

The Bread That Gives Eternal Life

John 6:35—51

Introduction

“If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And that bread that I give for the life of the world is My flesh” (John 6:51). The main question on the minds of the people in our Gospel lesson today is, “How can we believe what He says? *Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?*” (v. 42). If that was all there was to Jesus, it would be foolish to believe in Him. How can we believe that a carpenter can give eternal life?

Obstacles to Faith

This is what salvation in Jesus Christ is all about. If it were something we could weigh empirically or prove logically beyond all reasonable doubt, we would call it science and we wouldn't need faith. The only way to receive the eternal life Jesus offers is through faith.

Unless the Father Draws Him

But how do we get that faith? Jesus says, *“No one can come to Me unless the Father who has sent Me draws him” (John 6:44).* But the Father is a Gentleman. He never forces Himself on anyone. Many people hear the Word and have the grace of God offered to them. But they resist His grace. They continue to say, “I can't believe it; it's just too foolish.” And they go merrily on their way, never knowing forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

The Will of the Father

But this breaks God's heart, for *He is not willing that any should perish but that all should reach repentance (2 Peter 3:9)* and receive eternal life. As we read in the **Formula of Concord**, *God reveals His will by this call (Formula of Concord, SD Art. XI, 24).* He calls us by His Word, revealing that His will for us is for Jesus to keep us and *raise [us] up on the last day (John 6:39—40).*

Resurrection

The resurrection is our assurance and hope in this fallen world (Read **1 Thessalonians 4:16—17**). No matter what happens in this life, we look for the resurrection on the last day when Jesus Christ will raise us from the dead to eternal life with Him in heaven. As Jesus said in **John 11**, *“I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die” (John 11:25—26).*

Jesus Is the Bread

Three times in our reading today, Jesus plainly calls Himself the Bread of life. It's clear that Jesus gives us this bread and that He *is* this bread. *“And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is My flesh” (John 6:51).*

He Gave His Flesh

First, He gave His flesh on the cross. There He died in our place and paid the price for our sins. There He bought life for us with His death. There He won forgiveness of sin with His broken body and shed blood.

He Gives His Flesh

He continues to give His flesh today. When we receive the bread and wine of Holy Communion, we are receiving His body and blood for the forgiveness of our sins, the strengthening of our faith, and eternal life. Jesus' body is **THE BREAD THAT GIVES ETERNAL LIFE.**

*And the peace of God,
Which surpasses all understanding,
Will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.*
