

“I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE”

January 17, 2016

John 6:22-59

“I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.” John 6:51

The day before the events in this passage, Jesus fed five thousand men and the women and children who accompanied them, with five small bread-cakes and two fish. Everyone ate as much as he or she desired, yet twelve baskets full remained uneaten from the bounty He supplied.

Jesus then sent the multitude away and instructed His disciples to sail in a small ship across the Sea of Galilee, while He went into a mountain to pray. That night, as the disciples rowed through rough, wind-swept waters, Jesus came to them walking on the water. Seeing His form moving across the water, the disciples were terrified. When He identified Himself and entered the boat with them, they worshipped Him, confessing, “Of a truth thou art the Son of God” (Matt. 14:34).

Arriving at shore sometime between 3 AM and 6 AM the next day, as soon as Jesus’ presence was known, residents began coming to Him with diseased and afflicted people to be healed. Soon, many from the multitude He fed the day before appeared, walking from the location where they had eaten. Their arrival occasioned Christ’s discourse on the Bread of Life.

He chided those whom he had fed, discerning that their motivation was for physical food only; that they sought another meal, heedless that their greatest need was spiritual, not physical (John 6:27, 28). They recalled that in Moses’ day Israel was fed with manna from heaven. For forty years, manna sustained the nation. The day prior, they had been fed miraculously. Would that miracle be repeated? Would they eat today as they had yesterday?

We should understand from Scripture that miracles served a much larger, grander purpose than the immediate benefit that recipients enjoyed. Miracles revealed the nature of God, and confirmed the identity, authenticity and message of the one who performed them. Jesus now revealed the quality in Himself that was illustrated by the miraculous feeding—that He is the Bread of God, sent from heaven to earth in order to satisfy the hunger of the soul, a hunger that cannot be satisfied by any other supply.

Like the manna of old, Jesus Christ came from heaven. But unlike the manna that sustained physical life, He is the Bread that gives and sustains spiritual life. As Israel had to eat the manna in the wilderness to sustain its existence, so the people of God must feed their souls upon Christ in order to have spiritual life and to have that life sustained.

The lesson that must be learned is the necessity of feasting by faith upon Jesus Christ, by whom the life of God is imparted unto every believing soul, and by whom those souls are nurtured. We must discern the Bread of Life, desire the Bread of Life, and devour the Bread of Life.

