

Mark

Lesson 10

Chapter 6:25-71

Leader Guide

Leader Guide Bible Studies

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Jesus, the Bread of Life

Lesson 10; John 6:25–71

Prayers

Introduction

The account of Jesus declaring that he was the Bread of Life sent down from heaven immediately followed his miraculous feeding of a crowd of 5000 men plus women and children. In the miraculous feeding, Jesus gave thanks to God for the two fish and five loaves of bread, and he multiplied the gift of food to feed the crowd with 12 baskets full of leftovers. Afterward, Jesus and the disciples returned to Capernaum to find the crowd waiting and searching for him. This crowd witnessed his miraculous healings in Capernaum and Bethsaida, heard him preach, and were among the 5000 miraculously fed on the hills of Israel the day before. They wanted to make Jesus their king to provide for every need.

Read John 6:22-40

John 6: 22 On the next day the crowd that remained on the other side of the sea saw that there had been only one boat there, and that Jesus had not entered the boat with his disciples, but that his disciples had gone away alone. 23 Other boats from Tiberias came near the place where they had eaten the bread after the Lord had given thanks. 24 So when the crowd saw that Jesus was not there, nor his disciples, they got into the boats and went to Capernaum, seeking Jesus.

25 When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, “Rabbi, when did you come here?” 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.” 28 Then they said to him, “What must we do, to be doing the works of God?” 29 Jesus answered them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.” 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.” 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. 36 But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. 37 All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. 38 For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. 39 And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. 40 For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.”

1. Verse 25-27. Why was the crowd looking for Jesus?

The crowd was back home but hungry again, so they wanted Jesus to feed them again!

2. Verse 27-28. Jesus admonishes the crowd for chasing after food. What does he tell them that they should pursue?

Jesus told them to work for things that endure for eternity.

3. Verse 29. What work does God require for eternal life?

The work that God requires for eternal life is faith in Jesus, the Son of God, as our Savior. No doubt, the people thought Jesus would tell them to do some especially good works that would assure their salvation. Instead, Jesus told them to do something easy that they would not do – believe that he was their Messiah sent by God. Praise God that he gives us the gift of faith through his Holy Spirit and the incomparable riches of his grace!

4. Verse 30. What does the crowd's demand for a miraculous sign reveal about an unbelieving heart?

Demanding a sign is easier than faith. An unbelieving heart requires a sign that God's word is true, but no number of signs satisfies it. Jesus worked more miracles in Galilee than in any other region. The people witnessed miraculous healings, saw Jesus drive out demons, heard him preach with truth and authority, and were miraculously fed. Yet, they still wanted another sign that he was the Christ, so he gave them the ultimate sign; the sign of Jonah. The sign of Jonah was that Jesus would be brought back from death after three days in the grave. I wonder how many believed after his death and resurrection?

5. Verse 31-34. What miracle would the crowd like to see Jesus perform - continually?

They wanted food every day like the manna God supplied their ancestors when they wandered through the desert with Moses (until they died in the desert because of their unbelieving hearts).

6. Verse 32-33. How is Jesus like the manna the crowd was asking for?

Manna was sent down from heaven by God to save his people - from starvation. Jesus was also sent down from heaven by God to save his people – from their sin and spiritual hunger. Jesus feeds our faith in his salvation and makes it secure—that is, the eating and drinking Jesus is referring to.

7. Verse 35-40. What do the following verses teach about our eternal security?

- a. Verse 37, All those the Father gives, **will come to Jesus.**
- b. Verse 37, Jesus will never **drive us away.**
- c. Verse 38, Jesus does the **will** of the Father.
- d. Verse 39, The will of the Father is that **none** shall be lost, **all will be** raised on the last day.
- e. Verse 40, The will of the Father is that everyone who **believes in Jesus as their Savior** will have eternal life.

Read John 6:41-59

John 6:41 So the Jews grumbled about him, because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." 42 They said, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does he now say, 'I have come down from heaven'?" 43 Jesus answered them, "Do not grumble among yourselves. 44 No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day. 45 It is written in the Prophets, 'And they will all be taught by God.' Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me— 46 not that anyone has seen the Father except he who is from God; he has seen the Father. 47 Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life. 48 I am the bread of life. 49 Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. 50 This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. 51 I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh."

52 The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" 53 So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. 54 Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. 55 For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. 56 Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. 57 As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever feeds on me, he also will live because of me. 58 This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like the bread the fathers ate, and died. Whoever feeds on this bread will live forever." 59 Jesus said these things in the synagogue, as he taught at Capernaum.

8. Verses 41-42. The crowd knows that Jesus can work miracles and teach with authority. What can't they accept? How is this similar to today?

The people would not accept that Jesus had come down from heaven because they knew Joseph and Mary. They did not know of his miraculous birth through the Virgin Mary and by the Holy Spirit. Faith for people today should be much easier because we have the full story of Jesus in the scriptures. The gospel message is preached plainly in churches throughout our country and in many nations, yet many people reject the truth of salvation through faith in Jesus.

9. Round 2 of the conversation. Jesus repeats his claims with greater emphasis and uses prophetic language – similar to parables. Fill in the blanks:

- Verse 44. No one can believe in Jesus unless the Father **draws him.**
- Verse 45-46. Jesus has seen God because he was **sent from heaven.**
- Verse 47. Whoever believes Jesus is sent by God from heaven has **everlasting life.**

10. In verses 48-58, Jesus repeats his teaching about being manna/bread from heaven except that his language becomes prophetic – very similar to teaching in parables. Do you recall the purposes of this type of teaching?

- Psalms 78:2 to reveal **the hidden wisdom [of God]**
- Hosea 12:9-10 to identify **a prophet who was sent by God**
- Isaiah 6:9-10 to confound the **hard-hearted and unrepentant.**

11. Verses 48 to 58 are challenging to unravel, even considering the purposes for prophetic language. What are some of the benefits of "eating the flesh of the Son of Man and drinking his blood"?
- Verse 50, 53, 58: **eternal life**
 - Verse 56: **unity with Christ**
 - Discuss what it means to "eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood."

To be honest, there are aspects of these passages that I do not understand. Perhaps one way to understand these passages is similar to the way we understand the sacraments. The word "sacrament" comes from the Greek word for "mystery." In communion, the mystery is how the body and blood of Christ are joined with the bread and wine. We don't understand this, nor do we need to. We accept it by faith and joyfully partake be in union with our Lord in a most intimate manner and receive forgiveness for our sins. These scriptures point to the institution of communion that was to come, to the promise of the sweet abiding in Christ, and the promise of eternal fellowship with our Lord.

Read John 6:60-71.

John 6:60 When many of his disciples heard it, they said, "This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?" 61 But Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples were grumbling about this, said to them, "Do you take offense at this? 62 Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? 63 It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. 64 But there are some of you who do not believe." (For Jesus knew from the beginning who those were who did not believe, and who it was who would betray him.) 65 And he said, "This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father."

66 After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him. 67 So Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you want to go away as well?" 68 Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, 69 and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God." 70 Jesus answered them, "Did I not choose you, the twelve? And yet one of you is a devil." 71 He spoke of Judas the son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the twelve, was going to betray him.

12. No one understood Jesus' teaching. How did he explain himself to the disciples in verse 63?

Jesus was not talking about cannibalism as the Jews supposed. He said his words were spirit and life and that the flesh was no help at all. They would receive life in Christ by being reborn in faith through the Holy Spirit. Their flesh – their works and intellectual wisdom, would not bring them eternal life.

13. Controversy about the meaning John 6:48-58 continues today. Some denominations emphasize aspects of verse 55; others emphasize verse 63.
- Some Christians believe Communion is a sacrament, while others believe it is an ordinance. Luther's catechism teaches that the word sacrament is from the Greek meaning mystery. The mystery is how God does his work through the sacraments of baptism and communion. The two sacraments share common elements:
 - A sacred act.
 - Instituted by God (Christ).

3. God joins his word and himself to a visible element (water, wine, bread).
4. By which God offers, gives, and seals the forgiveness of sins earned by Christ.

b. Christians who believe the sacraments are ordinances believe the sacraments are prescribed practices symbolic of God's promises and have the following elements in common:

1. Ordered by Christ
2. Practiced by the early church
3. Symbols, not required for salvation but practiced to remember Christ's sacrifice for the forgiveness of our sin
4. Union with God is spiritual.

14. How do these two interpretations (Sacrament or Ordinance) impact communion practices in the following denominations? Match the denomination with the beliefs listed below.

Belief Statement
Number

- A. Catholic 4
- B. Lutheran 2
- C. Methodist 5
- D. Baptist 1
- E. Quaker 3

Denomination Core Belief Statement:

1. Bread and wine (grape juice) are symbols provided by God for spiritual communion with Christ to express our thanks for his sacrifice.
2. Elements remain as bread and wine, but the body and blood of Christ are in miraculous and mysterious union with the elements for the forgiveness of sin.
3. Every action in life is consecrated to God as an act of worship; sacraments are not practiced.
4. Elements are miraculously changed to Christ's body and blood when consecrated by the priest (or pastor) for the forgiveness of sin.
5. The Lord's table is open to all adults and children, baptized and unbaptized, to commune with the presence of Christ through bread and [grape juice as a substitute for wine].

Closing Prayer and Blessing