John 6vv25-35

In our passage today Jesus talks about bread. We may already know quite a lot about bread. And if we visit our local boulangerie or supermarket we have a great choice of breads.

But in many parts of the world today, it is not a case of choosing which type of bread takes your fancy, on any given day. For in many parts of the world, a basic carbohydrate, whether it be bread, ugali, tapalapa or rice - is not about choice, but necessity! It is the basic foodstuff, the main component of your diet... it is essential for living!

And it was just the same 2000 years ago in Jesus' day. Bread was something that you could not live without.

If you are familiar with the Willy Wonka stories, you'll remember that he invented an everlasting gobstopper.... But of course that was made up!... And besides, it never promised eternal life.

But in our bible passage today, Jesus offers bread which if we eat of it, we will live forever!

But before we look at our passage, we need to understand what has happened the day before, because once again, it involves bread!

Earlier on in chapter 6, we are told about a quite extraordinary miracle that Jesus performs. A huge crowd are following Jesus, because he has been miraculously healing the sick, but in their excitement, they have forgotten to bring their packed lunch with the But there is one boy with some food (5 loaves & 2 fish).

So Jesus takes that and… amazingly… miraculously… Jesus feeds everybody!

In response, the crowd conclude that Jesus is pretty special and want to make him king by force… After all, this is just the sort of powerful person you want heading up your government!

But the crowd fail to understand that this is not the kind of king Jesus is going to be, and so Jesus escapes to the hills.

In 6v25ff, we pick things up the next day…

The crowd have found Jesus in Capernaum, on the other side of the lake, and there in verse 25 they ask an innocent enough question - "*when did you get here, Jesus?*"

And we are wondering why they are chasing after him...

- Are they looking to make Jesus King by force again...?
- Will Jesus run away again...?

But actually, there in verse 26, we see how Jesus reveals their true motive…

> "*You are looking for me because yesterday I gave you lunch, and today you are hungry again!*"

They are chasing after Jesus, because they are hungry and Jesus is giving away free lunches!

But Jesus wants them to understand that they have missed the point.

Jesus miraculously feeding all the people was a signpost as to his true identity, but they haven't seen what the sign pointed to… what it signified.

But brilliantly, what we have in our passage today, is very helpful teaching from Jesus, as to who he really is!

But before that revelation, there is a challenge from Jesus… whereby Jesus challenges their motives... And ours...

Jesus says…

#1 - Pursue food that endures to eternal life

It's there in the first half of verse 27...

"Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life,!"

They need to enlarge their horizons. They are thinking only as far as lunchtime, but Jesus wants them to consider eternity.

And so Jesus challenges what the crowd (and what you and I), *"pour our energies into pursuing".*

Jesus words ask the question of each one of us, *'what are you working for, what are you working towards?'*

What are you pursuing in life?

What are you hungering after?

What is your goal?

There are many things, some good, some bad, some necessary, that we pour our energy into. But Jesus' point is that none of them will give us eternal life.

Either they wear out

Or they wear us out

Or we just become tired of them

They may not necessarily be bad things in and of themselves. But what Jesus is saying, is that they must not be your ultimate pursuit, because they will not give you eternal life!

And the life Jesus is talking about, is real 'life'

… Life as it is meant to be

Jesus is not just promising that you will just '*exist*' forever

There is a greek word for life (bios) which just means the biological process of being alive - breathing/sweating/existing

But the word Jesus uses here (is Zoe)… it means 'life' too, but something quite different. Like when someone is describing something that has happened and they say, *'it was great - it made me feel alive!'*

Now it is true that you are not '*existing*' anymore than when you are mowing the lawn, changing nappies, or driving the car in the rain, but there is a difference.

And what Jesus is encouraging us to do, is to pursue the food that endures to eternal *life* - not eternal *existence* - but eternal *life* - knowing life at its fulness…

… knowing what life is all about and having that… *forever* !!

… the life that God created you to have, and enjoying that forever :)

Jesus is talking about eternal life with God Almighty, where one day there will be no more:

sickness sadness suffering strife separation secrets shame sin

And Jesus is point is that this will not be found in a bigger house, a better job, going to a particular uni, or whatever else we might pursue - that is food that spoils.

This contrast is described beautifully in the book of Isaiah (chapter 55)

God is speaking, and he says...

[1] "Come, everyone who thirsts,
come to the waters;
and he who has no money,
come, buy and eat!
Come, buy wine and milk
without money and without price.
[2] Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread,
and your labor for that which does not satisfy?
Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good,
and delight yourselves in rich food.
[3] Incline your ear, and come to me;
hear, that your soul may live;

So in John chapter 6, here is Jesus telling the crowd that they should pursue food that gives eternal life.

But they ask in v28, *'what must we do, to be doing the works of God?'*

What the crowd think, is that they can earn this food, and earn eternal life!

They hear Jesus saying work for food that endures to eternal life - and they go, *'yeah, yeah ok… sounds wonderful!… how do I earn that?'*

It may be that this is our natural response too?

But what they (and we) need to understand is that…

#2 - God has sent Jesus to give this food

In vv27-29, Jesus is saying that what they need to do, is to believe in… entrust… put their faith in… the one who was sent from God

In other words, they need to believe that Jesus is who he says he is! That Jesus is the one approved by God. That Jesus alone has come from heaven and has been authorised by God to give this food that endures to eternal life.

But if the crowd are to believe this - then it seems they want some proof! (v30)

If what the crowd are supposed to 'do' is believe in who Jesus is - then they want him to 'do' something first, to prove he is who he says he is!

And which point we find ourselves thinking *"well they must have jolly short memories -because wasn't it only yesterday that Jesus fed thousands of people! What more do they want?"*

But their thought process it seems, goes something like this…

"So Jesus… You want us to believe that you are the one who can give us this food. Ok… Well we want you to prove it by doing something as least as impressive as Moses. He gave us manna!" (v31).

But in what Jesus says next, we have yet another of the crowd's misunderstandings exposed!

Firstly, they were wrong about Jesus' identity following the feeding of the 5 000. They failed to realise that the miracle was a sign pointing to who Jesus is.

Secondly, they were wrong in thinking that they can in some way earn this food that endures to eternal life.

And thirdly, they are now wrong, in thinking that it was Moses who provided the manna! For as Jesus says in v32, "*Truly, truly, it was not Moses who gave you the manna - it was God."*

Jesus' point is that it was God who provided Manna then in the wilderness, and it is God who is providing bread now!

... God is now giving you the '*true bread from heaven'*

Here in John 6vv25-35 - the verb "*give"* is used 7 times, and the direction of the giving is always the same. It is God who is the giver.

Eternal life cannot be earned, it is given by God… and God has sent Jesus to give it.

Now by v34, we think the crowd finally understand because they ask, "*Sir, give us this bread always*."

But here's the thing… those listening to Jesus still don't quite get it!

They think that Jesus is saying, he is the one who can give this bread!

Which is why they ask to be given this bread '*always*' - that is in the sense of '*from now on*'. They are asking that Jesus would deliver them some of this bread, each and every day.

But Jesus is saying much more than that… much… much more than that.

In v35 Jesus is explicit. He says in no uncertain terms that this true bread from heaven which gives eternal life, is himself.

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.

And so, for their understanding to be complete,

They need to grasp that…

#3 - Jesus is the true bread from heaven who gives eternal life

Jesus is not the deliverer of the bread - HE IS THE BREAD

But what does that mean? How can Jesus be bread? And when did bread ever quench our thirst?

Well thankfully, Jesus explains that too in v35.

Christianity is different to religion, because it is about coming to a person, coming into relationship with Jesus

IT is not about trying to earn eternal life, but rather, it's about a relationship to grasp hold of… a person to come to… and that person is Jesus.

And so in verse 35 we have the most wonderful life changing-promise…

He who comes to Jesus will never go hungry, he who believes in him will never be thirsty. This is the promise of eternal life for all those who come, for those who believe in Jesus. This promise means that from the moment you put your trust in Jesus as the bread of life, you are guaranteed eternal life.

So as I close, please understand this today…

If you are a Christian here today, then you have much to give thanks for & much to look forward to, this day, and every day!.

(… the words of our final hymn this morning remind us of the right response, *"songs of praises I will ever sing to thee"*)

But if you have not yet put your trust in Jesus then you cannot lay claim to this promise, not yet anyway, not until you come to Jesus, and put your trust in him.

You see it is one thing to be an admirer of Jesus, to even be quite impressed by him, but it is quite another to believe in him!

Not as a healer of the sick. Not as a miracle worker. Not as a free meal ticket.

But as the bread of life, the one who promises eternal life to all those who come to him, believe in him.