?*” Well, the man made a few excuses, but basically he said he just didn’t need church anymore.

So the pastor reached over, took the tongs, reached into the fire, took a burning coal from the center of the flames, and placed it aside and they sat back and watched. And after a few minutes, the coal

went cold and dark. So the pastor reached back in, picked up the coal and placed it back into the heart of the fire, and it began to glow again. And without saying a word, he stood to leave and the man said: *“Pastor, thank you for coming to see me and thanks so much for that fiery sermon. I’ll see you this Sunday.”*

The duty of constant communion with the Bread of Life.

At the end of World War II, the Allies discovered a lot of orphans in Europe. So, they placed them in camps and fed them and gave them a place to sleep, but they soon discovered that the orphans weren’t sleeping well. They were always nervous and afraid. So, they came up with a solution: every night, before they went to bed, the children would be given two pieces of bread, one to eat and one to hold in their hand during the night. Well, the children went to bed with the assurance that they would have something to eat the next day. And guess what? Problem solved! And the children slept.

Friends, I don’t know what you’re thinking about this morning. I don’t know what you’re going through (I can only imagine). But in your heart, you have Jesus, the Bread of Life, so be filled and be assured for He said: **“I am the Bread of Life. Those who come to me will never be hungry again.”**

Are you weary? Are you heavy hearted? Tell it to Jesus! Tell it to Jesus! Are you grieving over joys departed? Tell it to Jesus alone.

Tell it to Jesus. Tell it to Jesus. He is a friend that’s well known.

You’ve no other such a friend or brother. Tell it to Jesus alone!

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.