

Jesus, Who is the spiritual food that satisfies the deepest hunger, will bring about His Father's will to give eternal resurrection life to all whom the Father gives to Him. Of these Jesus will never lose or cast out any who comes to Him by faith. Come and feast on the Bread of Life!

Introduction: Story of Deon. He is a real person, but he is also you and me. He is Adam, Israel, Solomon, Augustine, Francis of Assisi, John Newton, C.S. Lewis, and every prodigal son who has known the empty pursuit of happiness.

Background: Jesus fed at least 5000 people in a remote location starting with only a few loaves of bread. The next day the multitude ran after Jesus looking for another miraculous sign. They weren't satisfied with yesterday's manna and wanted more of the same. Jesus seized the teaching moment by pointing to what they needed most of all—spiritual satisfaction in Him.

I. One Lavish Invitation

A. Bread that gives death (v. 35; cf. John 6:27a)

Notice how Jesus zooms in on their felt needs for a miracle, for food in their bellies, and even for a political messianic deliverer. A felt need is not a total deception, otherwise you wouldn't feel such a need at all. But a felt need cannot give you deep lasting satisfaction. It's the kind of "bread" that perishes. If you try to get lasting satisfaction out of such bread it will ultimately give you death. The feelings of wholeness and completeness will eventually wear off.

B. Bread that gives life (v. 35; cf. John 6:27, 32-33)

So what does Jesus offer instead? He extends an invitation to a lavish banquet, and He's the menu. The crowds were so excited because they thought Jesus had just reopened Moses' restaurant "Manna From Heaven." But Moses didn't give their forefathers bread from heaven. It was Jesus' Father Who had given them manna in the wilderness. And now His Father is giving the true bread from heaven. "For the bread of God is He Who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world" (v. 33). The Israelites had eaten the manna yet died in the wilderness because they had not feasted on the true bread of God. Only the Son of Man can give the food that endures to eternal life.

II. Two Dissimilar Questions

A. Skeptical: How can I believe Jesus will satisfy me? (v. 36)

Head: this question requires evidence of Christ's truth claim. It is motivated by skepticism and doubt (either honest or dishonest). One way to explain how people intellectually struggle with this question is by emphasizing the different words in it. Putting the stress on a different word each time you say it changes the nuance of the question. Try it. This exercise highlights how various doubts function when you consider Jesus and His claims about Himself. Don't miss the implicit warning. Knowing about Jesus, understanding some things about Him, and even seeing Him in action (whether in body or in spirit) from inside the faith community is not sufficient to bring someone to faith in Jesus.

B. Fearful: How can I trust Jesus won't reject me? (vv. 37-40)

Heart: this question requires evidence of Christ's decisive love. It is motivated by fear and insecurity. Something more than evidence is required for everyone who comes to Jesus in faith. God must also disarm the skeptic's heart by preemptively "giving Him" to Jesus. If you've come to Jesus and believed in Him as the Savior of sinners, as the Bread of Life, then you can be sure of this: before you came and believed, God the Father gave you to Jesus. That's why you came to Jesus and believed in Him. Not despite the evidence or by ignoring the evidence, but now God's Spirit enables you to rightly see how Jesus has revealed Himself. You rightly see Jesus now because you already belonged to Him. Knowing that should give you a great deal of satisfaction. But your tender and

fragile heart still asks questions. You need assurance that Jesus won't reject you, that He will never cast you out. That you'll always belong to Him and He'll never break your heart.

III. Three Guaranteed Satisfactions

A. God commits Himself to you (v. 37)

Everybody fears rejection. This is why you keep secrets from those you love. Because you believe deep-down that if he or she really knew me, then that person (your friend, parent, child, boyfriend, girlfriend, spouse) will eventually stop loving me and reject me. But who knows you more than God does? He knows all your secrets. He sees you all the way down and it doesn't scare Him off.

"Whoever comes to me I will never cast out." Jesus knows you completely and He is committed to you completely. And so you don't need to fear God's rejection. No matter what you think, say, or do, He is committed to you. God says, "I will never leave you nor forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5b).

B. God accommodates Himself for you (v. 38)

Not only will God never leave you nor forsake you, He also loves you enough to relate to you on your level. Jesus has "come down from heaven" to love you as His Father and your Father sent Him to do. In former times God spoke to His people through dreams, visions, and prophets. He used to appear to us in various forms: a pillar of smoke, or an angel, or in a storm. But in all these He was withholding Himself in one way or another from us because it wasn't yet time to appear as one of us. And when the fullness of time had come He gave His one and only Son—born of woman, born of flesh, born under the law, born like you and me (Hebrews 1:1-2a). In Jesus Christ God accommodates Himself for you. He is no longer "other," but is now and forever like you in a way He never was before. Why did God become man? At bottom the answer is because He loves you! And He will love you forever.

C. God will resurrect Christ and you (vv. 39-40)

There is only one way that God can love you forever. When someone dies there is a sense in which you can no longer show your love to that person. You can honor his memory with words and deeds of love, but unless that person is alive you cannot love him because he is dead. And so God, Who promises to forever love those who belong to Him, promises resurrection. The promise of Christ's resurrection is implied here because Jesus is the One Who will raise you to eternal life. Jesus must be raised first so that He is able to do His Father's will. "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. 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." Your heavenly Father guaranteed He would resurrect Jesus from the dead so He might live forever. Jesus the Bread of Life will give eternal life to you who feast on Him.

Conclusion: How can Jesus make all these promises to satisfy your deepest hunger and guarantee He will keep His word? He can give you living bread because He gave up His claim on it. As He fasted in the wilderness He refused to turn stones to bread because He was saving the true bread for you. On the cross His body was broken and He cried out in thirst so that you might be filled and satisfied by His body and blood broken for you. At the moment when His heart was consumed with fear and insecurity, He cried out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken Me?" (Matthew 27:46). He was given over to death and judgment so that you might be given to God, forgiven by God, and granted eternal life. Jesus was lost and cast out by His Father so you would be given to Jesus and He would never cast you out. When you begin to see Jesus as the Bread of Life broken for you, you'll begin to feel those spiritual hunger pangs. Come and take Him.