

Jesus, the Bread of Life

(Sermon #4)

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When asking who is Jesus and what is the gospel of Jesus Christ many times what comes up in a response is what Jesus said in John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." Then the next verse says, "For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." That Son Jesus spoke of was of Himself. Jesus, the Son of God, Who God sent into the world so that all who will believe in Him will be saved and have eternal life. So what does it mean to believe in Jesus? To just believe that Jesus was sent by God that we'll be saved and have eternal life? No, for when we look at all of Jesus' teachings He had much more to say than to just believe that He existed and that if we just believe in Him that we will have eternal life. While it may be tempting for us to just believe in Jesus (whatever that means) and go about our merry way and just wait to die to see if we are truly going to have that eternal life that He promised, we should look at the whole of His teachings to find out what exactly He meant by believing in Him. And really, we can look at the whole of the Bible as being the gospel of Jesus Christ for as is pointed out in the book of John,

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men." (chapter 1:1-3)

Jesus Himself is the Word and what do we call the Holy Bible? The Word of God. The whole Word of God then is a testimony unto Himself. The Word of God. Jesus of God. Jesus is of the Father, God. What we can find then in the Word of God is that the New Testament is just a clearer image of the the Word of God than the Old Testament. Throughout the Old Testament is prophesy of Jesus the Christ who would die on a cross for our sins and would give salvation to all those who will believe in Him. What we will be looking at today is a comparison of a passage of Scripture in the Old Testament with a passage of Scripture in the New Testament and of how the former is a shadow of what is revealed in the New Testament and that the Word of God was more than just believing that He exists, but that He is our very source of life, that He is the Bread of Life, and that life leads us into eternal life in Him. We will be looking at in the Old Testament,

Deuteronomy 8:1-10.

"Every commandment which I command you today you must be careful to observe, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land of which the Lord swore to your fathers. And you shall remember that the Lord your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord. Your garments did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years. You should know in your heart that as a man chastens his son, so the Lord your God chastens you. "Therefore you shall keep the commandments of the Lord your God, to walk in His ways and to fear Him. For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, that flow out of valleys and hills; a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey; a land in which you will eat bread without scarcity, in which you will lack nothing; a land whose stones are iron and out of whose hills you can dig copper. When you have eaten and are full, then you shall bless the Lord your God for the good land which He has given you."

Most of the Old Testament is the tragic telling of God delivering the Israelites out of bondage to the Egyptians and then how time and time again they would disobey God, rebel against God, and then fall out of favor with God and then being in bondage again. Then when the Israelites had enough fun in their bondage they would cry out to God and He would deliver them again. What the story is ultimately about then is that God chose the Israelites for Him to be their protector, their provider, their Leader, their God, and then finally their Redemption into life eternal. God was telling them where the blessings in life were. He was leading them to a land flowing with milk and honey. He said to follow His commands, do what He says to do, honor Him for the God Almighty that He is, the Maker of heaven and earth, the Creator of all things, the One from whom all life comes forth, and you will be blessed. Yet, time and time again the Israelites disobeyed God and rebelled against Him and followed after other gods and basically just did what they wanted to do. It was a horrible cycle of Israel's rebellion and then falling out of God's grace, then their repentance, God's mercy, and then God's favor and the cycle repeated over and over.

It says in the passage of Scripture that God humbled them, caused them to hunger so that they would know that "that man shall not live

by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord." He wanted them to know where their source of food came from and as James, the brother of Jesus said, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father." He wanted to be their God and He wanted them to understand that. He wanted the Israelites to understand that it is He who fed them manna in the wilderness for forty years and that it is He who led them out of bondage from Egypt and it was He who was leading them to the promised land of milk and honey. He even warned them further in verse 19, "Then it shall be, if you by any means forget the Lord your God, and follow other gods, and serve them and worship them, I testify against you this day that you shall surely perish."

The Israelites time and time again believed that God was real, that He was their deliverer and the sustainer of a blessed life for themselves, they continued to follow their own desires and disobey God and then "fall into disbelief." Their believing on God was only true belief when they were following His commands and obeying His Word. He was their God when their belief was true belief. That their belief was that God wanted them to obey His commandments and to walk in His ways for if they did not fear God and obey Him then their belief in Him was of no value. Their belief on God then in their disobedience was in His anger and wrath not in His saving grace. Now let's look at a comparison of that passage that was in the Old Testament, in the book of Deuteronomy, and look at **John 6:27-40**.

"Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him." Then they said to Him, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?" Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent." Therefore they said to Him, "What sign will You perform then, that we may see it and believe You? What work will You do? Our fathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.' " Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." Then they said to Him, "Lord, give us this bread always." And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst. But I said to you that you have seen Me and yet do not believe. All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in

Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day."

There is incredible dialogue here as well as some foundational truths. Jesus says to not labor for the food of this world that perishes but for the food that He gives that endures unto eternal life. Here Jesus mentions that the Israelites ate the manna that came from the sky that was only an image or representation of the perfect gift that truly comes from heaven. Jesus said that the manna that the Israelites ate was not the true manna from heaven but that He is the Bread of Life that comes from the Father in heaven. Just as the Israelites had to go out every day and collect the manna that came down from the sky, we also have to go to where the food is and that is Jesus, the Bread of Life. The manna was a physical representation of the spiritual food that we find in Jesus our Lord and Savior. So what happens if we don't go daily to get the spiritual food that is in Christ. Our spiritual being begins to go in starvation mode and well then what happens if you stop eating permanently? You die. Jesus is our spiritual source. The Jews asked Jesus what sign He would perform as the Israelites had a sign in the form of the manna from heaven. Jesus replied that He is that sign in the form of the spiritual food of which one will no longer hunger or thirst. We know that as when we don't go to that spiritual source of food that is in Jesus, who is the Word of God, we begin to hunger and thirst spiritually. What Jesus is saying then is that as He is the Bread of Life, that while we are in these earthly bodies that we must continue to go to the source of our spiritual food to be fed but when we are with Him in the afterlife, when we are with Him in His glory when will never hunger or thirst again.

Another comparison to the way God dwelt with the Israelites and what we now have in Christ Jesus is that God said He tested the Israelites, to cause them to hunger for them to call upon Him. God similarly tests us in whether we want His spiritual food that leads to everlasting life. He wants us to recognize our hunger and thirst for His Bread and His Living Water. An analogy that Jesus used which is further along in the book of John in chapter 15 is that He is the vine and we are the branches. When we draw nutrients from Him as the vine we will then bear fruit, even much fruit. If the branch decides not to get the nutrients from the source of the Vine, being Jesus, then it soon withers and is cut off and thrown in the fire.

God designed it so that, first of all, as He alone is God Almighty, Creator of all things and He rules over all of the heavens and the earth, so He wants us to recognize Him as such and that He has provided a way not only for life eternal in Jesus Christ but that our life begins when we believe in Him and He begins to live inside of us through the Holy Spirit that He places in us; to testify to our

spirit that we are His children and which also guides us into all of His Truth which is in His Word. We must believe that Jesus died on the cross for our sins but we must also know that it is He who works in us to will and to do according to His good purpose. Just as Jesus further elaborated in John 6 in verses 53-58, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me. This is the bread which came down from heaven—not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever." As we abide in Him we find the nourishment in our spirit and we find the assurance of life eternal in Jesus Christ. The choice is ours. He who feeds on the Son of God, that is Jesus, will live forever. Believing in Jesus is being in Jesus. We are being tested and prepared to find out if we want to live in Christ's perfect holiness, His Righteousness, His Goodness, His Awesomeness, His Beauty, and His Perfection; that He alone is God, and Lord, and Savior to all who believe in Him and receive Him.

When we partake in Holy Communion (which is also called the Eucharist or the Lord's Supper) and eat the wafer or bread we are symbolically eating of the Bread of Life, that is of Jesus Christ and when we are drinking the grape juice or wine we are symbolically receiving the blood of Jesus that was shed for the remission of, or taking away of our sins and cleansing us of all unrighteousness. His blood washes away our sins and He then reigns in us with His righteousness that we can be in the likeness of Jesus Christ our Lord. This is of an image of what is to come for when we are with Him on the other side of this present life we will then be perfected to be like Christ. What we are living now is in Him calling us into His Righteousness, into His plan for our salvation by believing in Him that through Jesus dying on a cross for our sins and then with God the Father resurrecting Him from the dead, then likewise, we also will be raised up to eternal life in Him. Many disciples of Jesus turned away from following Him after He said that you must eat my flesh and drink my blood. Jesus asked His closest disciples if they too were going to turn away. "But Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." If you believe that Jesus died on the cross for our sins and that on the third day God raised Him from the dead then you are invited to join in the Holy Communion. If you have already accepted God's free gift of salvation by believing Jesus died on the cross for your sins and if you have acknowledged Jesus Christ as your Lord but have since sinned against God, God's Word says, that, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from

all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9) Before we partake in the Communion let us go before God and confess our sins that we may have a clear conscience, that we may be right before God...

"And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them and said, "Take, eat; this is My body."" (Mark 14:22)

"Then He took the cup, and when He had given thanks He gave it to them, and they all drank from it. 24 And He said to them, "This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many. (Mark 14:23)"

CLOSING PRAYER