

8-7-22 Early in Jesus' ministry, he needed to start defining his role in everyone's life. He went into the wilderness to pray and fast, was tempted by Evil to turn the stones to bread, "Man does not live by bread alone". Our text begins after he finished feeding the 5000. They got a small piece of bread. Many followed him to the next stop and wanted more. What he was willing to give them was not served in a basket but in his Word.

John 6:35, 41-51

Message: Jesus defines himself to many by connecting their need for their daily food staple teaching he too is a daily staple in their life fueling their need for hope, "I am the bread of life" adding, "That came down from heaven". Suddenly all had to adjust their view of him from an eloquent rabbi (teacher) to something they couldn't imagine-yet. The dubious argued claiming they knew who Jesus was; believed they knew his parents. It was hard for all their listeners wondering who or what he really was. We may be reminded of how some express human logic: "If it walks and talks like a duck, it must be". Now they looked at Jesus who walked, talked and looked like all of them-yet was telling them he wasn't really who their human logic let them believe-he was much, much more.

To support the difference, he could have in their lives; that believing in him would give them a new life-an eternal life, he cited their ancestors celebrated at every Passover celebration. When they were hungry, Moses prayed for help and God provided "manna from heaven which kept them alive". Jesus too came from the heavens and also keeps them alive but not alive in the same sense but in a greater sense. "I am the bread of life." I am the one you see; all you have heard from God comes from me". Their ancestors only believed that God's purpose was to just make manna appear which Moses warned was perishable, "take only what you need for each day". Since they only expected edible, perishable food from God, their faith in God, died; thus, his expression, "They died".

If all we need God for is to bail us out of our immediate danger, and nothing more, we too are not allowing God access to our fulness of life, allowing us true, quality of life.

"I am the bread of life and whomever believes in me will have eternal life". We know that he is speaking about our spiritual life not just **being alive-existing-having** what we call a "**quality of life**"; of living a fulfilling life resulting from our faith in him. I don't need to say that all of us want more out of life; more out of our family, work, church-life.

Family: When we are around our family, we don't just want to be entertained watching them, we want to engage in the fun of family; to participate in their games and life for the duration of our life-a quality of family. It is using the life given to us by God for real life.

Work: We may look upon work as needed for its monetary rewards, mark off calendars for each day like a prison sentence served. Then one day we realize the value of social contact with our workers-even with our boss that gives us a quality of workplace, those who work from home never appreciate. In the broader sense, work adds to our wisdom

of purpose endorsed by God who sees our producing for others, like the drudgery of the farmer's work and life providing for all others.

Church: Worship can be a routine too with our Lord's prayer, Confession of faith, text and message seem like a revolving task, until we realize the value of meeting each other, strengthening our church family ties before and after church, the joy of gathering; the church is at its best; adding to the quality of worship.

"I am the bread of life whomever believes in me will have everlasting life". When he said this, 2 types of believers emerged: **One** felt his divine presence and, like his disciples, were immediate followers. Most waited. Then at the end of his earthly ministries, they heard about the empty, guarded tomb, or heard testimony from his disciples and hundreds more of his reappearances after being pronounced dead by mortals like Pilot and realized that he really did defeat mortal death giving proof of eternal life, available to them too.

Then he said, "Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world". To many, this reference to the bread being his flesh is troubling reminds us of scavenger birds who live off of the lifeless bodies of the mortal dead. Looking ahead to the end of his mortal life, it is the body of a fallen Christ that all of us are able to feast off of to continue to live a new life.

"I am the bread of life", a life we too can feast off of based on our faith, as taught in our Hebrews reading, "Faith which is the confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see".